KENYATTA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

KIMERU PROFICIENCY AMONG PRIMARY SCHOOL
PUPILS IN MERU CENTRAL DISTRICT

BY

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ARTS OF KENYATTA UNIVERSITY.

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DECLARATION

This dissertation is my own work and has not been presented for the award of a degree in any other university.

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DEDICATION

In the memory of my late father; Cyprian Ntalala M'mukembo, for his inspiration, selflessness and firm belief in the power of education.

&

To my wife Grace Kinanu and our son Joash Mutuma for their steadfast support and encouragement.
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ABSTRACT

The critical role that literacy plays in the everyday lives of people in Kenya as elsewhere around the world is indisputable. Literacy is intimately connected to language. Literacy presupposes language; one becomes literate in a language or languages. Pupils who have not fully acquired literacy skills in their first language have limited background skills to bring to the task of learning a second language. Furthermore, when a language is reduced in its function, which happens in case of a shift towards the majority language(s), generally speakers will become less proficient in it.

This study focused on assessment of the levels of Kimeru proficiency among lower primary school pupils in Meru Central District. It sought to identify the factors affecting these levels of proficiency, how it relates to language use and its impact to the task of learning other languages. The study was conducted in five primary schools in Meru Central District using a descriptive research design. The target population comprised of thirty standard four pupils from three public primary schools and twenty teachers from both public and private schools while the research instruments were Kimeru proficiency tests, focused group discussions and questionnaires.

Data was analyzed using quantitative and qualitative methods. The analysis was presented using descriptive statistics such as tables, percentages and graphs. The study found out that due to several factors, there are low levels of Kimeru proficiency among primary school pupils in Meru Central District. Given the role of L1 in learning other languages, the pupils will have difficulties learning English and accessing the curriculum.
This work is presented in five chapters. Chapter one introduces the study, chapter two reviews related literature while chapter three examines the research methodology employed. Chapter four focuses on data presentation and analysis while chapter five gives a summary of the findings, conclusions and recommendations.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Declaration.................................................................................................................. ii
Dedication.................................................................................................................. iii
Acknowledgement ..................................................................................................... iv
Abstract..................................................................................................................... v
Table of Contents..................................................................................................... vii
List of Figures........................................................................................................... x
List of Tables............................................................................................................ xi
Abbreviation and Acronyms.................................................................................... xii
Operational Definitions of Terms........................................................................... xiii

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction ........................................................................................................ 1
1.1 Background to the Study ................................................................................... 1
1.2 Statement of the Problem .................................................................................. 5
1.3 Objectives of the Study .................................................................................... 6
1.4 Research Question ............................................................................................ 7
1.5 Research Assumptions ..................................................................................... 7
1.6 Justification and Significance .......................................................................... 8
1.7 Scope and Limitations ...................................................................................... 9

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW & THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.

2.1.0 Introduction ................................................................................................... 10
2.1.1 The Concept of Linguistic Proficiency ......................................................... 10
2.1.2 Literacy Perspectives in Kenya ....................................................................... 12
2.1.3 The Importance of M.T Learning ................................................................. 13
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.0 Common underlying proficiency (Interdependence hypothesis) p.20

Figure 2.0 BICS/CALP (Cummins 1984) p.21
LIST OF TABLES

4.1 Proficiency Levels in Reading Skills......................................................30
4.2 Proficiency Levels in Writing Skills........................................................30
4.3 Proficiency Levels in Speaking Skills.....................................................31
4.4 Factors Influencing Kimeru Proficiency..................................................32
4.5 Effects of Kimeru Proficiency on Language choice/Use................................32
4.6a Reasons for Teaching Kimeru.................................................................33
4.6b Reasons against Teaching Kimeru..........................................................33
4.7 Competence Levels and Marks in Percentages..........................................34
5.1 Summary of Main Findings........................................................................58
Abbreviations and Acronyms

BICS  Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills

CALP  Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency

CUP   Common Underlying Proficiency

EFA   Education for All

FLA   First Language Acquisition

L1    First Language

L2    Second Language

LOI   Language of Instruction

MDGS  Millennium Development Goals

MT    Mother Tongue

SACMEQ Southern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality.

SLA   Second Language Acquisition
Operational Definition of Terms Used in the Study

**Assessment**  This is a kind of measurement carried out on an existing ability or ability achieved through process of learning.

**Dialect**  A sub-variety of language which can either be regional or social for example the Imenti and Igembe dialects of Kimeru language.

**Literacy**  The ability to listen, speak, read and write appropriately in a variety of contexts.

**Mother tongue**  Any indigenous language spoken in Kenya e.g. Kikamba or Kimeru.

**Multilingual**  A situation whereby speakers have a mastery of two or more languages.

**Norms**  Set benchmark standards for assessing language proficiency.

**Proficiency**  The ability to speak and write fluently and accurately in a particular language.
1.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides the background against which the study was based. Further, it presents the statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, assumptions, justification and significance of the study, scope and limitations.

1.1 Background of the Study

According to Muthwii (2004), in many African nations today, a big portion of the population does not manage to attain meaningful literacy levels through the school system. Consequently, many are not able to participate meaningfully in the important discourses and thoughts, which are by and large expressed in a foreign tongue. Cummins (2000), states that conceptual knowledge developed in one language helps to make input in other languages comprehensible. For example, if a child understands the concept of justice or honesty in one language all she has to do is acquire the label for these terms in English. She has a far more difficult task however, if she has to acquire both the label and the concept in the second language. Proficiency in the first language (L1) therefore helps in the learning of the second language.

According to Haugen (1971), all known languages are systematic systems of equal native value and language planning should not only deal with the technical aspects of language but also with its social aspects. However, in multilingual settings, languages do not have equal status. The more prestigious languages tend to have positive social economic
connotations while the minority languages have low social economic status and seem to imply lack of academic achievement and sophistication. This attitude fails to appreciate that language is not only an instrument of communication of messages but also a medium of transmission of the cultural norms and values of a people. When children learn to read and write in the majority language only, then the MT must almost inevitably be considered a second rate means of communication.

A close relationship is seen to exist not only between language and communications but also between language and thought (Crystal 1994). Proficiency in a language therefore, involves clear communication and easy thought processes. However, for sometime it was assumed that the ethnic groups we find in our modern societies were dying out because they were expected to integrate into mainstream society and give up their own lifestyle, culture, language and identity (Appel & Musyken 1987). On the contrary, the perspective on ethnic groups and ethnic identity has changed. In Kenya this is best exemplified by the mushrooming of vernacular radio stations in the last few years.

Languages which are used for literacy only at the lower primary schools in one part of the country are faced with the possibility of becoming functionally extinct as many of them are slowly but surely driven closer to extinction (Mbaabu 1996). The African culture, the wisdom, philosophy and the orature they embody is fast disappearing. Proficiency in vernacular will promote a sense of cultural identity and reduce the effects of cultural and linguistic dependency on the west. As Lambart (1980) observes, many minority ethnic groups are forced to shift away from their ethnic languages by national education policies and various social pressures. The minority language as a non-prestigious language cannot
be maintained adequately and it is subtracted from bilingual proficiency. This usually happens in transitional model of language planning where the MT is used in the early grades to bridge the gap between the home and the school environment. This is the case in Kenya where MT is only taught in lower primary school and abandoned thereafter. When a language is reduced in its functions, which happens in case of shift towards the majority language, generally the speakers will become less proficient in it (Lambert 1980).

This study focused on Kimeru proficiency. Meru or Kimeru is a Bantu language spoken by the Meru people or the Ameru who live on the Eastern slopes of Mount Kenya and the Nyambene ridges. Ethnologue lists the classification of Kimeru as: Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Volta-Congo, Benue-Congo, Bantaid, Southern, Narrow Bantu, Central, E, Kikuyu-Kamba (20), Meru. The Meru people are a heterogeneous community but all share a common ancestry (Nyaga 1997). They share the same language, Kimeru but there are slight regional differences in accent and lexical items. The mutual intelligibility among Meru dialects is around 85% though it varies from dialect to dialect (ethnologue). For instance, lexical similarity between Imenti and Tigania is 85 percent whereas it is 67 percent between Imenti and Chuka dialects.

Presently the Meru who number around 1.5 million live in ten districts in Eastern province. They occupy: Meru south, Maara, Meru Central, Imenti north, Buuri, Imenti South, Tigania East, Tigania West, Igembe North and Igembe South districts. The Meru dialects include: Igembe, Tigania, Imenti, Igoji, Mwimbi Muthambi and Chuka. Kimeru like other vernacular languages in Kenya is used in the lower classes to bridge the gap between the home and the school.
According to KIE syllabus (2002), mother tongue is the first language a child is exposed to or the language of the School's catchment area. This is the language in which children first learn to express their thoughts and develop relationships with their immediate social environment. Their experience in education therefore, should provide for their mother tongue to enable them to learn and understand the values and concerns of society. The school should attempt to amplify rather than replace these experiences. The general objectives of teaching mother tongue in lower primary school, according to K.I.E (2002) syllabus are:

1) To develop sufficient command of vocabulary and sentence patterns to enable the learners use mother tongue at home, at school and in the community.

2) To acquire pre-reading, literacy and numeracy skills in mother tongue.

3) To acquire reading and writing skills.

3) To develop a positive attitude towards own culture and those of others and to acquire basic ideas on HIV/AIDS, children’s rights and other emerging issues such as technology, the environment, integrity education and gender responsiveness.

Ironically, the child is expected to acquire all the above skills in the first three years of education. It is against this background that this study set out to assess the levels of Kimeru proficiency among primary school pupils in Meru Central District.
1.2 Statement of the Problem

A close relationship is seen to exist not only between language and communication but also between language and thought. Proficiency in a language therefore, helps in clear thought processes, decision making and critical thinking (Crystal 1994). In Kenya however, a big portion of Kenyan population does not manage to attain meaningful proficiency levels through the school system either in L1 or in English (Muthwii 2004). Consequently, many are not able to participate meaningfully in important discourses, processes and thoughts. The child’s first language, knowledge and skill are not developed or nurtured in Kenyan schools because the L1 is discouraged in schools in the upper primary classes. Therefore, Kimeru like other L1s in Kenya has continued to suffer neglect although it is the most comprehensive expression of the children’s cultural heritage, comprising moral and religious values.

Linguistic proficiency especially in English is a major issue in linguistic studies in Kenya. Studies on Kenyan languages and especially those of Mt. Kenya region are seen in works by Mutahi (1997), Hein and Mohly (1980), Mbaabu (1996), Whiteley (1974), Mathooko (2004) and Ntarara (2006). However, the above studies have focused on issues such as history and classification of the dialects in the region and speech accommodation. There are hardly any studies that focus on vernacular proficiency though they are the most threatened by multilingual situation in Kenya, urbanization, education, technology and migration. Since children’s ideas and thoughts are in their mother tongue and will continue to be so long after they have learnt to speak in English; to be encouraged to think for themselves, the children must be helped to do so in their own language.
Furthermore, there have been mounting complaints about the inability of pupils in Kenya primary school classes to read in English (Maina 1991) and poor reading ability among school leavers (Kirigia 1995, Chege 1999). The inability of the pupils to read in English in their early years is attributed to a number of factors (Mberia 2002). Among these factors is that first language literacy skills are not yet fully developed and therefore the consequent lack of background skills to bring to the task of learning to read English as a second language. It is out of this concern that this study sought to assess the levels of Kimeru proficiency among primary school pupils in Meru central district, the factors contributing to these proficiency levels, their effect on language choice/use and the impact to the task of learning other languages.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The study was guided by the following objectives:-

1) To assess the levels of Kimeru proficiency among primary school pupils in Meru Central District.

2) To identify the factors influencing Kimeru proficiency among primary school pupils in Meru Central District.

3) To describe the effects of the prevailing Kimeru proficiency levels on language choice/use in Meru Central District.

4) To describe the impact of the prevailing Kimeru proficiency levels among primary school pupils to the task of learning other languages.
1.4 **Research Questions.**

The study sought to answer the following research questions:-

1) What is the level of Kimeru proficiency among primary school pupils in Meru Central District?

2) What are the factors influencing Kimeru proficiency among primary school pupils in Meru Central District?

