

**TANGAZA COLLEGE**



**CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN AFRICA**

**KIUNA ROSEMARY NJERI**

**THE IMPORTANCE OF MOTHER TONGUE:  
(A CASE STUDY AT OLYMPIC ESTATE, KIBERA)**

**Moderator**

**Dr. Zacharia W. Samita**

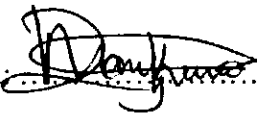
A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Award  
of a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Social Communication

**NAIROBI**

**2009**

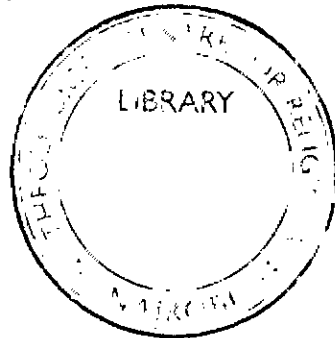
## STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this Thesis is my original work achieved through my personal reading, scientific research method and critical reflection. It is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the Bachelor of Arts Degree in Social Communication. It has never been submitted to any other college or university for academic credit. All sources have been acknowledged and cited in full.


Signed:  .....

Name of Student: Kiuna, Rosemary Njeri

Date: 10<sup>th</sup> June 2009



This Thesis has been submitted for examination with my approval as the supervisor.

Signed:  .....

Name of Supervisor: Dr. Zacharia. W. Samita

Date: 10<sup>th</sup> June 2009

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this research work to God Almighty. My loving mother Margaret W.Kiuna, my fiancé Paul for all his efforts.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

I am sincerely thankful to the Almighty God for giving me the strength and providing resources and inspiration to successfully complete this Thesis. I also thank my dearest and loving mother Margaret W. Kiuna who gave me emotional, financial and spiritual support, even through her continued prayers. My genuine thanks also go to Paul, my supportive friends Christine, Katherine, James, Isaac, Mbugua, Karanja for the sacrifices and efforts they made for me. My deepest appreciation also goes to my Supervisor, Dr. Zacharia.W. Samita for his kindness understanding, scholarly guidance and continued support in this work. Lastly, my appreciation goes to Mrs. Owino: she helped and allowed me distribute the questionnaires at Olympic Primary School. I cannot forget to mention my interviewees for their resourcefulness, time and cooperation. God Bless them all, including anyone else I might have forgotten to acknowledge.

STUDENT DECLARATION.....	ii
DEDICATION.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.....	iv
ABBREVIATIONS.....	v
GENERAL INTRODUCTION .....	1
1. Background to the Study .....	1
2. Statement of the Research Problem.....	2
3. Aim and Objectives of the Study.....	5
4. Hypothesis .....	6
5. Limitations of the Thesis .....	6
CHAPTER ONE.....	7
1.0 Introduction .....	7
1.1 Definition of Terms .....	7
1.2 Africans' Perspective on the Importance of Mother Tongue .....	8
1.3 Parents and the Mother Tongue.....	10
1.4 TV and our Language .....	12
1.5 Culture, Language and Self –Esteem .....	15
1.6 Ways to Promote Mother Tongue .....	18
Conclusion.....	19
CHAPTER TWO.....	21
2.0 Introduction .....	21
2.1 Research Methods.....	21
2.2 Location of Study .....	22
2.3 Sampling Criteria.....	22
2.4 Data Analysis.....	22
COMMUNICATION THEORY .....	35
2.5.1 Introduction .....	35
2.5.2 Social Learning Theory .....	35
2.5.3 Uses and Gratification Theory.....	37
CHAPTER THREE .....	40
COMMUNICATION STRATEGY .....	40
3.0 Introduction .....	40
3.3 Funding.....	47
3.4 Evaluation .....	47
3.5 Conclusion .....	47
GENERAL CONCLUSION.....	48
RECOMMENDATIONS.....	50
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	52
APPENDICES: QUESTIONNAIRE.....	55
APPENDIX 2: Field Notes.....	57
APPENDIX 4: Participant Observation .....	58

