

A UNIFIED ORTHOGRAPHY FOR BANTU LANGUAGES OF KENYA

(Kipokomo, Mijikenda, Kikuria, Gĩkũyũ, Luhya, Dawida,
Ekegusii, Kĩĩkamba Kĩembu, Kimeru, Kiswahili)



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Kwesi Kwaah Prah

A UNIFIED ORTHOGRAPHY FOR BANTU LANGUAGES IN KENYA

Introduction

This monograph presents the unified orthography for the Kenyan Bantu languages, which include Gĩkũyũ (GK), Kĩkamba (KK), Ekegusii (EK), Kikuria (KR), Kĩmeru (MR), Kĩembu (EM) Luhya group of languages (LY), Dawida¹ group of languages (DW), Miji Kenda group of languages (MJ) and Kiswahili (KS). The harmonization focuses on the vowels and the consonants and word-forms used in these languages. Examples have been drawn from all the eleven languages. Sample texts are presented using the harmonized orthography.

General Unified Spelling Rules

1. Six of the languages in this group have seven qualitative vowels. The writing of these languages will utilize all the seven vowels listed for the unified orthography.
2. Each vowel quality consists of long and short vowel. In written texts the default rule shall be to use the short vowels. Where there is an underlying long vowel, it will be represented by use of two similar vowels.
3. All the languages represented in this group are tone languages but none marks tone in their current orthography. Tone will therefore not be marked in non-technical text.
4. In Gĩkũyũ the voiceless labiodental fricative currently represented as shall now be written as <f>.
5. In Kikamba the post-alveolar affricate currently represented as <ky> shall be written as <ch>.
6. The bilabial fricative, previously written as <v> or in a number of languages in this group, shall now be represented as <bh>. Since none of the languages in this group makes use of both the

voiced and the voiceless bilabial fricatives, one grapheme will be sufficient.

7. Where a language has a set of voiced consonants that only appear accompanied by a nasal, they shall be written together with the nasal, for example, nz, nd, mb, ng, nj.
8. Prenasalization of consonants shall be marked by the presence of <m> or <n> before the consonant.
9. The silent nasals preceding consonants in Gikuyu shall be left out in the writing of the language. For example, the current 'mbembe' (maize) shall now be written as 'bebe'.
10. Labialized consonants shall be written with a following <w>, for example <mw>, <lw>, <tw>.
11. Palatization of consonants shall be written with a following <y>, for example <my>, <ly>, <ty>.
12. In Gĩkũyũ, where [s], [ʃ] and [tʃ] are in dialectal variations, <s> shall be used to represent all three in writing.
13. Languages with velar fricatives shall use <kh> for the voiceless and <gh> for the voiced one.
14. The voiced interdental fricative shall be written using the letters <dh> and the voiceless using <th>.
15. Loan words shall be written as they are pronounced in local languages.
16. Prefixes including locatives and honorifics shall be written conjunctively. They shall be attached to the nouns they modify and written without capitalization, except when they are attached

- to the name of a language or an ethnic group or they are at the beginning of a sentence in which case they will be capitalized.
17. The copular shall be written as an independent word except when it is contracted, in which case it shall be written conjunctively.
 18. Conjunctions shall be written as separate words.
 19. The negative particle shall be written conjunctively when it is used with a verb and disjunctively when used with a noun or an adjective.
 20. The possessive particle shall be written disjunctively except with pronouns, in which case it shall be written conjunctively.
 21. Demonstratives shall be written disjunctively.
 22. Affixes that are part of the verb complex will be written conjunctively.
 23. Compound nouns will be written as separate words except when one part is contracted, in which case they are written conjunctively.
 24. Reduplicated forms are written conjunctively.
 25. Ideophones shall be written as separate words.
 26. Borrowed words and borrowed names of places shall be written as they are pronounced in the borrowing language.
 27. Names of people and places shall be written as they are currently written.

28. Except in the case of the diagraph <ng'> the apostrophe shall be used to indicate contraction. In such cases it will be placed above the position where a letter or letters are missing.