3) What is the effect of the prevailing Kimeru proficiency on language choice/use in Meru Central District?

4) What is the impact of the prevailing Kimeru proficiency among primary school pupils to the task of learning other languages?

1.5 **Research Assumptions**

The research was based on the following assumptions:

1) There are low levels of Kimeru proficiency among primary school pupils.

2) There are many factors affecting Kimeru proficiency levels among primary school pupils.

3) Due to low levels of Kimeru proficiency, primary school pupils result to borrowing, code switching and code mixing in their language use.

4) Due to low Kimeru proficiency levels, primary school pupils have difficulties learning other languages.
1.6 Justification and Significance

Indigenous languages like Kimeru are neglected in Kenya by not being given status in any major public domain. Since proficiency in a language is tied to its vitality and survival, a study of Kimeru proficiency may help to understand its status. In addition, given that language is tied to identity and culture, this study may help in formulation of policies on development, promotion and maintenance of Kimeru and other indigenous languages in Kenya.

Moreover, many linguistic studies have been done on English language proficiency (Maina 1991, Kirigia 1995, Chege 1999, Mberia 2002). However, little attention has been given to proficiency levels in Kimeru. This study set out to fill that gap. At the same time, given the role of L1 in a bilingual set up and education, an assessment of Kimeru proficiency among primary school pupils may help in re-evaluation of policies on language and education in Kenya. Furthermore, a study of Kimeru proficiency would help in gaining insight into MT language proficiency problems and help in language planning and education policies.

Finally, it is hoped that this study will stimulate interest and more studies will be done on general linguistic proficiency levels in other L1s in Kenya and specific linguistic domains. The study may also lead to comparative studies on L1 and L2 proficiency levels in different languages in Kenya.
1.7 **Scope and Limitations.**

The study focused on the assessment of Kimeru proficiency levels among primary school pupils in Meru Central District. The study was done in selected primary schools in the district, drawn from all divisions. The respondents included teachers and pupils in primary schools in Meru Central. Meru Central District being a homogenous rural district, it was expected that the findings would be used to draw generalizations in other Meru districts and dialects.

This research only focused on class four pupils in selected public primary schools because they had just stopped learning Kimeru at school. Though there were many dialects in Kimeru, proficiency was assessed in only Imenti dialect. Imenti dialect is considered the standard dialect for the entire Meru region and because of this, the bible translation for the larger Meru community was done in it. It is also the dialect used as the medium of instruction in the formative years of schooling in the region (Gordon 2005, Mathooko 2005, Mbaabu 1996)
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1.0 Introduction

This chapter deals with literature review related to this study and the theoretical framework upon which it is based. The literature review examines the concept of linguistic proficiency, literacy perspectives in Kenya, the importance of mother tongue learning, the relationship between L1 proficiency and second language learning, linguistic proficiency and language maintenance/shift and finally language education policy in Kenya. In the theoretical framework, Cummins Linguistic Proficiency Theory, the Psychological View of Literacy and Sociolinguistic Theory of Language are reviewed.

2.1.1 The Concept of Linguistic Proficiency

Language proficiency or linguistic proficiency is the ability of an individual to speak or perform in an acquired language. As theories vary among pedagogues as what constitutes proficiency, there is little consistency as to how different organisations classify it (Wikipedia). However, most theories view proficiency as involving literacy and communicative competence.

Baker observes that the term literacy is commonly used but what precisely is meant by it is neither simple nor uncontroversial (Baker, 2001). He identifies three kinds of definition: functional skills, construction of meaning and socio-cultural approaches. Furthermore, learning a language is seen as learning how to communicate or developing what has been
referred to as communicative competence (Hymes 1972). Referring to Canale and Swain (1980), Richard and Rodgen (1986) quoted in Groenewegan (2008), describe communicative competence as involving:

1) Grammatical competence, which refers to knowledge of grammar.

2) Sociolinguistic competence which refers to an understanding of the social context in which communication takes place.

3) Discourse competence which refers to an understanding of a whole message or text.

4) Strategic competence which refers to the strategies communicators employ to keep communication going.

Moreover, fluency and language competence are generally recognized as being related. In predominant frameworks in the United States, proficient speakers demonstrate both accuracy and fluency and use a variety of discourse strategies. In this study proficiency was treated as not only the ability to speak fluently in a language but also read and write accurately in it. To obtain data for the study Kimeru proficiency tests were administered to class four pupils to assess their writing, reading and speaking proficiency. In assessing proficiency levels in English Groenewegan (2008), identifies three levels of linguistic proficiency; below minimum competence level, minimum competence level and desired proficiency levels. This study adopted this model in describing pupils' proficiency levels in various linguistic skills.
2.1.2 Literacy Perspectives in Kenya.

Conceptions about what is literate behavior have varied over time and place. However, the critical role that literacy plays in everyday lives of people in Kenya as elsewhere in World is indisputable (Bunyi 2008). There are different perspectives from which to approach an understanding of the term literacy. Resnick and Resnick (1991) take a historical approach of literacy and demonstrate that views about what is regarded as literate behavior have varied over time and differed from one context to another both within society and among societies. They argue that in the 18th century Europe and North America, high levels of literacy were restricted to a small elite group and that for the general public the ability to write one’s name was adequate proof of literacy.

In 1960’s, the focus of literacy in Kenya was on basic literacy. Getting the large number of illiterate people reading and writing was the goal of literacy campaigns (Republic of Kenya 1965). Currently, policy pronouncements emphasize functional literacy. However operationalization of functional literacy has not been achieved and practice has continued to reflect a basic literacy approach (Macharia, Kebathi, & Righs 2001). In most schools in Kenya, the predominant approach to literacy is the functional skills type with its attendant emphasis on test and examinations (KNEC 1994; Muthwii 2002 b). It is an approach where the learners are given the technical skills necessary to read and write through activities such as learning vocabulary, grammar and composition. They are tested on how well they understand or comprehend information on the printed word (KNEC 1994).

A culture of measuring national literacy rate has taken root with International development and education goals such as: Education for all (EFA) and the Millennium Development
Goals (MDGs) paying attention to literacy (Bunyi 2008). In Kenya, literacy surveys and National census are the two literacy- measuring strategies used. Literacy rates in Kenya have risen steadily from 46 percent in 1976 to 73.7 percent in 2000 (MOEST 2003). According to the Kenya National Literacy Surveys (KNALS) report (2007), the country has a national adult literacy rate of 61 percent and a numeracy rate of 64 percent. The critical finding of the study was that on average 38.5 percent (7.8 million) of the Kenyan adult population was illiterate, which was a major challenge, given the central role literacy plays in national development and the empowerment of an individual to have a fulfilling life. Another critical finding was that the age cohort of 15 to 19 years recorded a literacy rate of 69.1 percent. This implies within this age group 29.9% were illiterate and could not read or write in English, Kiswahili or their Mother tongue. This was a worrying finding since the youth form bulk of the population.

The current study assessed literacy levels among standard four pupils. Most children at this level were at the age group of 8 to 12 years. Given the prevailing school transition levels in Kenya, the findings may help to predict future literacy levels in the county.

2.1.3 The Importance of Mother tongue Learning.

There is growing evidence from across Africa, Latin America and Asia that mother tongue based multilingual education is the most appropriate solution for children who do not use national or international languages in their home life (Benson, 2006). Children build a strong conceptual picture of the world and academic concepts through a language they understand first and later on transfer that to a second or third language (Cummins and Krashen 1986). According to Cummins linguistic interdependence principle: to the extent
that instruction is effective in promoting proficiency in Lx transfer of this proficiency to Ly will occur provided there is adequate exposure to Ly (either in school or environment) and adequate motivation to learn Ly (Cummins 1981, p.29). According to this principle, pupils who have not acquired desired proficiency levels in their MT have limited background skills to bring to the task of learning a second language.

In Kenya, despite considerable linguistic diversity, the country is increasingly multilingual with Kenyans tending towards varying degree, of proficiency in Mother tongue, Kiswahili and English (Muthwii 2002). The language policy in Kenya encompasses a bilingual approach in education where the child’s mother tongue (or the language of catchment area) is used as the language of instruction in lower primary classes while English and Kiswahili are taught as subjects (Gachathi 1976). In the upper classes, English takes over as the language of instruction while Kiswahili is taught as a subject. Mother tongue is dropped from the school system and MT is expected to be acquired at home and in the neighborhood.

According to Muthwii (2002), it could be argued that the issue of language use in general and language in education in particular, inculcates in children the shallow, poorly considered idea that MT languages are inferior to English. The children therefore imagine that there is no education of any significance that can come through the MT and fail to appreciate its potential in many ways. The pupils’ interest in MT therefore, remains perfunctory, their knowledge of it, superficial and stunted. This is contrary to findings of international research that show bilingual education starting in learners’ mother tongue can provide many pedagogical and linguistic advantages (Baker 2000, Cummins 2000). This
study assessed Kimeru proficiency levels among primary school pupils in Meru Central District and described its impact to the task of learning other languages given the role of mother tongue in second language acquisition.

2.1.4 L₁ Proficiency and Second language Learning.

Many studies have been done to find out the relationship between L₁ and second language learning. According to Swain (1983), the skills most basic to academic progress and achievement such as the ability to master speech as a symbolic system, to generalize and abstract are most easily learnt in L₁. As these skills are cross-lingual, they can easily be applied to L₂ as well. Thus, it is easier to learn to read in L₁ and then apply this skill to L₂ than to learn to speak and read L₂ simultaneously. Once the reading skill is automated through L₁ more attention can be paid to acquisition of L₂.

Cummins (1984) argues that bilingualism does not have detrimental effects on language skills, provided that first-language proficiency is adequately supported. Children from ethnic minority groups should receive instruction in the mother tongue in order to develop adequate cognitive language skills, before full weight is given to second language acquisition in school. The skills developed in the mother tongue will also support the acquisition of academic and literacy related skills in the second language. Then and only then, will bilingualism be beneficial for these children.

According to the threshold -hypothesis developed by Cummins (1978), a child needs to develop a certain levels of proficiency or competence in the first or second language to take advantage of the benefits of bilingualism. According to this hypothesis, bilingual
education may provide the greatest support for bilingual learners including linguistic, conceptual and learned knowledge. Additive bilingualism has positive consequences for metalinguistic development, learning of additional languages and more generally for learners’ verbal cognitive operations.

The threshold hypothesis also suggests that both languages must be given an opportunity to develop if there is to be a long-term positive impact. Additive bilingualism brings with it many positive attributes that promote learners linguistic and academic development. An assessment of the levels of Kimeru proficiency among primary school pupils therefore, helped to gauge their readiness to learn English. This is because English is taught from lower primary school and takes over as language of instruction in upper primary. Since Kenya is a multilingual country, this study helped to assess if Kenyans are benefiting from bilingualism and the impact of prevailing language policy on language learning and development.

2.1.5 Linguistic Proficiency and Language Maintenance/Shift

Speakers who routinely use more than one language may not use either of their languages in ways, which are exactly like that of a monolingual speaker. As a speaker uses his/her L2 frequently and becomes proficient or even dominant in it, some aspects of L1 can become subject to L2 influence or deteriorate. According to Schmiel and Kopke (2007), L1 attrition is governed by two factors; the presence and development of the L2 system on one hand and the diminished exposure and use of L1 on the other. Like second language acquisition (SLA), first language acquisition is mediated by a number of external factors such as exposure and use, attitude and motivation (Schmid 2002). In the absence of favorable
factors, L1 acquisition and proficiency is stunted. This may lead to L1 attrition. Lambart (1980) observes that many ethnic minority groups are forced to shift from their ethnic language towards a national language by national education policies and various social pressures. The minority language as non-prestigious language cannot be maintained adequately and it may be subtracted from bilingual proficiency.

In many bilingual communities more and more speakers use the majority language in domains where they spoke the minority language (Appel & Musyken 1987). They adopt the majority language as a regular vehicle of communication because they expect that speaking that language gives better chances for upward social mobility and economic success. In Kenya, there is enormous pressure to learn English since it is the language of education and government. Unfortunately, a big portion of Kenyan population does not attain meaningful proficiency in it (Muthwii 2004). Consequently, they are not able to participate meaningfully in the important discourses and thoughts, which are by and large expressed in a foreign tongue. When a language is reduced in its function which happens in case of shift towards the majority language, generally speakers will become less proficient in it (Lambert 1980).