## ABBREVIATIONS

Advert	Advertisement
AIDS	Acquired Immunity Deficiency Disease
CDF	Constituency Development Fund
C.U.E.A	Catholic University of Eastern Africa.
E.g.	For Example
H.I.V	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
I.e.	That is
ISC	Institute of Social Communication
KTN	Kenya Television Network
NARC	National Rainbow Coalition
NTV	Nation Television
SPSS	Statistical package for Social Sciences
TV	Television

## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

### 1. Background to the Study

Language is an important part of a society's culture. However, globalization has seen African states give away more than they can receive. This is because they have embraced English lifestyle and are on the verge of forgetting their own culture. Languages are very powerful instruments of preserving and developing our tangible and intangible heritage. Initiatives to promote the dissemination of mother tongues will serve not only to encourage linguistic diversity and multilingual education but also to develop fuller awareness of linguistic and cultural traditions throughout the world and to inspire solidarity based on understanding, tolerance and dialogue<sup>1</sup>

African local languages are extremely important in giving people an identity in a very rapidly changing world. Indigenous languages are slowly dying out simply because Africans generally believe that foreign languages are superior to local indigenous languages. The world will be a poorer place to live in should the other languages and their associated cultures disappear, or become enfeebled as a consequence of the rise of English, a betted by continuing American supremacy in the cultural sphere.<sup>2</sup>

There is need to decolonize people's minds so that they can take pride and preserve their languages. Loss of indigenous languages also means loss of thousands of years' worth of culture, heritage and tradition. Indigenous languages also carry much of the wisdom of the people who speak them.

Mother tongue is very important at cultural and emotional levels. It can be incredibly traumatic for a child to lack a primary language of expression which he/she feels at home with and which provides self-identity. This would leave the child with a

---

1 *Bilingual conversation*, Nolasco, [http:// www.kottke.org](http://www.kottke.org), 14-01-2009

2 T.S. Ismail, *The Language of Post Colonial Literatures*, 117

low self-esteem and a feeling of inferiority complex when interacting with other children who know the language.

When a child is born in a given community, she/he acquires a language and learns how to use it, with whom and when to use it. Language allows speakers to represent reality, negotiate norms and express their subjectivity. They use the language to convey what they want to say about themselves or the world.<sup>3</sup> It is easier to teach children a language when they are young than when they are old. From the age of ten especially, it becomes a little bit difficult for the child to learn one's mother tongue. In traditional African societies, parents and relatives were instrumental and would involve their children in knowing their mother language. Mother tongue does not necessarily mean the language of one's mother. Indeed, it means the first language one is introduced to when young.<sup>4</sup> The researcher, therefore, has a scholarly interest to know why mother languages are dying out and what this portends in terms of social communication.

## **2. Statement of the Research Problem**

Mother tongue is no longer as prevalent as it was in pre-colonial traditional African societies. A strong mother tongue is a stepping-stone towards developing strong language ability. This in turn contributes to one's conceptual and indeed social and economic development. Language is a critical tool in one's attempt to interact with his/her social and economic world<sup>5</sup>

The researcher has been observing people around cannot help but wonder in despair the way individuals especially the young are shunning away from their culture and swiftly embracing the western and modern culture.

---

3 F. Willis, *Early Childhood Television viewing and Adolescent Behavior*, pg 102

4 J. Mwazemba, *Speak Your Mother Tongue With Pride. The Standard*, 30,2008,4

5 M. Wambui, *Parents Magazine*, August, 58

This is the culture that is most common among the group well known as the 'dot com generation'. A lot of changes are happening in this generation especially when it comes to language. The society is experiencing the birth of new languages which is taking place at a very fast rate and young people are embracing. The researcher therefore deems that TV is playing a very vital role in killing of indigenous languages. However, the researcher also believes that the same TV can be used to promote mother tongue especially among children who are the most affected and who are the interest group of the researcher.

