

***Utilizing Resources in Linguistic Minority Communities to Enhance Acquisition of Literacy Skills among Learners: Evidence from Maasai, Turkana and Nubian Language Groups in Kenya***

***Martin C. Njoroge, Department of English and Linguistics, Kenyatta University***

***Phyllis W. Mwangi, Department of English and Linguistics, Kenyatta University***

***Emmanuel Furaha, Department of Linguistics and Foreign Languages, Moi University***

The Language in Education Policy in Kenya supports the education of children in their mother tongue (MT) for the first three years of primary. However, this policy has not been implemented amongst the minority language groups in Kenya, mainly because most of the languages involved have not been developed. Consequently, some minority communities are forced to use MT materials written in the neighboring majority languages. Minority languages, just as the dominant languages, carry with them a wealth of knowledge about the local ecosystem and act as a repository of a speech community's history, traditions, arts and ideas (Kamwangamalu, 2008). Thus when a language is lost, much more is lost than just its basic function as a tool of expression. There is, therefore, need for documentation of the available unwritten resources in minority languages because every one of the world's languages is unique and invaluable. The issue of literacy among linguistic minorities forms the gist of the proposed colloquium. The colloquium will be based on a research done on oral literature genres in three minority languages in Kenya: Maasai, Turkana and Nubian, which were randomly sampled. Using oral literature samples from these minority languages, we shall illustrate the wealth of resources and knowledge that can be harvested, which, in turn, can be used in enhancing acquisition of literacy skills among learners. We argue that if these oral literature materials are selected carefully, they will form useful resources in the achievement of literacy for all and in instilling social values because most oral literature genres contain useful lessons where good is rewarded and evil punished.

*Keywords: minority languages, literacy, Kenya, Maasai, Turkana, Nubian, oral literature*