Language shift linked with language loss will finally result to language death (Appel & Musyken 1987). If the shift is towards the majority language, this language seems to conquer domain after domain via the intermediate stage of bilingual language use. When the minority language (L1) is spoken in fewer domains its value decreases. This in turn will lessen the motivation of younger people to learn and use it. A study of Kimeru proficiency among primary school pupils would help to describe the proficiency and infer the status of
the language in terms of development, maintenance, survival and vitality. This is because the more vitality a linguistic group has; the more likely it will survive and thrive as a collective entity in inter-group context. When children have low proficiency in their L1, it becomes difficult to maintain the language.

2.1.6 Language Policy in Kenya’s Education System.

At the introduction of print literacy in Kenya during the colonial period, the language policy guiding education practice revolved around three languages namely; English, Kiswahili and the learners first language (Muthwii 2002). Most agencies involved in education at the time were divided on the role of indigenous languages in helping learners to acquire literacy (Gorman 1974). The missionaries also boosted local languages by according them orthography. Musau (2002) identifies the decision of the Phelps Stoke Commission of 1924 as the crucial point that sorted out the use of language in Kenya. While recommending the use of first language as language of instruction (LOI), the commission argued for the teaching of English as a second language after the mastery of writing and reading in L1 but that Kiswahili should cease to be taught except in the coastal area where it was the vernacular.

At independence when the government took over the mandate to provide education, the strong rationalization that all learners needed to learn in English to produce skilled labour force to run the government and industry was already in force (Mbaabu 1996). The Ominde Commission of 1964 strengthened the position and institutionalized English as the LOI in all schools from class one. English became the nation’s official language while Kiswahili was recommended as a subject in primary schools. Mother tongue was relegated to only verbal communication in school. Kenyan’s language policy has been reviewed
several times since independence in 1963. The Gachathi commission of 1974 recommended mother tongue as LO1 in lower primary schools and English as a subject in lower primary and LO1 in upper primary classes, secondary and tertiary education. The Mackay report of 1984 and the Koech report of 1999 recommended maintenance of status quo.

In all the reviews done in Kenya, MTS have been neglected. Even when the MT is given some role in the school system, there are a number of unresolved contradictions between the policy of encouraging the child’s first language as LO1 in the lower primary school and the reality as the child progresses through the education system where English completely dominates the indigenous language. The first language is virtually excluded from the syllabus after lower primary school (Muthwii 2004). As Lambert (1980) observes; many minority ethnic groups are forced to shift from their ethnic languages by national education policies and various social pressures. The minority language as a non-prestigious language cannot be maintained adequately. When a language is reduced in its functions, which happens in case of shift towards the majority language, generally the speakers will become less proficient in it.

Given the above language policy in Kenya, this study sought to find out the levels of Kimeru proficiency among primary school pupils. This is because apart from imparting knowledge, education influences learners’ attitudes and behaviour. Furthermore, pupils who have not fully acquired literacy skills in their L1 have limited background skills to bring to the task of learning to read English (Huck 1988)
2.2.0 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.2.1 Cummins Linguistic Proficiency Theory

Cummins (1984 and 2000) argues for a Common Underlying Proficiency (CUP) or Interdependence Hypotheses in which cross-lingual proficiencies can promote the development of cognitive academic skills. There are many aspects of language that are common. For example, all languages have ways of denoting time, of indicating actions and actors. Languages do this with different vocabularies and often with different grammars, but all languages are rule governed. Part of the process of language acquisition involves the discovery and application of these rules. Cummins states that cognitive and literacy skills established in the mother tongue or L1 will transfer across languages. This is often presented visually as two icebergs representing the two languages, which overlap and share, underneath the waterline, common underlying proficiency or operating system. Both languages are outwardly distinct but are supported by shared concepts and knowledge derived from the cognitive and linguistic abilities of the learner.

![Diagram of Common Underlying Proficiency](CUMMINS_1984)

Figure 1.0 Common underlying Proficiency /Interdependence hypothesis

(CUMMINS 1984)
Cummins' representation also demonstrates the view of how linguistic knowledge is stored in the brain. One way of thinking of this is to consider bilingual speakers as having separately stored proficiencies in each language, and this may include pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar in the working memory, which in turn have access to long-term memory storage that is not language specific. In other words, the use of first or second language is informed by the working memory but the concepts are stored as underlying proficiency.

Cummins also describes language proficiency in terms of surface and deeper levels of thinking skills. He argues that the deeper levels of cognitive processing such as analysis, synthesis and education are necessary to academic progress. He distinguishes these aspects of proficiency from what he describes as more explicit or superficial realization of linguistic and cognitive processing.

Figure 2.0. BICS/CALP (Cummins 1984)
Cummins proposes a minimum threshold of first language cognitive/academic development necessary for success in second language learning. Cummins also suggests that if the threshold of cognitive proficiency is not achieved, the learner may have difficulties achieving bilingual proficiency. Therefore, continued development in the first language would help second language learners in their learning of the second language. It is important that new input is connected to the learners’ previous knowledge, including linguistic, conceptual and learned knowledge. So the continued support of the first language whilst learning the second language would be beneficial for cognitive development as well as for other socio-cultural reasons.

This study analyzed and described Kimeru proficiency and deduced its effect on language choice and second language learning within Cummins linguistic interdependence hypothesis. If the pupils had not fully acquired proficiency in Kimeru, then, they had limited background skills to bring to the task of learning a second language. Based on Cummins linguistic proficiency theory, the results of the study may help in explaining the low proficiency levels in English language among primary school pupils in Kenya.

2.2.2. The psychological view of literacy.

Under the psychological view, literacy is seen as the possession of psycholinguistic skills that enable one to handle symbolic information. Such skills include: reading, writing, communication skills, and what Wells (1989), has called literate thinking skills which refer to using language deliberately as a tool for thinking. Within this view, Cambourne (1998) has identified full literacy skills as: critical thinking, problem solving and reflection. Elaborating on what full literacy under the psychological view of literacy means, wells
(1991) makes distinctions among the processes involved in literate behavior and identifies four levels of literacy within an overall model. The four levels are:

1) Performative level which is the level of decoding and encoding text and doing simple arithmetic reading, writing, and numeracy.
2) Functional level where literacy refers to interpersonal communication and ability to use reading, writing and calculation skills to carry out everyday tasks in one’s society that require possession of such skills.
3) Information level where the emphasis is on the role of literacy in the communication of knowledge especially in the learning of different subjects in school. Reading for information is emphasized.
4) Epistemic level which refers to the psychological effect of literacy where reading and writing are seen to have the capacity to bring about changes in the mental lives of individuals and by extension, of the society to which they belong.

In this study, literacy was defined as the ability to listen, speak, read and write appropriately in Kimeru in a variety of contexts. The study analyzed and described Kimeru proficiency levels based on a psychological view of literacy. Data was mostly collected on performative and functional levels of literacy. Pupils’ proficiency was assessed on their ability to speak, read and write in Kimeru.

2.2.3 Sociolinguistic Theory of Language Planning.

Language planning is in fact part of or the factual realization of language policy. A government adopts a certain policy with regard to the languages spoken in the nation and will try to carry it out in form of language planning (Appel & Musyken 1987). There are different views on the social nature of language. This work was based on the sociolinguistic theory of language planning. The sociolinguistic theory is based on two principles:

1) All known languages are symbolic systems of equal native value.
2) Language planning should not only deal with the technical aspects of languages, but also with social aspects.

Haugen (1971), who adheres to this principle states that the rich diversity of human languages and dialects is part of human condition. In this view, primitive languages do not exist either. Of course some language lack a vocabulary necessary for talking about certain aspects of modern life in industrialized societies but that does not make them primitive. Furthermore, vocabularies turn out to be easily expandable. In the second principle of sociolinguistic theory of language planning, social nature of language is stressed. Languages are produced by people in their daily, social interactions. They have different social values, and people’s identities are strongly linked to the language they speak.

This study analyzed and described Kimeru proficiency levels and the factors influencing them from a sociolinguistic perspective. In the study, the role of Kimeru language proficiency was stressed since it is the most comprehensive expression of the children’s cultural heritage comprising moral and religious values. Language is not only an instrument for communication of messages but also the cultural norms and values of a group are transmitted by it (Giles et al 1977). The results of the study would help to understand if all languages are being treated as symbolic systems of equal native value and if Kimeru proficiency was being given attention in the education system. This is because education is very important with respect to language maintenance. If children’s proficiency in their L1 is fostered at school and they learn to read and write in it, this will contribute to its maintenance (Appel & Musyken 1987).
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction
This chapter discusses the methodological procedures undertaken in order to carry out the study. It includes information about research design, area of study, target population, research instruments, sampling procedures, validity and reliability, data collection procedures and analysis.

3.2 Research Design
This study adopted a descriptive research design. Kerlinger (1969) quoted in Kisulu and Tromp (2006), points out that descriptive studies are not only restricted to fact-findings, but may often result in the formulation of important principles of knowledge and solution to significant problems. They are more than just a collection of data. They involve measurement, classification, analysis, comparison and interpretation of data. This design was appropriate for assessing the levels of Kimeru proficiency, describing factors affecting these levels, language choice/use and the impact to the task of learning other languages.

3.3 Area of Study
The study was conducted in Meru Central District of Eastern Province in Kenya. The residents of this area are native Kimeru speakers of Imenti dialect. Imenti dialect is considered the standard for the entire Meru region. It is the dialect used for Bible translation for the larger Meru community and used as a medium of instruction in the formative years of schooling in the region (Mathooko 2005, Mbaabu 1996).
3.4 Target Population

The target population for the study was twenty teachers from both private and public primary schools and thirty standard four pupils from public primary schools in Meru Central District. Milroy (1987) observes that large samples are not necessary for linguistic surveys because they tend to be redundant, bringing data handling problems with diminishing analytical returns.

3.5 Sampling Procedures

The study used purposive sampling procedure whose underlying principle involves identifying in advance the type of speakers to be studied and then seeking the quota of the speakers who fit the specified categories. In this study, Primary schools in Meru Central district were arranged in groups of public and private schools. Three public primary schools which teach Kimeru in lower classes were purposively picked while two were picked among private schools. In each public school selected, four teachers handling lower classes were involved and all class four pupils while four teachers were sampled from each private school. Later, the compositions from each public school were arranged according to sex of the pupils, five girls and five boys were randomly picked for further assessment in speaking, reading and focused group discussion.

3.6 Research Instruments

The research instruments used in the study were questionnaires for teachers, Kimeru proficiency tests and focused group discussions for pupils. Proficiency tests were given as an instrument to assess proficiency levels in different skills while the questionnaire was administered to teachers as a complementary data collection instrument.
3.7 Validity and Reliability.

Palton (2001), states that validity and reliability are two factors which any qualitative researcher should be concerned about while designing a study, analyzing results and judging the quality of the study.

3.7.1 Validity

A language test is said to have content validity if its content constitutes a sample of language skills and structures it is concerned with. To ensure validity in the Kimeru proficiency tests, the researcher obtained the skills and linguistic structures that are meant to be covered in MT according to KIE (2002) syllabus. This provided the basis for selection of items to be included in the tests and aided in developing norms for different language skills.

To enhance validity of the questionnaire and focused group discussions, the researcher sought advice from the supervisors and peers on validity and relevance of the questions to the topic of the study. Comments and suggestions raised by lecturers during the proposal presentation were also incorporated in formulating the final questionnaire.

3.7.2 Reliability

A test is said to be reliable if it measures consistently what it is meant to measure. Reliability of a test ensures that the scores obtained by any given candidate in any given test are not spurious (Ochieng, 2003). In this study, proficiency tests were given to a small group of pupils who were not part of the study for pre-testing. The responses elicited helped the researcher to restructure the questions to enhance reliability.
3.8 Data Collection Procedures.

The data for the study was obtained by administering Kimeru proficiency tests to pupils to obtain data on writing, reading and speaking proficiency. Questionnaires were administered to teachers to collect data on factors influencing Kimeru proficiency, the effect of Kimeru proficiency on language use and teachers' views on MT. Views from pupils on their MT and their language practices were obtained through focused group discussions.