Maurice Ragutu, a language teacher at the University of Nairobi, agrees that it does not matter whether it is vernacular or mother tongue: both languages helps people to trace their ancestral roots, culture, heritage and traditions, which all help promote unity in a community. According to him, indigenous languages are dying not only in Kenya but also in other countries. He said, "The society we are living in is dynamic which explains why some languages are under threat of extinction. Many parents are to blame for their children's inability to speak their mother tongue. It is the duty of the parent to expose children to their language. He said that children can only learn their mother tongue by being exposed to it.<sup>6</sup>Languages are an integral part of the cultural knowledge and behavior. The researcher has established that, Kenyan parents are key contributors to the gradual death of mother tongues.

There are a number of possible reasons for this. Parents have actually not played their role in encouraging their children to learn and speak their mother tongue. Parents tend to think that when their children are good in English and Kiswahili, unlike in mother tongue, they will be in a position to perform better in school and in their career life, than

---

6 R. Maurice, Student Encyclopedia of African Literature; *Why Mother Tongues are Dying*.  
<http://www.africanlanguages.com>. 14- 01-2009

those who have poor command of these languages. Where these children live and study also contributes significantly to language acquisition and mastery. For example whom the children interact with is a contributing factor. Many a times, it is common in the residential estates, in this case Olympic Estate, to find people from diverse racial and ethno-linguistic backgrounds. Another key factor depended on where the children studied. It is common in the residential estates, in this case Olympic Estate, to find people from diverse racial and ethno-linguistic backgrounds.

European children are faster and more assertive in learning while African children are slower and lack confidence. This could be because of their linguistic and the environment in which they are brought up also. Most children in Africa tend to learn through the media and the environment. The researcher was able to find out that these children spend very little time with their parents and the environment they live in is also too busy for them. This reality presents these children with difficulty in practicing their mother tongue, even if they wanted to. Long-term experience now seems to suggest that a vernacular medium is educationally preferable because sound teaching must, to some degree, interact with the home life of the child and must initially be based on concepts formed during the child's pre-school experiences<sup>7</sup>

Another challenge is that people have adopted the attitude that if one is talking in one's mother tongue, it could be viewed as a sign of backwardness. It is not clear whether the aforementioned reasons are valid.

Little is even known about some of the implications of this reality. Is neglect of mother tongue a disaster or could the contrary be the case? The researcher would want an in-depth scholarly research investigation into this reality vis-à-vis social communication.

---

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.jpanafrican.com>, M. Mathooka 27-02-2009

Some research works show that a strong grasp and grounding in one's mother tongue forms the foundational building blocks of language acquisition even for other languages. Indeed, it helps children perform better in school than those who only speak two languages that is English and Kiswahili. Speaking more than three languages helps a child think in a broader and more complex way than the one who speaks only one language.<sup>8</sup>

Another way in which native languages are facing extinction is due to suppression in schools. This is where the authority imposes rules on native speakers in schools that punish children who practice the language in the school quarter.

Ngugi wa Thiong'o recalls undesired ways by which English was being imposed on them at the expense of their language. ".....One of the most humiliating experiences was to be caught speaking Gikuyu in the vicinity of the school. The culprit was given corporal punishment: three-five strokes of the cane on bare buttocks or made to carry a metal plate around the neck with inscriptions such as; I am STUPID or I am a DONKEY".<sup>9</sup>

### **3. Aim and Objectives of the Study**

The overall aim of this study is to show that television (TV) has immensely contributed to the growing decline, decay or even extinction of mother tongue. The study is to be guided by specific objectives:

1. Design a communicative strategy that will help promote use of mother tongue.
2. Identify audience needs with regard to mother tongue.

---

<sup>8</sup> M. Wambui, *Parents Magazine*, March 2008, 58.