1. VOWEL

1.1 Short Vowels

	Phonetic Symbols	Grapheme	Examples
1.	a	a	adū- people (GK); kaya – home (MJ)
2.	ɛ	e	eka – stop (KK); eṣeṣe- dog (EK)
3.	e	ĩ	ĩka – do (KK); rĩma – dig (EK, GK)
4.	ɔ	o	kora – do (KR); bhola – say (LY)
5.	o	ũ	ũma – bite (KK); tũma – send (EK, KK)
6.	i	ĩ	ĩnda – louse (DW), ngia – enter (PK)
7.	u	u	rula – get out (LY), unga – flour (MJ)

1.2 The Distribution of the Vowels across the Eleven Languages

Phonetic Symbols	Grapheme	LY	DW	MJ	KS	PK	GK	KK	EK	MR	KR	EM
a	a	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
ɛ	e	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
e	ĩ	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+
ɔ	o	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
o	ũ	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+
i	ĩ	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
u	u	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+

1.3 Vowel Length

Short and long vowels are contrastive. Where there is an underlying long vowel it will be represented by two similar vowels otherwise all vowels will be written as single vowels.

Examples

Short vowel	Long vowel
ikibhira – small finger (KR)	ikibhiira – a plastic container (KR)
sima- put off (LY)	siima – appreciation (LY)
ta – sell (KK)	taa – lamp (KK)

2. TONES

Except in Kiswahili, tone is important for distinguishing meaning between words in all the other languages in this group. However, marking tone will make the written texts very complex, and because meaning of words can easily be discerned from the context, tone will not be marked in non-technical texts.

3. CONSONANTS

3.1 Simple Consonantsⁱⁱ

Sound	Grapheme	Examples
p	p	papa – father (LY), puruka – to fly (DW)
b	b	baba - father (KS) bada – forest (PK)
m	m	matu - clouds (KK), matso – eyes (MJ)
β / Φ	bh	bhabha – grandmother (DW), bhaya – there (KK)
w	w	wendo – love (KK), wira – song (MJ)
f	f	fata – need (GK), findu – items (LY)
v	v	vadu – shoes (DW), vuma – blow (KS)
θ	th	thi – go (KK), thema – cut (MJ)
ð	dh	dhambi – sins (KS), dhanu – maize cob (GK)
t	t	tora – stab (PK), teri – dust (DW)
d	d	duka – arrive (LY), idadu – three (DW)
n	n	nanu – who (LY), niki – why (DW)
s	s	seka – laugh (EK), sira – get lost (KR)
z	z	zighe – locust (DW), zuma – bark of a dog (MJ)
l	l	lalya – close eyes (KK), lola – look (MJ)
r	r	kura – cry (KR), reda – bring (DW)
ts	ts	tsana – comb (MJ), tsia – go (LY)
dz	dz	dzua – sun (MJ), hadza- mention (PK)
ɲ	ny	nyanya – tomato (GK), nyora – find (EK)
ʃ	sh	shida – trouble (DW), shindu – thing (LY)
tʃ	ch	chaka – start (EK), chana – river (PK)
dʒ	j	jana – yesterday (PK), jegha – good (GK)
k	k	aka – paint (EK), kenga – cut (KR)
j	y	yaya – sister (LY), yeo – today (PK)
ŋ	ng'	ng'ombe – cow (MR), ng'andu - gold (MJ)
h	h	heho – cold (GK), hehi – near (MJ)
ɣ	gh	lugha – language (KS), ghamba – speak (KR)
g	g	gui – dog (GK), gego – tooth (PK)
x	kh	khandi – again (LY), khano – this one (LY)
gb	gb	gbwa – fall (MJ), lugbwe- rope (MJ)
kp	kp	[kpwaha] - armpit (MJ), kpwenda- to go (MJ)

3.2 The Distribution of the Consonants among the Eleven Languages

Sound	Grapheme	LY	DW	MJ	KS	PK	GK	KK	EK	MR	KR	EM
p	p	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-
b	b	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-
m	m	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
β / Φ	bh	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	-
w	w	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
f	f	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-
v	v	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	+
θ	th	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	-	-	-	-
ð	dh	+	+	+	+	+	+	-		+	-	+
t	t	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
d	d	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-
n	n	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
s	s	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
z	z	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-
l	l	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	-	-	-	-
r	r	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+
ts	ts	+	-	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-
ɬ	dz	+	-	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-
ɲ	ny	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
ʃ	sh	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-
tʃ	ch	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	-
ɕ	j	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	+	-	-
k	k	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
j	y	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
ŋ	ng'	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
h	h	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	+	-
ɣ	gh	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+
g	g	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	-	+
x	kh	+	-	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-
gb	gb	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
kp	kp	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