3.9 Data Presentation and Analysis.

The collected data was coded and categorized manually by the researcher. The coding was according to Kimeru proficiency test results and questionnaire feedback. Data was then captured and analyzed using the statistical package for social science (SPSS) version of 10.0 program. Finally, the researcher presented and described data using tables, frequencies, percentages and charts.
CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION.

4.1 Introduction

This chapter covers the analysis and discussion of data collected with the aim of establishing the levels of Kimeru proficiency among primary school pupils in Meru Central District, the factors influencing the proficiency levels, the effects of the prevailing levels on language choice/use and its impact to the task of learning other languages.

4.2 DATA PRESENTATION.

To obtain data on Kimeru proficiency levels, tests were administered to pupils in order to obtain data on writing, reading and speaking proficiency. Questionnaires were used to collect data on factors influencing Kimeru proficiency, the effects of Kimeru proficiency on language choice and teachers views on MT. Below is a presentation of data collected:

4.2.1. Proficiency Levels in Reading Skills.

A sample of thirty pupils from three public primary schools was subjected to the reading test. In the test pupils were given a Kimeru passage to read silently for comprehension. They were later required to read it aloud and were tape recorded by the researcher. Assessment was based on the general objectives of teaching MT in lower primary school according to K.I.E (2002) syllabus and the set objective on reading for standard three. Assessment and grading was done by the researcher and a panel of three public primary school teachers handling lower primary schools classes. From the MT reading test given, 50 percent of pupils failed to demonstrate minimum competence level while only 13 percent had desired competence level.
Table 4.1. Proficiency levels in reading skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Below minimum competence level</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum competence level</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>36.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desired competence level</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2.2 Proficiency levels in writing skills.

All standard four pupils in the schools sampled were given the writing test. The researcher then sampled ten students’ compositions in every school for marking and analysis. The marking and analysis was done by the researcher and a panel of three primary school teachers handling Kimeru in lower primary classes. Learners were required to write a story in Kimeru about the day they would never forget. Based on the set objectives for teaching MT according to K.I.E (2002), the researcher developed norms for different competence levels in writing.

Table 4.2. Proficiency levels in writing skills.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Below minimum level</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum level</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desired level</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.2.3 Proficiency Levels in Speaking Skills

Just like the reading skill, a sample of thirty pupils was subjected to the speaking test. Proficiency in speaking was tested by giving an oral task. Assessment was based on the set objectives on speaking for standard three pupils according to K.I.E (2002) syllabus. Based on the set objectives, the researcher developed norms for different competence levels that were used by the researcher and a panel of primary school teachers to assess the pupils.

Table 4.3. Proficiency in speaking skills.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competence Level</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Below minimum competence level</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum competence level</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desired competence level</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2.4 Feedback from Questionnaire for Teachers.

Questionnaires were administered to primary school teachers to collect data on factors influencing Kimeru proficiency, the effect of Kimeru proficiency on language choice/use and teachers’ views on Kimeru. The researcher administered the questionnaire to a sample of twenty teachers. They were administered in the morning and collected later in the afternoon. This ensured that all the sample respondents filled the questionnaires.

4.2.4.1 Factors Influencing Kimeru Proficiency.

When asked to identify factors influencing Kimeru proficiency (mastery) among pupils, the respondents identified several factors.
Table 4.4. Factors Influencing Kimeru Proficiency.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pupils’ background</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community/peers influence</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language used by teacher</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education policy</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exposure to written materials</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2.4.2 Effects of Kimeru Proficiency on Language Choice/Use

When asked whether Kimeru proficiency influences language use 95% of the respondents answered in the affirmative while 5% in the negative.

The respondents identified several effects of Kimeru proficiency on language choice/use.

4.5. Shows effects of Kimeru proficiency on language choice/use.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Affects pronunciation</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influences thinking</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affects writing</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduces reading ability</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affects speaking</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.1.4.3. Teachers’ views on Kimeru

The researcher sought teachers’ opinion on whether Kimeru should be taught and why. 65 percent of the respondents supported the teaching of Kimeru while 35% opposed it. The respondents gave several factors for and against the teaching of Kimeru.

Table 4.6a. Shows Reasons for Teaching Kimeru.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It’s local language/Mother tongue</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supports other languages</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preserve culture/heritage</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides background for education</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enables effective communication</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s government policy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.6b. Shows Reasons against Teaching Kimeru.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learners are from different ethnic background</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s not examinable</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To reduce mother tongue interference</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3 Data Analysis and Discussion

This section contains the analysis and discussion of data collected with the aim of establishing the levels of Kimeru proficiency among primary school pupils in Meru Central
District, the factors influencing the proficiency levels, the effects of the prevailing levels on language choice/use and its impact to the task of learning other languages.

4.3.1 Kimeru Proficiency Levels Among Primary School Pupils.

To obtain data, Kimeru proficiency tests were administered to class four pupils to assess their writing, reading and speaking skills in Kimeru. The tests were administered to a sample of thirty standard four pupils from three public primary schools in Meru Central District. Performance in the tests was analyzed using percentage intervals and the scores were graded according to three levels of competence as follows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competence level</th>
<th>Marks in percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Below minimum competence level</td>
<td>49 % and below</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum competence level</td>
<td>50-69 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desired competence level</td>
<td>70 % and above</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


As indicated in the table above, pupils who performed below the minimum competence level had a mark of 49 percent and below. Minimum competence level was between 50 and 69 percent while pupils who scored 70 percent and above were regarded to have attained the desired competence level

4.3.1.1. Assessment of Writing Skills

Assessment was based on the general objectives of teaching MT in lower primary school according to K.I.E (2002) syllabus and the set objectives for standard three
According to the syllabus, learners are expected to acquire writing skills in MT which include: ability to produce clear and legible joined script and writing own stories based on familiar experiences. Based on the set objectives, the researcher developed norms for different competence levels in writing. Pupils were asked to write a story in Kimeru about the day they would never forget. Learners, who had attained minimum competence level, were expected to write compositions using joined script, produce correctly punctuated pieces of writing, spell correctly and express their ideas in simple narrative. Pupils, who possessed desired competence level demonstrated not only the above skills but also wrote with ease, used appropriate tenses and had sufficient sentence patterns in Kimeru. Pupils who scored below minimum competence level were unable to express their ideas in simple narrative and demonstrated lack of sufficient vocabulary and sentence patterns in Kimeru.

Results from tests assessing writing skill showed low acquisition of the skills in Kimeru. Many pupils were unable to express their ideas in simple narrative. From the writing test given, 80 percent of the pupils failed to achieve the minimum competence level, 10 percent demonstrated minimum competence level while only 10 percent had achieved the desired competence level.

**Table 4.8: Proficiency Levels in Writing Skills**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Below minimum competence level</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum competence level</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desired competence level</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
According to Wells (1986), a substantial part of pupils learning is dependent on their ability to cope with written language. Therefore pupils who have not mastered the writing skill will have difficulties in learning. Furthermore, research in L2 acquisitions shows that if a child masters the first language, then learning another language becomes less problematic in that habits of speech such as writing can be transferred across languages (Cummins 1981). According to Cummins, there is an underlying cognitive/academic proficiency common to languages and this enables transfer of literacy related skills across languages.

Therefore, given the above writing proficiency levels in Kimeru, there is need to gauge the readiness of pupils to use English as LOI from standard four. This is because a large group (80 percent) had not achieved minimum writing proficiency level in Kimeru. Under the psychological view of literacy, literacy is seen as the possession of psychological skills that enable the learner to handle symbolic information. According to this view, learning to write is learning a system of symbols. One must learn the orthography and linguistic structure of a language in order to write effectively. Hence, mother tongue education in the lower primary classes offers the best introduction to literacy that eventually becomes useful in the acquisition of English as a second language (Hakuta 1986). Writing for communication presupposes that the learner has sufficient vocabulary to draw from in terms of words, that when put together in sentences, phrases or clauses will bring out the intended usage or meaning. In this study, 80 percent of the pupils had not attained minimum writing skills in Kimeru. This was bound to affect their writing skill not only in Kimeru but also other languages.
4.3.1.2 Assessment of Reading Skills.

Assessment was based on the general objectives of teaching MT in lower primary school according to K.I.E (2002) syllabus and the set objectives on reading for standard three. Pupils were given a Kimeru passage to read for comprehension. Then, they were required to read it loudly and tape recorded. According to the syllabus, learners are expected to acquire pre-reading and reading skills in MT which include ability to read loudly, fluently and with increased confidence from a range of graded reading materials. Based on the set objectives, the researcher developed norms for the different competence levels in reading. Learners who had minimum competence levels were expected to read the passage loudly without pointing at words and with relative fluency. Pupils with desired competence level were expected to read loudly, fluently and recognize the role of punctuation in written material. Pupils with below minimum competence skills failed not only to recognize words but also phrases and punctuation.

Results from the Kimeru reading test indicated low mastery of reading skills. Many pupils lacked fluency, proper articulation and speed when reading. Many of them read hesitantly and exhibited bad reading habits like vocalizing, pointing at words, regression and moving the head while reading. From the Kimeru reading test given, 50 percent of pupils failed to demonstrate minimum competence level, 37 percent attained minimum competence level while only 13 percent had desired competence level.
Table 4.9: Proficiency Levels in Reading Skill.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Below minimum competence level</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum competence level</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>36.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desired competence level</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above findings show that a majority of the pupils had not mastered adequate proficiency skills in reading. This implies that these learners had limited background skills to bring to the task of learning English and using it as LOI. According to Swain (1983), the skills most basic to academic progress and achievement such as the ability to master speech as a symbolic system are easily learnt in LI. As these skills are cross-lingual they can easily be applied to L2 as well. Thus, it is easier to learn to read in LI and then apply this skill to L2 than learn to read L2 simultaneously. Once the reading skills is automated through L1 more attention may be paid to acquisition and reading in L2.

Since new input is connected to learners’ previous knowledge including linguistic and conceptual knowledge, pupils who have not mastered minimum reading proficiency levels in Kimeru have little skills to bring to the task of reading in L2. Moreover, Cummins (1984) argues that bilingualism does not have detrimental effects on language skills provided that first language proficiency is adequately supported. The skills such as reading, developed in Kimeru will also support the acquisition of academic and literacy related skills in the first and second language. Then and only then will bilingualism be beneficial for these children.
In this study where pupils were not proficient in Kimeru they may not benefit from bilingualism. Consequently, this should be a matter of great concern especially given the drop-out and transition rates in Kenya. Those who acquire some measure of literacy in primary school but do not proceed to secondary school run the risk of losing any literacy skills they may have acquired in the primary cycle. They cannot read meaningfully in either Kimeru or English. If the learners have not acquired basic reading skills, they cannot use language(s) fully. Ability to read is part of education for life in that we are able to read information that is important in our everyday lives (Adams 2001)

4.3.1.3 Assessment of Speaking Skills

Proficiency in speaking was assessed by giving pupils an oral task. Pupils were required to explain in detail and give directions on how a visitor (their teacher), would reach their home. Assessment was based on the set objective on speaking for standard three pupils according to K.I.E (2002) syllabus which included; the ability to give, receive and follow precise instructions and respond appropriately to a variety of instructions. Based on the set objectives, the researcher developed norms for the different competence levels in speaking. Learners who attained minimum competence level were able to converse fluently, confidently and made simple sentences verbally observing punctuation marks. Desired competence level involved speaking fluently using correct sentence structures, appropriate vocabulary and connectors and those pupils who scored below minimum competence levels were unable to express themselves verbally in Kimeru.

Results from speaking proficiency tests revealed that most pupils were fairly proficient in Kimeru. However, many demonstrated limited vocabulary to describe directions though
they were able to explain how a visitor could get to their home. From the Kimeru proficiency test, 90 percent of the pupils had attained minimum competence level, 10 percent demonstrated desired level while only 3 percent had not attained minimum level.