<sup>9</sup> C.f. T.S. Ismail, *The Language of Post Colonial Literatures*, 81

3. Recommend a TV program proposal which will communicate the need to know one's mother tongue as well as seeing the value of appreciating their culture.

#### **4. Hypothesis**

This thesis aims to test that:

- ✓ TV personalities indeed influence the language they use to communicate since children emulate them a lot.
- ✓ Children have access to TV and consume it heavily and it affects what they watch and the programs they associate with.
- ✓ Parents spend little or no time to encourage their children to speak their mother tongue
- ✓ Children do not see the need of speaking their mother tongue since they think it will affect them later on in life.
- ✓ Most children think it is important to know their mother tongue though they do not speak it.

#### **5. Limitations of the Thesis**

The topic the researcher is writing on has very limited literature on it here in Kenya and Africa at large. The researcher, therefore, encountered challenges in finding written materials to refer to, as such and the internet came in handy for her literature review.

Another challenge was that most of the interviewees were adamant in giving their views since they thought this topic was not as relevant as the rest were, for example on

HIV and AIDS, violence and drugs which made it hard to gather information. Therefore the researcher had to really struggle to get cooperative and resourceful respondents

## CHAPTER ONE

### URBAN CHILDEN AND MOTHER TONGUE

#### 1.0 Introduction

This chapter examines social and cultural issues that help promote the use of mother tongue among urban children. It explains how indigenous languages can enrich children in their growth. The chapter also shows how the language can enrich children's culture which acts as a stepping stone towards a good educational background and boosts their self-esteem. Through this, children maintain their pride of belonging to a certain ethnic group hence grateful about their cultural identity.

#### 1.1 Definition of Terms

##### *1.1.1 Child*

A young human being, a boy or girl who depends on parents or guardians; a person before the beginning of puberty, or below the age of 18 years, unless the law stipulates otherwise; a young human being of either sex from before birth to the completion of physical development.<sup>10</sup>

##### *1.1.2 Language Extinction*

A language which no longer has any native speakers.<sup>11</sup>

##### *1.1.3 Dead Language*

A language which has stopped changing in grammar and vocabulary. Normally, conversion to an extinct language occurs when a language is being directly replaced by a different one.<sup>12</sup>

##### *1.1.4 First Language*

First language is the one which one learns to speak first as a child. It is the language that one speaks best.<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup> Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, 107.

<sup>11</sup> [www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org), 20-1-2009.

<sup>12</sup> [www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org), 20-1-2009.

### *1.1.5 Vernacular*

It is a native language of a country or locality. It is sometimes applied to non-standard dialects of a global language; the language spoken in a country or region, especially the official language.<sup>14</sup>

### *1.1.5 Socialization*

The process through which people learn the skills, knowledge, values, motives and roles, that is, culture of the groups to which they belong or the communities in which they live.<sup>15</sup>

### *1.1.6 Mother Tongue*

The first language one is introduced to when young or from birth.<sup>16</sup>

## **1.2 Africans' Perspective on the Importance of Mother Tongue**

When Professor Ngugi wa Thiong'o launched *Murogi wa Kagoogo*, meaning Wizard of the Crow, is a novel written in Gikuyu, many scholars laughed it off as a joke because they could not understand how such a learned scholar of Ngugi's repute would expect them to read his work in Gikuyu.

Ngugi had demonstrated by word and deeds that he was willing to go great lengths to keep African languages alive. For him, using foreign languages in literature was a mark of neo-colonisation.<sup>17</sup>

"I believe that my writing in Gikuyu language, a Kenyan language, an African language, is part and parcel of the anti-imperialist struggles of Kenyan and African people".<sup>18</sup>

---

13 [www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org), 20-1-2009.