2. The letter 'h' does not occur

3. The letter 'g' does not occur in the word 'g'.

3.3 Complex Consonantsⁱⁱⁱ

Most of the consonants above form the bases for the formation for co-articulated consonants that occur in all these languages. The co-articulated consonants fall into the following groups and are written as in the examples given below:

a. Prenasalised consonants

- i. mb mbaka – cat (EM)
- ii. nj njia – path (KS)
- iii. nth nthĩ – earth (KK)

b. Labialised consonants

- i. mw mwana – child (MR, GK, KK)
- ii. thw thwarigha – antelope (GK)

c. Palatalised consonants

- i. sy syana – children (KK)
- ii. ly lya – eat (LY)

d. Nasalised and labialised consonants

- i. ndw - londwa – be observed (LY)
- ii. njw - ugonjwa- sickness (KS)

e. Nasalised and palatalised

- i. mby - mbya – horns (KK)
- ii. ndy mwendya – cousin (KK)

4. WORD DIVISION

4.1 The Copula

Rule: Where the copula occurs independently it is written disjunctively; where it is not independent, it is written conjunctively.

- a. Mūtūa nĩ mūwau. (KK)
Mūtūa is sick.
- b. Mokua noomobhe. (EK)
Mokua is bad.

4.2 Conjunctions

Rule: The conjunctions are written as separate words.

- a. Marighū **na** bebe (GK)
Bananas and maize
- b. Baba **na** maiyo (MJ)
Father and mother

4.3 Locatives

Rule: Locatives are written disjunctively except the affixes like -ni, -po, -ko, -mo, mu-, khu-, which are written conjunctively.

- a. Nyumbenyi (DW)
In the house
- b. **Mwisamba** (LY)
In the shamba
- c. Emesa **īghūrū** (EK)
On the table
- d. Nyūmba **nthīnī** (KK)
Inside the house

4.4 Negative Particle

Rule: The negative particle is written conjunctively when it is used with a verb and disjunctively with a noun or adjective.

- a. Babusa **sabha** mgonjwa. (PK)
Babusa is not sick
- b. Mūnene **tī** mūrūaru. (EM)
Mūnene is not sick.
- c. **Sikunde** kwenda chaghunyi .(DW)
I do not want to go to work.
- d. **Tindacha**. (EK)
I have not come.

4.5 Possessives

Rule: The possessive is written disjunctively except with pronouns, in which case it is written conjunctively.

- a. Mwana **wa** bhabha (MR)
My father's child
- b. Kīwa **cha** mwalimū (KK)
Teacher's Sugarcane
- c. Mfuko **wangu** (PK)
My Bag
- d. Omwana **one** (EK)
My child

4.6 Demonstratives

Rule: Demonstratives are written disjunctively in all languages.

- a. Metha **ĩnũ** (MR)
That table
- b. Meza **ide** (MJ)
That Table (away from both speaker and listener)

4.7 Verb Forms

Rule: Affixes which are part of the verb forms shall be written conjunctively.

- a. Tū-ti- na -mũ -**kūn** -a. (KK)
Sm-neg-tns-om-**beat**-fv
We have not beaten him/her.
- b. Khu-a-mu-**pir**-e. (LY)
Sm-tns-om-**beat**-fv
We have beaten him.

c. Nĩ-ma-ra-rug-a. (GK)

Foc-sm-tns-cook-fv

They are cooking.

d. Tu-ta-wa-pig-an-ish-a. (KS)

Sm-tense-om-beat-reci-caus-fv

We shall make them beat each other.

4.8 Compound Nouns

Rule: Compound Nouns shall be written as separate words except when they are contracted.

a. Omonyakerogo (EK)

Chairperson

b. Omonyene ekerogo (EK)

Chairperson

c. Mwene gĩtĩ (GK)

Chairperson

d. Mũndũũme (KK)

Man (Lit. Person who is male)

e. Mũndũ mũũme (KK)

Man (Lit. Person who is male)

4.9 Reduplication

Rule: Reduplicated forms shall be written conjunctively^{iv}.

a. Ninanini (from nini- small) (GK)

Smaller

b. Tumatuma- (EK)

jump jump

c. Taratara –(EK)

Walk slowly

- d. Chekhachekha (LY)
laugh laugh

4.10 Ideophones and Interjections

Rule: Ideophones are perceived as separate words and therefore they shall be written as separate words.