Table 4.10: Shows Proficiency in Speaking Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Below minimum competence level</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum competence level</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desired competence level</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Due to inadequate mastery of Kimeru vocabulary some pupils resulted to lexical borrowing from Swahili and English. According to Appel & Musyken (1987), speakers who use more than one language may not use either of the languages in ways which are exactly like that of a monolingual speaker. This was the case in this study, as many pupils resulted to code mixing and switching in their speech. This affected their proficiency in Kimeru. The proficiency exhibited by majority of the pupils in Kimeru was Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS). Cummins (1981) describes BICS as face to face interpersonal communication proficiency which is context embedded because of its face-to-face nature. For this reason, it is less demanding because a wide range of paralinguistic cues and feedback assist the language user. This was the case among the pupils sampled as most of them demonstrated limited Kimeru vocabulary and used paralinguistic features such as gestures while describing direction to their home. Nevertheless, the speaking skill was the most developed in the pupils and many were proficient enough to use Kimeru in their daily verbal communication.
4.3.2 Factors Influencing Kimeru Proficiency

In order to identify factors influencing Kimeru proficiency among primary school pupils in Meru Central District, questionnaires were administered as a complementary data collection instrument. The respondents were lower primary schools teachers in Meru Central District sampled from five schools. When asked to comment on Kimeru proficiency levels among standard four pupils, 75 percent said they were average, 15 percent said they were below average while 10 percent said they were average. This meant that many teachers viewed their pupils as possessing minimum Kimeru proficiency skills.

**Table 4.11: Teachers’ Opinion on Kimeru Proficiency among Standard Four Pupils.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Below average</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above average</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The respondents identified several factors influencing Kimeru proficiency. The factors identified included; pupils background, language used by teachers, language used with peer and the community, language policy in Kenya’s education system, exposure to written materials and motivation.
In addition, the researcher sought pupils’ opinion on their MT and the factors influencing their proficiency in Kimeru. During focused group discussions the pupils pointed out that their proficiency especially in writing and reading Kimeru is influenced by several factors. These included: Kimeru is only taught in lower primary classes, it is not examined at K.C.P.E, it is not commonly used in writing and that they are discouraged from speaking Kimeru in upper classes. Majority of the pupils saw no need for being proficient in Kimeru and preferred English because it is a gateway for success and subsequent employment opportunities. The pupils said that learning English would help them pass examinations while Kimeru was neither taught after lower classes nor examined.
According to Schmid (2002), first language acquisition is mediated by a number of external factors such as exposure and use, attitude and motivation. Therefore, apart from factors identified above, in the absence of favourable factors, L1 proficiency and acquisition is stunted. This seems to be the case in Meru Central where Kimeru was seen as an inferior language. Languages which are used for literacy only at the lower primary school in one part of the country are faced with the possibility of becoming functionally extinct as many of them are slowly but surely driven closer to extinction (Mbaabu 1996). The African culture, the wisdom, philosophy and orature they embody is fast disappearing.

Lambert (1980) observes that many ethnic minority groups are forced to shift from their ethnic languages towards a national language by national education policies and various social pressures. The MT language as a non-prestigious language cannot be maintained adequately and it may be subtracted from bilingual proficiency. If the MT is spoken in fewer domains its value decreases. If the shift is towards the majority language, this language seems to conquer domain after domain via the intermediate stage of bilingual language use. This in turn will lessen the motivation for younger people to learn it.

Kimeru is taught and used as LO1 in lower primary school to bridge the gap between the home and the school environment and abandoned thereafter. According to Muthwii (2002), it could be argued that the issue of language in general and language in education in particular, inculcates in children the shallow, poorly considered idea that MT is inferior to English. The children therefore imagine that there is no education of any significance that can come through MT. Therefore, the pupils interest in MT remain perfunctory, their knowledge of it
superficial and stunted. Attitude and motivation are therefore, major factors influencing Kimeru proficiency.

According to Adegbija (2001), a positive attitude stake in a language is a dominant factor in its maintenance. Conversely, negative attitude with respect to a particular language constitutes the precipitator of language shift. This may be indicated by the child’s proficiency levels in the language.

4.3.3. The Effects of Prevailing Kimeru Proficiency on Language Choices/ Use.

Having established that there are low levels of Kimeru proficiency among standard four pupils, the researcher sought primary school teachers’ opinion on its effect to language choice/use. When asked whether Kimeru proficiency influences language use, 95 percent of the respondents answered in the affirmative while 5% in the negative.

Table 4.12: Teachers’ Opinion on Whether Kimeru Proficiency Influences Language Use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The respondents gave several effects of Kimeru proficiency on language use/choice. They included: it affects pronunciation in other languages, influences thinking as children think in Kimeru, affects writing, reading and speaking ability in other languages.
The researcher further sought the effects of Kimeru proficiency on language choice/use from the pupils during FGDS. Most of the pupils reported that their Kimeru proficiency affected their language use. They indicated that they usually resulted to borrowing English or Swahili words. When they were not sure of the appropriate word in Kimeru, they often used code-switching and code mixing in their daily communication. Finally, from the proficiency test in both writing and speaking, it was evident that lexical borrowing partly due to insufficient command of Kimeru vocabulary and sentence patterns was very common.

To begin with, borrowing was done at the lexical level where English words were used as loan words in Kimeru; for example birthday, Monday, black, right among others.

See the sentences below from pupils' composition:

i) Muthenya juria ndari na "birthday" jwathongi mono.
*The day I had a birthday was very good

*You will walk up and find a black gate

*During my birthday there was a lot of happiness on Monday.

Kiswahili words borrowed included: sumu, mbio, sana and the phrase miaka nenda miaka rundi. For example:

i) Muthenya juria ntikorirua miaka nenda miaka rundi.

ii) Ndiraibia sauti ma agimbitaga

iii) ....yona igakua yamatuka mbio sana

Furthermore, there were cases in which English words were borrowed and domesticated / nativalized into local usage. For example

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Swahili</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thamosi</td>
<td>Thermos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti</td>
<td>Aunt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dandi</td>
<td>Daddy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anku</td>
<td>Uncle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bathinde</td>
<td>Birthday</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Considering that Meru language which belongs to the Bantu family of languages is agglutinative, pupils borrowed from English and Kiswahili vocabulary which they rendered into the agglutinative structure of Kimeru.
For example;

i) **Nitwakaribishirwe**- Swahili+Kimeru structure

(We were welcomed).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ni</th>
<th>twa</th>
<th>karib</th>
<th>i</th>
<th>shirwe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We</td>
<td>First person</td>
<td>Root of</td>
<td>inflection</td>
<td>Past complete action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plural marker</td>
<td>Karibu</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ii) **Turashinda** (we won)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tu</th>
<th>ra</th>
<th>shind</th>
<th>a</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We</td>
<td>Tense marker/</td>
<td>Root of</td>
<td>Inflection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>past</td>
<td>Shinda</td>
<td>morph</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When it came to giving direction, many pupils lacked sufficient Kimeru vocabulary to describe directions. They relied on paralinguistic cues. For example:

i) Ugeta rutere ruru. You will walk towards this side (Then points/demonstrates)

ii) Wite na njira iria itite ndera- You take the path that goes that way (then points/demonstrates).

iii) Ukethira kajira getite nderia, ugate wite na ndeeiji-You will find a path leading that way, you turn and walk this way.(Demonstrates and points at the various sides.)

From the study, borrowing took place where foreign concept existed since these concepts were non-existent in Kimeru such as Thermos and birthday. Other factors like the ‘prestige’ that English carries led to automatic borrowing even when there were words in Kimeru and the concepts existed in MT for example; uncle, aunt, Monday, black, right
among others. It was also evident that some words borrowed in English involved nativalization of the borrowed English words for instance, anku-uncle, bathinde- birthday, anti- aunt, thamosi-thermos and dadi-daddy. However, most Swahili borrowed words and some English words were used in code-mixing and code-switching.

Code-mixing occurs when speakers switch from one language to another in the course of a conversation without necessarily following an identified pattern. Musyken (2000), distinguishes three types of code-mixing patterns namely; insertion alternation and congruent lexicalization. Code switching is a result of factors such as lack of competence in a language, clarity of ideas, and identification of oneself as belonging to a certain speech community, amongst others.

Winford (2003), names three possible responses of a speech community to a language contact situation: language maintenance, language shift, or the creation of a new language. When a speech community preserves its original primary language, with only small degrees of change due to the influence of the other language(s) involved, this is language maintenance. Linguistic borrowing and convergence are common linguistic strategies in such situations.

Borrowing can range from casual (lexical items only) to intense (moderate structural borrowing). While borrowing can take place in even relatively homogenous speech communities of monolinguals, structural convergence typically occurs in multilingual communities. Of significance are genetically distinct languages in contact, where the matrix language is of one language family, and the embedded language is of an entirely
different language family. The matrix language refers here to the primary language of the
speakers engaged in borrowing or code switching, and the embedded is the secondary
language from which they are borrowing.

Typically borrowing is asymmetrical, in that it runs from the sociolinguistically dominant
language to the other. Myers-Scotton (1993) observes that as speakers acknowledge the
dominance of the secondary language, they may actually begin to shift to that language as
the matrix language of their borrowing and code switching. Code switching, with a shift in
the matrix language, promotes and also explains the process of language shift. Eventually,
speakers may use the previous primary language only in code switching. Language shift,
then, can be the result of extensive language contact, borrowing and code switching. This
can ultimately end in language death (Myers-Scotton 1993). Thus, while Winford lists
borrowing and code switching as mechanism of language maintenance, they have also been
described as mechanisms of language shift and death.

When a speech community gets into contact with a language which is seen as a symbol of a
higher standard of living, it may seek to adopt that language in order to identify with the
way of life that it indexes. This may explain the high value that pupils in Meru Central
District attached to English and their motivation to learn it instead of Kimeru. Myers-
Scotton describes speakers who only use the dying language in code switching, where the
matrix language is the invading language. These speakers probably see their identities as
“better symbolized by the invading language”. Eventually, if language loyalty to the dying
language is lost, then code switching discontinues and all that remains is the invading
language.
In addition to its communicative function, language also functions to mark its speakers as members of a particular group, or speech community. Fishman (1977) describes the symbolic nature of language, explaining that it serves to express or refer to something other than itself. In that process of symbolizing, language tends to become valued for its own sake. According to the sociolinguistic theory of language planning, the social nature of language is stressed. Languages are used by people in their daily social interactions and they are all symbolic systems of equal native value. Of course, some languages lack a vocabulary necessary for talking about certain aspects of modern life in industrialized societies but that does not mean they are primitive (Haugen 1971). Furthermore, vocabularies turn out to be easily expandable.

However, in many bilingual communities more and more speakers use the majority language in domains where they spoke the minority language (Appel & Musyken 1987). They adopt the majority language as a regular vehicle of communication because they expect that speaking that language gives better chances of upward social mobility and success. Nevertheless, if pupils' proficiency in Kimeru is fostered in school and they learn to speak, read and write in it, this will contribute to its maintenance. Therefore, primary school pupils in Meru Central District need to be encouraged to learn Kimeru. If they fail to become proficient in their Li, it will be difficult to adequately maintain the language.

### 4.3.4 The Impact of Kimeru Proficiency on the Task of Learning Other Languages.

According to K.I.E (2002) Primary School Syllabus, pupils are expected to: develop sufficient command of vocabulary and sentence patterns to enable them use mother tongue
at home, and in the community. They are also expected to acquire pre-reading, literacy and numeracy skills in mother tongue and develop reading and writing skills. However, from this study there were low levels of Kimeru proficiency as pupils, had not fully acquired most of the required skills.

Cummins and Krashen (1986) argue that children build a strong conceptual picture of the world and academic concepts through a language they understand first and later on transfer them to a second or third language. Research done in Kenya among primary school pupils has shown low mastery of literacy skills among primary school pupils. For example, the 1998 SACMEQ criteria-referenced English reading tests administered to a representative national sample indicated that 77 percent of Kenyan class six pupils had not attained the English reading mastery level deemed desirable for successful learning in standard seven (UNESCO IIEP, 2001). The inability of the pupils to read in English is attributed to a number of factors (Mberia 2002). Among these factors is that LI literacy skills are not yet fully developed and therefore the consequent lack of background skills to bring to the task of learning English as a second language.

More recent studies show that the situation has not improved. According to a research released by KNEC in June, 2010, more than half of standard three pupils (52 percent) could not read appropriately. They could not comprehend and infer meanings in short passages or use correct punctuation. When learners fail to master such concepts early, it becomes difficult for them to understand more complex ones later. Reading and writing skills cut across all subjects and failure in them leads to poor mastery of others hence low academic/cognitive development.
Since for bilingual learners, their first language knowledge is helpful in acquisition of the second language, the researcher sought the opinion of lower primary school teachers on whether Kimeru should be taught and why. 65 percent of the respondents supported the teaching of Kimeru while 35 percent opposed it.

**Table 4.13: The Percent of Teachers for and against the Teaching of Kimeru.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The respondents gave several reasons for and against the teaching of Kimeru. Reasons given for teaching Kimeru included: it is their local language/mother tongue, it supports learning other languages, to preserve cultural/heritage, provide background for education, enable effective communication and because it is a government policy to teach Kimeru in lower primary school.

On the other hand, the respondents opposed to the teaching of Kimeru pointed out that learners may be from different ethnic background, Kimeru is not examinable and not teaching Kimeru would reduce L1 interference in other languages. From the responses given it was evident that many teachers were not aware of the importance of LI literacy to the task of learning other languages. It was evident that many teachers do not see the connection between the mastery of literacy skills in Kimeru and the learning of English. It
was also evident that majority of the respondents were ignorant of language policy in education as only 5 percent mentioned it as a reason for teaching Kimeru.

Graph 3: shows reasons given for teaching Kimeru

Research in SLA shows that if a child masters the first language then learning another language becomes less problematic in that habits of speech such as listening, reading and writing can be transferred to the learning of the second language (Cummins 1981; Krashen 1985, swain 1983). Pupils in Meru Central district who demonstrated low mastery of literacy skills in Kimeru will find learning other languages quite problematic, since they have not developed adequate proficiency in habits of speech such as reading and writing.

In light of the findings that there are low levels of Kimeru proficiency among primary school pupils, and that MT literacy is crucial to second language learning; primary school
pupils in Meru Central District have a difficult task in learning other languages. However, SLA depends not only on LI literacy skills but many other factors such as motivation to learn the language, age of the learner, exposure to the language and other social, political and demographic factors.

Moreover, there are some research findings which show that transfer of skills across languages is not automatic (McLaughlin 1987). For this reason, Sprosty, (1985) is of the opinion that second language learning can be aided by effective teaching of the language arts in the first language. Sprosty goes further to say that knowledge about the transfer of skills between languages is important since teachers who are sensitive to the role played by the first language in developing second language literacy skills are in a better position to use that relationship in preparing learners to become proficient in it. Therefore, there is need to sensitize teachers in Meru Central District on the importance of teaching Kimeru and the role of L1 in learning other languages.
CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a summary of the main findings of the study, conclusions and recommendations. First, is a brief summary of the whole study with particular reference to the research problem, research methodology, results and main contributions of the study. Finally, recommendations and areas for further research are highlighted.

5.2 Summary of the Study.

The research sought to assess Kimeru proficiency levels among primary school pupils in Meru Central District. This was necessitated by the findings that a big portion of the Kenyan population does not manage to attain meaningful proficiency levels through the school system either in L1 or English (Muthwii 2004) and the inability of pupils in Kenyan primary school classes to read in English, (Maina 1991). The inability of the pupils to read in English is attributed to a number of factors (Mberia 2002). Among these factors is that L1 literacy skills are not yet fully developed and therefore the consequent lack of background skills to bring to the task of learning to read English as a second language. The study sought to assess the levels of Kimeru proficiency among primary school pupils in Meru Central District, identity the factors influencing the proficiency levels, describe the effect of prevailing levels on language choice/ use and their impact to the task of leaning other languages.

Literature was reviewed on the concept of linguistic proficiency, literacy perspectives in Kenya, the importance of mother tongue, the relationship between first language proficiency and second language learning, linguistic proficiency and language
maintenance/shift and finally language education policy in Kenya. The theoretical framework which informed and framed the study emerged from Cummins Linguistic Proficiency Theory, the psychological view of literacy and the sociological theory of language planning. The study was a descriptive survey that used Kimeru proficiency tests, questionnaires and focused group discussion to collect qualitative and quantitative data. Descriptive analysis, tables, frequencies, percentages and graphs were used in data presentation and analysis.

5.3 Summary of the Main Findings.

From the above analysis and discussion, it emerges that there are low levels of Kimeru proficiency among primary schools pupils in Meru Central District. To a large degree, the objectives set for MT education in lower primary schools are not attained. Standard four pupils had not developed sufficient literacy skills in Kimeru. This may partly be attributed to the transitional model of bilingualism in Kenya’s education system where pupils learn in their mother tongue in class 1-3 and switch to English in upper classes. As many pupils and teachers pointed out there was little motivation to learn Kimeru because it’s not taught after lower primary school.

McLaughlin (1985) noted that the major problem of the transitional model of bilingual education is that there is a tendency to emphasize English at the expense of the first language. Instead of using cognitive and linguistic development in the first language such as Kimeru for later development in the second language, many programmes in this bilingual model give superficial attention to mother tongue instruction. Sometimes children are exited into L2 medium of instruction before they have mastered enough of the L1 to
enable them access the curriculum. This may account for the poor performance in English proficiency tests done among primary school pupils (UNESCO IIEP, 2001).

In most of the schools sampled many teachers reported that they mixed languages when teaching lower classes. This therefore implies that the policy on LOI is not fully implemented. At the same time, given the role of English as the official language and language of instruction associated with success, power, prestige, progress and achievement, Kimeru is neglected and there is little motivation to learn it. However, given that the first language enhances meta-linguistic skills and development of proficiency in the second language, there is need to develop sufficient Kimeru literacy skills in the early years of schooling.

A minimum threshold needs to be developed in L1 if there are to be any benefits from bilingualism (Cummins 2000). If there is low level of proficiency in both languages there may be negative consequences. Sometimes, this has been referred as semi-lingualism where the learner is neither proficient in L1 or English. This may be the case in Kenya where many primary school pupils are neither proficient in L1 or English. This may results to subtractive bilingualism. Subtractive bilingualism arrives out of a situation where the second language is acquired without accommodating the linguistic skills that have been developed in the first language. In this model, the learners L1 skills are replaced by L2 thereby placing linguistic and cultural systems in conflict instead of complementing one another (McLaughlin, 1990).
Table 5.1 Shows the objectives of the study and the summary of main findings for each.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OBJECTIVE</th>
<th>MAIN FINDINGS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. To assess the levels of Kimeru proficiency among primary school pupils in Meru Central District.</td>
<td>Results from the study show low acquisition of writing and reading skills in Kimeru. 80 percent had not attained minimum competence levels in writing while 50 percent had not in reading. However, only 3% had not attained minimum proficiency levels in speaking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. To identity factors influencing Kimeru proficiency in Meru Central District.</td>
<td>Kimeru proficiency is influenced by: pupil background, language used by teachers, language influence from peer and community, education policy, exposure to written materials and motivation to learn other languages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. To describe the effects of the prevailing proficiency on language choice/ use.</td>
<td>Prevailing Kimeru proficiency levels affect reading, speaking and writing in other languages and Kimeru. It also results to lexical borrowing, code mixing and code-switching.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. To describe the impact of the prevailing proficiency levels to the task of learning other languages.

Due to lack of adequate literacy skills in Kimeru, pupils will experience difficulties in learning other languages and accessing the curriculum. Literacy skills in Kimeru such as writing and reading are not fully developed among many pupils as they exit lower primary school.

5.4 Conclusions.

The results of this study have therefore, revealed that by the time of transition from Kimeru instruction to English, primary school pupils in Meru Central District have not acquired sufficient literacy skills in L1. Given the role of L1 in the learning of other languages, primary school pupils have a difficult task learning English and accessing curriculum (which is in English) and at the same time, due to their limited proficiency and mastery of any language, pupils results to use of code-mixing, code-switching, lexical borrowing or non-standard language. Though subtractive bilingualism may not occur in this case because pupils are fairly proficient in spoken Kimeru, semi-lingualism is likely as many pupils may exit school without fully mastering any language.

Therefore, there is need for sensitizing and training primary school teachers on the role of MT in learning other languages and education. From the responses given by many teachers who were sampled, it was evident that many were ignorant on the importance of Kimeru
literacy to learning other languages. It was evident that many teachers did not see any positive connection between the mastery of literacy skills in Kimeru and the learning of English.

5.5.1 Recommendations.

This study would wish to make the following recommendations on issues to be addressed by the government and other institutions.

1. The government and policy makers should promote MT in Kenya’s education system if learners are to enjoy benefits of bilingualism. Research in SLA shows that if a child masters the first language, then learning other languages becomes less problematic in that habits of speech are cross-lingual.

2. Kimeru and other MTs should be introduced as examinable academic subjects in primary schools. Languages are produced by people in their daily social interactions. They have different social values and people’s identities are strongly linked to the languages they speak. Since education is very important with respect to language maintenance it should be taught and examined at the end of primary school level. If children’s L1 is fostered at school and they learn to read and write in it, this will contribute to its maintenance.

3. The government, policy makers and the media should create awareness to pupils and communities on linguistic richness of MT. The rich diversity of human languages and
diacets is part of human condition. Languages embody peoples’ culture, wisdom, philosophy and orature. This linguistic diversity and culture needs to be promoted.

4. There is need to ensure the implementation of language policy in Kenyan’s education system. From the research it emerged that majority of teachers were not aware of language policy in Kenya’s education system. During the pre-visit to schools and sampling, it was evident that private schools and many public primary schools do not teach Kimeru. Nevertheless, Kenya’s education policy advocates for the use of MT or the language of the catchment area as the language of instruction in lower primary school.

5.5.2 Areas for Further Research

The scope of this study was limited to Kimeru proficiency among primary school pupils in Meru Central District. There is need for further research in the following areas:

1. Strategies to improve the current low Kimeru proficiency levels among lower primary school pupils.

2. Research on MT proficiency levels in other vernacular languages in Kenya.

3. Comparative studies on MT and English proficiency levels among primary school pupils

4. The relationship between linguistic proficiency in the LO1 and performance in other Subjects.

5. The level of implementation of Kenya’s language education policy in Public primary schools.

6. An assessment of the acquisition of literacy skills among primary school Leavers in Kenya.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Appendix A: GENERAL OBJECTIVES OF TEACHING MOTHER TONGUE.

By the end of the course the learner should have:

1. Developed sufficient command of vocabulary and sentence patterns to enable the learner use mother tongue at home, at school and in the community.
2. Acquired pre-reading, literacy and numeracy skill in mother tongue.
3. Developed a prefigure attitude toward own culture and those of others.
4. Acquired reading and writing skills
5. Acquired basic ideas on HIV/AIDS, children right and other emerging issues such as technology, the environment, integrity education and gender responsiveness

Appendix B: SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES FOR LANGUAGE SKILLS IN MOTHER TONGUE (Standard Three).

A. SKILL: WRITING

By the end of the topic, the learner should be able to:

i. Produce clear and legible joined script.

ii. Write down own stories based on familiar experience.

iii. Write short informal letters.

B. SKILL: READING

BY the end of the topic, the learners should be able to:

i. Read given tests silently and answer oral and written questions.

ii. Read aloud fluently and with increased confidence from a range of graded reading materials.

C. SKILL: LISTENING AND SPEAKING

By the end of the topic, the learners should be able to:

i. Give, receive and follow precise instructions accurately in individual and group tasks.

ii. Listen and respond appropriately to a variety of instructions

iii. Tell stories /news /announcements confidently and correctly

iv. Discuss themes drawn from the immediate and wider environment.

v. Listen to stories being read, talk about what happens to characters and recall significant details

Appendix C-Questionnaire for Teachers

Kindly fill the following questionnaire as truthfully as possible. Your feedback will be treated confidentially and for the purpose of the research only.

1) Name (optional) ________________________________

2) Category of school Public □ Private □ (Tick one.)

3) What language(s) is used in teaching lower primary pupils in your school?

Kimeru □ Kiswahili □ English. □ All are mixed □ (Tick one)

4) Which language(s) do pupils use in their informal interactions?