- a. Kwi! – Expression of pain (KK)
- b. achi!- Expression of surprise (EK)
- c. aka! – Expression of surprise (KR)
- d. twa! – Expression of surprise (DW)
- e. ayi! – Expression of surprise (MJ)

4.11 Borrowed Words and Borrowed Names of Places

Rule: Borrowed words and borrowed names of places shall be written as pronounced in the borrowing language.

- a. Ībhuku- book (KK)
- b. ekombiūta- Computer (EK)
- c. girikacha – agriculture (MJ)
- d. Ilobhi – Nairobi (KK)
- e. Mambasa (DW)/ Mwambasa (KK) for ‘Mombasa’ City

4.12 Established Names of Places and Names of People

Rule: Except in cases where the name of a place has been borrowed and nativized into the language, established names of places and names of people shall be written following the standard conventional way these are written in documents.

5. SAMPLE TEXTS FROM THE ELEVEN LANGUAGES

5.1 Mijikenda Text

Karibuni kpwahu phawani mshome kikipwahu Kimidzichenda. Kimidzichenda ni rahisi kushoma na kundika. Kila mshomi andegbwira malagizo gaga andalokerwa. Hunaavoyeraa makale na matsia ili maimanye lugha ya mkare wehu.

Welcome to Coast to learn our language Midzichenda. This language is easy to learn. Every learner who follows these instructions will be successful. We pray that you have good health so that you learn this language of our ancestors.

5.2 Kipokomo

Waphokomo ni wantu ambao wakaa karibu ne chana ya Galana a Maro. Wakaa gerigeri ye chana wakaima mpunga, miwa, maembe, ninko, mapemba na pamba. Pia wajama kulowa nisu wakatumia viloo, nchoma na nyavu.

Waphokomo wamanya kuvusya mawaho na kugeea ja ngwena. E lakini ngwena Kajama kudia phokomo. Wahokomo wajama kuwinda nguu, njovu na nyahi phade kae lakini sambu wayacha. Wenye waima na kuloa tu. E vintu vyao ni wali, matoli na nisu. Vintu vyao wajama kuvingiza nazi ikangora sana. E Waphokomo ni wantu wampoe ambao hawafeda kubigana na waishi na kila mntu. Mwisio e Waphokomo pia ni wakenya msiegiywa adyo!

The Pokomos are people who live near the river Galana a Maro (the Pokomo name for River Tana). They live along the river farming rice, sugarcane, mangoes, bananas, maize and cotton.

They also love fishing by using hooks, spears and net. The Pokomos are good in rowing canoes and swimming like crocodiles. But crocodiles love eating the Pokomos. Long time ago, the Pokomos love hunting hippopotamus, elephants and buffaloes but now they stopped to hunt.

They just farm and fish only. Their food is rice, boiled bananas, and mudfish. They love using coconut milk in their foods to make them tasty. The Pokomos are polite people who love peace and they can live with anybody. Lastly, please don't forget that the Pokomos are also Kenyans!

5.3 Kikuria

Gaho amang'ana agamui gano gatagotūka kūmaandīko gakarai gano gatūmīiywī gūkoondīka īng'ana yīnookwī. īkīmanyīirriū kīnū gīkūūrūkia ichinikaarra chiyu kubhibhiria nkīno [], kugituubhaniū maaha Mataayū 6:13

Gūnkaaga nyabhūrebhe ūratūra kunyoora īga ichinkarra ibīrī gūśī ichiincharu nchitūūrūwī hamui: kugītuubhaniū (5-6). īyū nīkorrwī īigo ūkorri ūrī agūsoma atūrī kūūngūra buuya īng'ana īno yandīkīrwe kūhasī hayū.

There are some words which are not found in previous writings which were used to write the word of God. The symbol which identifies those lines in the Bible is this one, [], for example see Mathew 6:13.

Sometimes you can find that two or more lines have been put together: for example (5-6). This is done so as to enable the reader to understand clearly what is written there.

5.4 Gīkūyū

Hīndī īmwe mūhuri nīomaigharire aghīthī kūhura beghū. Hīdī īrīa ahuragha imwe ikīghwa jīrainī, nasio nyoni ighīūka ighīsirīa. Igī ikīghūa mīighuainī kūrīa ghūtarī na tīri mūigī na tīri dwarī mūrīku. īdī hīdī īrīa rīūa rīarire rīghīsisīna nasio ikīūma onarua tondū itiarī na mīri. Igī ikīghwa tīriinī mūnoru, ighīsiara wegaha, imwe siasio ighīsiara maita ighana rīmwe.