________________________________________________________________________

5) What language(s) do teachers use when advising pupils in lower primary school?

________________________________________________________________________

6) (i) Should Kimeru be taught in primary schools? Yes □ No □

(iii) Please give reasons for your answer above.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

(ii) If yes, up to what level (class)? Std 3 □ Std 6 □ Std 8 □

Other □ (specify) ______________________________________________________________
i) In your opinion, what are the proficiency levels among standard four pupils in your school in oral and written Kimeru?

Below average ☐ Average ☐ Above average ☐ Very Good ☐

ii) What factors influence Kimeru proficiency (mastery) among pupils in your school?

__________________________________________
__________________________________________
__________________________________________
__________________________________________

iii) A) Does their Kimeru proficiency level influence their language use?

Yes ☐ No ☐

B) How?(Explain)

__________________________________________
__________________________________________
__________________________________________
__________________________________________

iv) What is the English proficiency level among class four pupils in your school?

Below Average ☐ Average ☐ Above Average ☐ Very Good ☐

Thank you for your feedback.
Appendix D- Questions/Issues for standard four pupils FGDs

1) What language(s) do you use at home?

2) a) Should you be taught Kimeru in all primary classes and be examined in KCPE?

   b) Why?

3) What language(s) do you use when playing or talking to your classmates outside the class?

4) A) Are you proficient in Kimeru?

   b) What factors influence your proficiency levels in Kimeru?

   c) Does your Kimeru proficiency affect your language use/ communication?

   d) Briefly explain how?
Appendix E - Speaking proficiency norms for standard three

a) Skill: Listening and speaking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competence to be attained (objectives)</th>
<th>Minimal competence</th>
<th>Desired competence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>By the end of the course, the learner should be able to:</td>
<td>The following basic competencies will be expected for the listening and speaking skills:</td>
<td>The learners should be able to demonstrate:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) Give, receive and follow precise instructions accurately in individual and group tasks</td>
<td>Pupils ability to:</td>
<td>• Use of correct sentence structures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Listen and respond appropriately to a variety of instructions</td>
<td>• Converse fluently and confidently</td>
<td>• Use appropriate vocabulary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Tell stories/news/announcements confidently and correctly.</td>
<td>• Dramatize and role play a variety of activities</td>
<td>• Use correct connectors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) Relate real or imaginary events in narratives, news and experiences</td>
<td>• Answer questions</td>
<td>• Converse fluently, confidently, accurately and with ease.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) Discuss themes drawn from the immediate and wider environment.</td>
<td>• Make simple sentences verbally observing punctuation marks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f) Listen to stories being read, talk about what happens to characters and recall significant details</td>
<td>• Ensure coherence and cohesion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Task: Mwarimu wenu nakwenda kwija kwenu. Mwire buria agakinya. (Your teacher would wish to visit your home. Give him/her direction to your home.)
Appendix F: Reading proficiency norms for standard three.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competence to be achieved (objectives)</th>
<th>Minimum competence</th>
<th>Desired competence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>By the end of the course, the learner should be able to:</td>
<td>The following basic competences will be expected of the reading skill.</td>
<td>The learner should demonstrate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) Read given texts silently and answer oral and written questions</td>
<td>• Reading aloud and comprehending information from textbooks, passages, newspapers and magazines.</td>
<td>• Reading aloud with understanding and ease from textbooks, passages, newspapers and magazines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Read loudly fluently and with increased confidence from a range of graded reading materials.</td>
<td>• Reading and interpreting information presented in visual form.</td>
<td>• Recognize the role of punctuation in written material.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Reading without pointing at words with a finger or pencil.</td>
<td>• Read and re-tell what has been read using own words.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adopted from Benchmarks for English Language Education (Groenewegen, T. 2008 Ed)

and Primary School Syllabus (KIE 2002)

Task: Attached appendix H
Appendix G: Writing proficiency norms for standard three.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competence to be attached.</th>
<th>Minimal competence</th>
<th>Desired competence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>By the end of the course, the learner should be able to:</td>
<td>The learner should demonstrate the following minimum skills.</td>
<td>The following competencies will be expected for the writing skills:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) Produce clear and legible joined script</td>
<td>- Write using joined script neatly and legibly</td>
<td>Pupils ability to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Write own stories based on familiar experiences</td>
<td>- Produce correctly punctuated pieces of writing</td>
<td>- Write using joined script neatly and legibly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Write short informal letters</td>
<td>- Write informal letters</td>
<td>- Produce correctly punctuated pieces of writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Spell correctly</td>
<td>- Spell correctly and use appropriate tense.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Express their ideas in simple narrative.</td>
<td>- Express their ideas in simple narrative.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adopted from *Benchmarks for English Language Education* (Groenewegen, T. 2008 Ed) and *Primary School Syllabus* (KIE 2002)

Writing Task: Andika rugono iguru ja muthenya juria utikorourirua niju. (Write a story about the day you will never forget)
Appendix H: Reading passage

Task: Thoma rugono ruru (Read this passage)


Antũ barea bethagĩrwa barĩ ũgwatĩne bwa rwagĩ nĩ tũkenke. Tũkenke nĩ twaana tũnini. Antũ bangĩ baria bethagĩrwa barĩ ũgwatĩne nĩ eekũrũ babarito.

Twirĩtanageni kũmaamaga neetine magita yonthe. Rwagĩ nĩ mũnũthũ wa muntũ. Munt ũ ajĩtu nĩ rwagĩ at ũ inya.

## Appendix J: Assessment Levels and Marks in Percentage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proficiency level</th>
<th>Marks in percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Below minimum proficiency level</td>
<td>49 and below</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum competence level</td>
<td>50 – 59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desired proficiency level</td>
<td>70 – 100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adopted from ‘*Benchmarks for English Language Education*’ Groenewegen, T. (2008 Ed.).
Appendix K: MOTHER TONGUE SYLLABUS (Typed as they appear in the syllabus. Font and spacing maintained as in the syllabus)

INTRODUCTION
Mother tongue is the first language a child is exposed to or the language of the school’s catchment area. This is the language in which children first learn to express their thoughts and develop relationships with their immediate social environment. Their first experience in education, therefore, should provide for their Mother Tongue to enable them learn and understand the values and concerns of the society. The school should attempt to amplify rather than replace these experiences.

Mother Tongue occupies a very important place in our primary school curriculum for a number of reasons.

- The pupils’ ideas and thoughts are in their mother tongue and will continue to be so, long after they have learnt to speak in English. To be encouraged to think for themselves, the pupils must be helped to do so in their own language.
- The culture of a people is expressed in mother tongue. Mother tongue must be taught positively so that learners can respect their cultural heritage as a basis for appreciating that of other people and make own contribution when they grow up
- Mother Tongue acts as a link between home, Early Childhood Development (ECD) centres and Primary School, and encourages the child’s free expression. It is also a tool for the teaching of literacy, numeracy and manipulative skills and a foundation for learning other languages. Mother Tongue when used as a medium of instruction provides children with a sense of belonging, self-confidence and motivates them to participate in all school activities. This provides for a smooth transition experience.
- Mother Tongue should be taught as a subject in lower primary so as to:
  - Establish basic language skills such as listening and understanding, speaking, pre-reading and reading, pre-writing and writing. These should be done in a language that the pupil can speak well.
  - Reinforce and develop it as an effective medium of instruction. The use of mother tongue makes what is taught meaningful since it relates to the child’s previous experiences.
  - Develop it for greater use since it is the most comprehensive expression of the child’s cultural heritage comprising character, moral and religious values.

GENERAL OBJECTIVES
By the end of the course, the learner should have:
1. develop sufficient command of vocabulary and sentence patterns to enable the learner use mother tongue at home, at school and in the community.
2. acquire pre-reading, literacy and numeracy skills in mother tongue
3. acquire reading and writing skills
4. develop a positive attitude towards own culture and those of others
5. acquire basic ideas on HIV/AIDS, children’s rights and other issues such as technology, the environment, integrity education and gender responsiveness.

**STANDARD ONE**

4.1 SKILLS: LISTENING AND SPEAKING

4.1.1 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:

By the end of the topic, the learner

a) Communicate orally with peers, members of the family, the

Communicate and participate in all occasions, classroom activities such as story telling, poem recitation, dramatization and riddle setting and solving

d) participate as a speaker and listener in group activities including imaginative play.

e) participating in conversations and dialogue

Should be able to:

b) practicing simple social courtesies with appropriate classroom expressions based on age groups and characteristic of the community

c) asking and answering questions

i) telling home news and describing personal experiences

k) interpreting sequential picture stories for structures

4.1.2 LEARNING EXPERIENCES

I) talking about relevant themes

a) listening and responding
telling simple stories

• greetings
• simple oral instructions
• information/news*
• directions
• messages*
• questions
• songs*
• commands
• Requests

singing songs and reciting rhymes*

* Note: Messages/songs/stories should include important social values like honesty, kindness, forgiveness, cooperation and emerging issues as integrity education and gender responsiveness.
LEARNING RESOURCES
Relevant songs/stories/

- news and announcements based on events at a school and at home
- Short simple stories*
- Conversations
- Teachers' own stories, Taped materials(stories, songs And conversations)
- Conversations using Puppets
- miming a variety of activities based on various themes such as the home and school
- poems/riddles
  - Pictures/photographs
  - Invited resource persons
  - Taped songs/stories
  - Teachers own stories
  - Conversations
  - Puppets
  - Masks
  - Drawings
  - Wall charts
  - clock faces
  - costumes
  - sequential pictures
  - appropriate centres of interest or nature corner
  - relevant language games

4.2.4 ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES
There are basic competencies expected for the reading skills Pupils' ability to:

- respond appropriately to different sounds
- identify differences and similarities sounds
- arrange pictures in sequence retell parts of a story
- give names of characters
- tell correct sequence of events in a story
- take part in role play
- tell own experiences
- take and give riddles
- sort out objects according to colour shape or size
- match pictures with objects
- remember what is missing
- draw pictures from shapes

* handing the writing instruments and materials
* free writing, drawing and painting large patterns, using
* building patterns with a variety of materials
* tracing, drawing and colouring objects
* joining dots to form shapes
* threading grains, beads seeds
(ii) WRITING
* writing letters of the alphabet (lower and upper case)
* writing numerals and their names
* copying and writing words
• read and recognize own names, those of others, words and phrases
• follow pictures with left to right eye orientation
• recall what has been displayed and printed even when script is withdrawn

4.3.0 SKILL: WRITING

OBJECTIVES:
By the end of the topic; the learner should be able to:

a) acquire pre-writing skills
b) Form letters
c) Use pictures, symbols or isolated letters, words, or phrases to communicate meaning
d) Produce simple guided pieces of writing and use appropriate words, punctuation marks, simple sentences.

4.3.2 LEARNING EXPERIENCES

(i) pre-writing skills
• Drawing and modeling letter shapes in print type
• Writing patterns using a variety of materials
• Handling, manipulating and modeling objects

4.1.4 ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES
These are basic competencies expected for the listening and speaking skills.
• give appropriate responses orally
• talk about various issues based on given themes
• retell stories/riddles/proverbs,
• listen to instructions and respond appropriately
• match statements to objects, pictures or situations in the

using print script
* copying and practicing of:
  - numerals and letters of the alphabet (lower and upper case) from the board

  - familiar labels in print script

4.3.1 SPECIFIC

sentences
* writing:
  - own names and those of others
  - labels and captions for own drawing and models

* building and copying words

syllables in familiar words
* compiling and numbering pictures and pages of:
  - own picture books
  - picture dictionaries

Pupils ability to:
environment, sounds in words
* remembering:
  - names of characters in a story
  - the main ideas in a story
  - the events of a story in correct sequence

* understanding and
classroom

- listen to questions and respond appropriately
- listen to requests and respond appropriately by carrying out actions required
- participate in conversations and answer questions
- sustain fluent conversations
- Pronounce vowels and consonants
- Articulate combined vowels and Consonants
- Match spoken statements to Pictures.

42.0 SKILLS: READING

4.2.1 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:
By the end of the topic, the learner Should be able to:

a) Acquire reading readiness skills to enable the learner have literacy and
b) Read and pronounce words correctly
c) Read and understand graded reading similarities and differences in Material shapes, pictures, objects
d) Show signs of a developing Interest in reading

4.2.2 LEARNING EXPERIENCES
(i) PRE-READING SKILLS:
(a) Aural: (distinguishing similarities and differences in involving different kinds of shapes.
- Odd man out exercise)

- Listening to:
  - rhyming words
  - minimal pairs
  - stories being told
  - stories being read from a book
  which have to be followed from left to right

- Reading picture stories with left-to Right and top-to-bottom sequencing

b) learning letters in the alphabetical order
• Matching identical shapes
• Finding differences between similar pictures
• Finding specific pages and pictures in a book
• Describing pictures
• Drawing shapes briefly displayed.
• Repeating lists
• Memorizing short dialogues.
• Putting a series of pictures in logical order
• Suggesting conclusions to unfinished sequences of pictures or shapes
• Discussing pictures on charts or in books
• Drawing or tracing patterns with a left to-right orientation.

(ii) READING
   a) Reading:
   • Names of the letters of the Alphabet
   • Sounds of syllables
   • Own names and those of others
   • Labels, captions and symbols
     (in the classroom and in the Local environment)

   c) building and reading
      * familiar words
      * simple sentences
   d) reading graded books and supplementary readers with understanding

4.2.3 LEARNING RESOURCES
   * Different sounds in the environment
   * wall charts
   * flash cards
   * pictures
   * taped materials
   * objects of various colours/shapes/sizes
   * scrap picture books
   * picture sequences

STANDARD TWO

5.1 SKILLS: LISTENING

5.1.1 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:
By the end of the topic, the learner should be able to:
   a) listen and respond appropriately to oral instructions
   b) talk about own experiences at home/school
   c) listen attentively to stores and poems and talk about them
   d) describe an event, real or imagined
   e) participate actively in group
   g) practicing appropriate social expressions in and out of school
   h) asking and answering questions based on familiar topics
   i) telling news and describing one’s experiences
   j) practicing types of traditional greetings according to age and
discussions
f) make sentences based on theme
drawn from the immediate and
reinforce and enrich:
wider environment
g) listen to stories, talk about what
happens to characters and recall
significant details.

5.1.2 LEARNING EXPERIENCES
a) listening and responding to:
• singing games or poems
• oral instructions
• messages based on means of
communication in the post
office such as letters and
telephones

• questions
• commands
• requests
• guided formal and informal
conversations
b) listening to and demonstrating
understanding by following:
• news and announcements
• simple stories and riddles
• speeches and conversations
• taped material
• mother tongue radio programmes
c) reinforcing concentration through:
• miming a variety of activities
based on familiar situations at
home/school
• playing appropriate language
games

5.1.3 LEARNING RESOURCES
* appropriate objects
* pictures/photographs
* invited guests
* taped stories, speeches
  conversations
* relevant stories/poems/
songs/riddles
* masks
* language games
* wall charts
* clock face
* appropriate costumes
* appropriate centre of interest or
  nature corner
* nature walks
* field trips/visits

5.1.4 ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES
There are basic competencies expected
For listening and speaking skills.
Pupils ability to:
• carry out desired action
  appropriately
• describe objects, events and actions
• talk about their own experiences

c) recognizing and using
  punctuation marks in reading
  Correctly, for example:
  * full stops
  * commas
  * question marks
  * exclamation marks

occasion
k) conversing using puppets
l) playing language games to
  - vocabulary
  - sentence
  - tenses
m) singing songs and reciting rhymes
n) giving directions
o) discussing the items in centre of
  interest/nature corner
p) telling time using vocabulary
  related to time
q) practicing speech drills for
  remedial work
r) reporting on findings of nature
  walks and visits
• recite poems for elocution or
dramatization
• converse on themes such as shop
and hospital, confidently

5.2 SKILL: READING

5.2.1 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:
* name cards
  Should be able to:
a) read words, sentences and books
  accurately and fluently
b) read accurately and understand
  signs, labels and notices
c) use picture and context clues, sight
  vocabulary and phonic skills in
  reading
d) listen and respond to stories, poems
  and other materials read aloud,
  expressing opinions informed by
  what has been read
e) read a range of materials with some
  independence, fluency, accuracy
  and understanding

5.2.2. LEARNING EXPERINES
  a) Reading:
    • compound letter sounds
    • more compound words
    • simple questions and
      instructions
    • simple descriptions of
      objects using describing
      words
    • simple stories for
      comprehension
    • poems and proverbs
    • familiar words and sentences
      from simple substitution
      tables
    • words and sentences in
      words/sentences matching
      exercises
    b) participating in simple reading
      contests

e) reading and answering questions
  from individual reading cards on
  selected class readers
f) reading and responding to a
  menu/price list

5.2.3 LEARNING RESOURCES
  * different captions
  * scrap picture books
  * vocabulary tree
  * supplementary readers
  * picture dictionaries
  * home-made television
  * crossword puzzles
  * children’s magazines
  * labels
  * word cards
  * newspaper cut-outs
  * religious bulletins
  * menu/price list

5.2.4 ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES
  The following basic competencies will
  be expected for the reading skills:
  pupil’s ability to:
  * describe what has happened in a
    story and predict what may happen
    next
  * talk in simple terms about the
    content of stories or information in
    graded reading materials
  * identify syllables in naming and
    doing words
  * read fluently
  * combine syllables to form words
    and read them
  * identify and read words on cards or
    on the chalkboard
  * act out parts of their reading
  * build sentences using word cards
  * build words using letter cards
  * give the sounds of letters and
    group of letters
• answer oral/written questions on sentences and short passages
• match written sentences with pictures
• read short passages aloud
• retell parts of what they have read
• model/draw characters/objects found in their reading

5.3.0 SKILL: WRITING

5.3.1 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:
By the end of the topic, the learner should be able to:

a) produce legible upper and lower case letters in print script and use them consistently
b) produce guided pieces of writing using complete sentences that are correctly punctuated

5.3.2 LEARNING EXPERIENCES

a) Copying:
• words using print script
• letters of the alphabet
• sentences with lower/upper case of the letters of the alphabet
• dates and names of days of the week and months

b) Writing (in print script)
• familiar names
• words

5.3.3 ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES

for the writing pupils ability to:

• guided writing
• drawing models
• categorizing from a jumbled list
• handwriting competitions
• compiling scarp picture books
• labeling and numbering

• writing down shopping lists
• writing captions
• recording prices, measurements and weights
• writing short reports, information, requests, messages and news
• writing answers to questions
• writing own names and those of others and places
• recopying personal experiences
• building words, phrases and sentences
• filling in missing letters and words

5.3 LEARNING RESOURCES

• suitable writing materials
• wall charts
• writing manuals
• pupils’ own drawings and models

• picture dictionaries
• appropriate nature corners
• picture sequences
• posters and notices
• picture captions and labels
• chalkboard illustrations
• curiosity corner
• envelopes
• substitution tables

These are basic competencies expected

• produce desired written work
• copy letters, words and sentences
• fill in blanks in sentences
• write dictated words and sentences
• match written sentences with pictures and copy them.
STANDARD THREE

6.1.0 SKILLS: LISTENING AND SPEAKING

6.1.1 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES
By the end of the topic, the learner should be able to:

a) give, receive and follow precise individual and group tasks
b) listen and respond appropriately to a variety of instructions
c) tell stories/news/announcements
d) relate real or imaginary events in narrative, news and experiences according to different immediate and wider environment
f) listen to stories being read, talk happens to characters

* speech drills and recall significant details various themes based on the

6.1.2 LEARNING EXPERIENCES
a) listening and responding appropriately to:
   • oral instructions
   • directions
   • messages conveyed through different modes of communication such as stories, proverbs, internet and E-mails
   * questions
   * more complex commands
   Including irony
   • request
   • similes and metaphors
   • proverbs
   • riddles
   • tongue twisters

b) listening to and demonstrating one's understanding by

   at home
   instructions accurately in seasons, important national events and events of local interest
   f) dramatizing and role playing
   in and out of school
   e) discuss themes drawn categories of persons and occasions about what

* impromptu speaking

immediate and wider environment

h) Telling:
   * news and describing one's experiences
   * time using vocabulary related to time
   * stories
   * riddles
   * tongue twisters

i) Conversing using puppets

j) Playing language games to reinforce and enrich vocabulary, sentence patterns and tenses
   * singing songs
   * Reciting:
     - rhymes and poems
     - choral verse speaking on selected extracts with integrity values

k) Talking about various themes such
following:
- news and announcements
- riddles, short stories similes and metaphors
- relevant taped materials
- relevant Mother Tongue radio programmes

n) Giving oral reports on:
- graded materials read
- findings of group work

6.2 SKILL: READING

6.2.1 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES
By the end of the topic, learner should be able to:

a) read given texts silently and answer oral and written question
b) read aloud fluently and with increased confidence from a range
o) Predicting what is going to happen oral and written question
In a story
p) Using
  a) Reading:
- Proverbs in appropriate
  Situations in and out of
  School.

6.1.3 LEARNING RESOURCES
* real objects
* relevant taped materials
* pictures/photographs
* resource persons
* masks
* puppets
* appropriate centre of
  Interest/nature corner/curiosity
  Corner
- nature walks/ visits

6.1.3 ASSESSMENT ACTIVITITES
The following basic competencies will
Be expected for the listening and
Speaking skills:
  Pupils’ ability to:
- converse fluently and confidently
- dramatize and role play a variety of
  activities
- as the farm/garden/domestic and
  wild animals
l) Giving directions to/from places
m) Interpreting sequential picture
  stories for oral composition

6.2.2. LEARNING EXPERIENCE
* paragraphs, short stories
  supplementary readers and
  Other relevant materials
* graded materials for fluency,
  pronunciation and
  comprehension
* rhymes, poems, riddles and
  proverbs
* simple informal letters
* labels, captions, posters,
  notices and menu
* with understanding the
  teacher’s comments and
  responding appropriately
* the names and directions of
  places, with paper
  pronunciation
* questions from individual work
  cards on selected class readers
* scrap books, picture
  dictionaries and relevant
  magazines
* sentences from substitution
• answer questions
• recall details in parts of the story
• identify lessons in narratives/proverbs

6.2.3 LEARNING RESOURCES
• supplementary readers
• old calendars
• pupils’ written work
• reading cards
• work cards
• relevant children’s magazines/newspapers cut-outs
• religious bulletins
• wall charts
• clock faces
• others relevant reading materials

6.2.4 ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES
• There are basic competencies expected
For the reading skills:
Pupils’ ability to:
• answer questions orally and in
  a) writing after reading a given story
• dramatize/role play certain
  books,
  characters or parts of the story after
  pages
  reading certain text/stories
• compete at reading tasks

6.2.0 SKILL: WRITING

6.3.1 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:
By the end of the topic, the learner
Should be able to:
a) produce clear and legible joined
down
tables
b) Reading and dramatizing stories
c) participating in simple informal
reading contests
d) reading, understanding and solving
puzzles
e) playing reading games.

writing
a) Writing:
* answers to questions
* guided compositions with appropriate topics
* story from a sequence of pictures
* class notices and posters
* simple sentences to form a sequence of pictures
* dictated words, sentences and short passages
* labels and captions for own drawings and models
  * informal letters and addressing envelopes
* short reports, information, requests, messages and news
b) compiling scrap picture
labeling and numbering the
c) compiling picture dictionaries
d) keeping personal diaries
e) filling in missing words in sentences to write paragraphs
f) rearranging and writing simple ideas
g) substituting single words for phrases and writing them
6.3.2 LEARNING EXPERIENCES

Handwriting
a) Copying and practicing:
   - letters of the alphabet in joined script
   - words, phrases, names, sentences, informal letters and passages/stories.
b) practicing joined script handwriting
c) participating in handwriting competitions

6.3.3 LEARNING RESOURCES

phrases and sentences

6.3.4 ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES

Note: The assessment activities for std.1-3 should be carried out through the following methods:

- write using joined script neatly and analyzing pupils' oral performance/reading tasks/written tasks
- produce correctly punctuated assignments pieces of writing
- write informal letters
- spell correctly
- express their ideas in simple narrative.

* probing or interviewing pupils on their reading/writing assignments.