One day a sower left to sow seeds. While sowing some fell on the road side and the birds came and ate them up. Others fell on thorns where the soil was little and not deep. When the sun came, it burnt them and they dried up because they didn't have roots. Others fell on rich soil; they produced well, some of them produced up to 100 times.

5.5 Luhya

Bhabhandu bhenyekha khunywa kamabhele nyebhanyole kamani kekukhola ekasi bhulayi. Lundi bhabhandu bhenyekhana khulia chinyenyi chingali nende kamatunda nyebhakhanyola bhulwale ta. Eline lyenyekhana khulondwa nende bhabhandu bhosi.

Everybody needs to take milk in order to be strong to work well. Likewise, everybody needs to eat a lot of vegetables and fruits in order to keep healthy. This should be observed by all people.

5.6 Dawida

Bhadabhida bhosedabhifunyira chabhucha kwa kuditesia kupata maandiko gha Kidabhida. Ni matuku malazi disebhonie ilagho sa iji. Bheke bhabha bhedu ndebhemanyire agha malagho, kwa huwo maandiko ndeghezighanirighe.

We thank all the Dawida people for helping us to come up with our orthography. For a long time we have not had it harmonized. Our ancestors did not know these things, and therefore the orthography was not harmonized.

5.7 Ekegusii

Ritukū ĩrimo Abhaya akabhūka mambia kogenda mūgūndū. Ūgūchia kūbūgūria ĩkībagho akanyora ūmūtī ūrūrī pi! Agakumia gwa! Nki nkiabhete? Akībhūria. Akarangeria mūkaye ĩrindī amūbūrīe. Ūmūrugi oye chinsa ĩchiū ngoteratera arīngī nonye yarīngī mambia. Mūkaye akamotebia ng'a nūmūiri ūsaria ūbūkūmbī bwabho. Abhaya akarora bhūbhī mono. Kūrindī Abhaya takora kīndī ghionsi. Ekororekana ng'a Abhaya nomotoereru.

One day Abaya woke up in the morning to go to the farm. When he went to pick the hoe he found the handle had come off completely. He was shocked. What had happened? He asked himself?

He called his wife so that he would inquire. The wife was singing repeatedly that time even if it was morning. The wife told him that a relative has spoilt their jembe. Abaya got so annoyed. But Abaya did not do anything. It appears that Abhaya is tolerant.

5.8 Kīikamba

Mūnyambū na mbiti maendie kūtabha ng'ombe. Na mūnyambū atabha ng'ombe nūme mūonza, nake mbiti nga mūonza. Na mooka mūsyī malika kūīthya ila ng'ombe. Maīthya matūkū maingī na mūthenya ūmwe mūnyambū ookīla tene, athi chūūnī eethīa ng'ombe ya mbiti nīsyaie, nake mbiti nīwamamīte. Nībho mūnyambū woosie ĩla nthakame ya

ng'ombe abhakanga ĩla nzaũ yake nĩkana amwĩe mbiti kana nĩ nzaũ yake ĩsyaie. Na oosa kala kasaũ atwaa bhau bhe nzaũ, naathi kũmũamũkyia mbiti.

Lion and Hyena went to raid cattle. Lion raided seven bulls, and Hyena raided seven cows. When they got home they herded their cattle for many days. One day, when Hyena was sleeping, Lion woke up early and went to the cattle shed and found that Hyena's cow had given birth. Then Lion took blood from the cow that had given birth and smeared it on one of his bull planning to tell Lion that it is his bull that had given birth. He also took the calf and kept it near the bull. He then went to wake Hyena up.

5.9 Kĩembu

Ghasoni kanini kaghũrũkĩte ĩghũrũ na kwarĩ na mbevo mũno ginya ghakĩghanda na ghakĩghwa kĩvarorĩ kĩnene.

Kaĩ vau ng'ombe ĩvĩtũkĩte ĩghĩkamĩĩra na ghakĩanjia kũĩigua ũrugarĩ. Mai ma ng'ombe nĩmatethirie ghũkathiria mbevo. Ghakĩmama vau nĩũndũ wa ũrugharĩ na ghĩkeno, na vuvarĩ ghakĩanjia kũina nĩ ghũkena.

Kanyau kavĩtũkĩte ghakĩghua ghasoni ghakina na ghakĩũka kũroria karũmĩĩra mũghambo wa ghaconi, nĩkonire ghasoni ghakunĩkĩtwe nĩ mai ma ng'ombe. Na vau ũghuo ghaghĩkaruta maĩri na ghakĩnakaĩa.

A little bird was flying but it was so cold the bird froze and fell to the ground in a large field.

While she was lying there, a cow came by and dropped some dung on her. As the frozen bird lay there in the pile of cow dung, she began to realize how warm she was.

The dung was actually thawing her out! She lay there, all warm and happy, and soon began to sing for joy.

A passing cat heard the bird singing and came to investigate. Following the sound, the cat discovered the bird under the pile of cow dung, and promptly dug her out and ate her.

5.10 Kimeru

Kinya athũrĩte Jumatatũ rũkĩĩrĩ. Mantũ joothe joonekanagha jathuki rũtere rwawe. Ghĩntũ kĩambere kũthĩthia kĩaĩ kuuma ghĩtandene

nĩkenda eta sukuru. Ng'ina owe nĩamũthuranĩĩite sai na mũghate. Wee nĩĩarire na eta sukuru. Rĩĩĩa arĩ jĩrene etĩite sukuru, nĩonere arĩ na guuo sia kũmama. Kinya nĩasokere nyuma ja ghũĩkĩra guuo siawe sia sukuru.

Rĩĩĩaetire sukuru nĩethĩire atĩ, ghũtarĩ na sukuru ntukũ ĩĩu ntontũ ariimũ nĩbharĩ na mũsemanio. Kinya nĩathũrire mono ntontũ bhwa ghũũkĩrũa rũũkĩrĩ kaiinda na ghũtaarĩ na sukuru.

Nĩaanire ja na aghwatana na tũana tũgĩ kĩenine ghũsetha.

Kinya hated Monday morning. Everything seemed to go wrong on her side. The first thing she did was to get out of the bed so that she could go to school. Her mother had prepared tea and bread for her. She ate and went to school. When she was on her way to school, she realized that she was wearing pajamas. Kinya went back home to put on her school uniform.

When she went to school she found that there was no school that day because the teachers had a meeting. Kinya was so annoyed because of waking up very early and yet there was no school.

She went home and joined other children in the field to play.

5.11 Kiswahili

Hujambo rafiki? Wanao na mumeo hawajambo? Sisi hatuna neno pamoja na familia yangu yote, hofu ni kwenu tu.

Nilitaka kukujulisha ya kwamba tulifika salama kutoka Ukambani. Tulifurahia kuwa pamoja na familia yako. Kwanza mamako, aliituchekesha na hadithi zake za kitambo. Tulifurahia pia chakula chenu cha muthokoi na matunda yaliyokuwa kwa wingi shambani mwenu. Kwa hakika mumebarikiwa kuwa na chakula kwa wingi.

Sasa ningetaka kukualika uje kwetu Mombasa ili pia upate kujua wazazi wangu. Napendekeza upange safari yako hapo mwezi wa Disemba ambapo kila mmoja wetu atakuwa amesafiri huko. Tunapanga kuwa na sherehe ndongo ya shukrani siku ya jumapili ya tarehe tatu.

How are you? How are your children and your husband? My family and I are well.

The aim of this letter is to inform you that we arrived safely from Ukambani. We were happy to spend time with your family, especially your mother who entertained us with her folktales. We also enjoyed the delicious muthokoi (food) and fruits from your shamba. I must say that you are very lucky to have food in plenty.

I now would like to invite you to visit our home in Mombasa so that you can also meet my parents. I suggest that you organize to come in December when all of us will be at home. We plan to have a thanks giving celebration on the 3rd of December.

- i Dawida covers the languages with the names: Taita, Taveta and Pare.
- ii The word 'simple' here is used to contrast these consonants from the co-articulated consonants like the pre-nasalised ones.
- iii The term, 'complex consonants', is used here for lack of a better term. This combination of letters represents one consonant sound.
- iv In some languages, when expressing adverbial meaning reduplicates are written as separate words, for example:
 - a. abwo abwo- there there (EK)
 - b. Kavola kavola- slowly slowly (KK)