14 *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*, 107

15 A. Nzangi, *Psychology of Communication*, Class Notes, Tangaza College, CUEA, 2007

17 <http://www.movertonguematters.com>, 20-1-2009

17 <http://www.eaststandard.net/magazines/society/articles.com>, 21-1-2009

18 Cf. T.S. Ismail, *The Language of Post Colonial Literatures*, 103

During the pre-colonial period, indigenous African dialects were in use. Foreign languages such as English, German and French came with the colonialists. In many parts of Africa, evangelization by Christian missionaries coincided with colonization. To spread Christianity, missionaries had to first teach people new languages. In this way, they would understand the languages in which the Bible was then written. They also did this to enhance or ease other activities such as trade and administration of the locals. They then introduced formal education through which these languages: English, French, Spanish and Portuguese, among others, were taught.<sup>19</sup>

Westernization introduced members of African societies to western education and culture. The first respondents to western education began to have prestigious positions in society. As a result, other members began going to school. Gradually, use of these foreign languages started gaining prestige in the society.

In his book *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of African Languages in Literature* (1986), Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o traces the erosion of indigenous languages. During colonization, missionaries and colonial administrators controlled African gatherings, publishing houses and the educational content and contexts of novels.

Today, western civilization and other aspects of modernity including new technology, continue to tear apart the socio-cultural fabric of Africans. During the National Alliance of Rainbow Coalition (NARC) era, free education was introduced. This would have acted as a good stepping stone for introducing mother tongue. The government plays a vital role in promoting children's rights and education but when it comes to culture, they have failed completely. I concur with Mathooko who states that, "A glaring gap, which poses a major challenge to the success of the Free Primary Education,

---

<sup>19</sup> Why Mother Tongues are Dying , <http://www.Students Encyclopida of African Litérature, Africans Languages>, 21-01-2009

exists in terms of the language of instruction. The existing language policy disregards mother tongues as tools of disseminating knowledge and does very little to promote them.”<sup>20</sup>

The researcher, therefore, urges the government to allocate more time in the free education curriculum to helping the promotion of indigenous knowledge especially among the modern-urban children. It would be important if people could stand on their grounds, follow Ngugi’s footsteps and fight for their native language. Ngugi is one of the significant figures and a prominent example of postcolonial writers who has abandoned English for creative writing in favor of his native language Gikuyu.

### 1.3 Parents and the Mother Tongue

Our languages are dying because some parents think to be modern is to learn the English language and therefore do not speak the local language with their kids at home. English is gradually becoming the first language in the homes of modern families in Kenya. It is not funny but very shameful when one cannot speak at least one local language. Kenyans may not know it, but visitors from other countries marvel at the rich diversity of local languages in the country. It is a heritage that is in perpetual danger as young people shun the language of their mothers.<sup>21</sup>

Children who speak more than two languages are believed to do better in school than those who speak only one language. Thus, parents should be the first educators of their young ones.<sup>22</sup> The researcher agrees with the above statement but parents here do not necessarily mean “biological parents”. It calls for the involvement of the community as a whole. Those who were taught in their mother tongue for three years at pre-primary level scored better—but not as well as those who were schooled for six years in their first mother tongue.<sup>23</sup> Parents should thus ensure that even if a child is too young to

---

<sup>20</sup> Mathooka, M (2009). *The Journal of Pan African Studies*, <http://www.jpanafrican.com>, 27-03-2009

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.eaststandard.net/magazines/society/articles.com>, 21-1-2009

<sup>22</sup> M. Wambui, *Parents Magazine*, March 2008, 58

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.un.org/depts/dhl/language/index.html>, [pagessociolingo.wordpress.com/kenya-why-mother-tongues-are-dying](http://pagessociolingo.wordpress.com/kenya-why-mother-tongues-are-dying) 21-01-2009

understand, they should speak to him/her in their mother tongue. This will help the child to know his/her mother language as she/he grows up (Nzangi March 11, 2007).

In today's society, parents, just like the children, feel that mother tongue is outdated and is left to the older generation. They, therefore, may talk to their spouses, peers and other relatives in their mother tongue. But when it comes to speaking to their children, they use foreign languages or Kiswahili.

The researcher interviewed Jecinta, a business lady from Nairobi who is from the Abaluhya community but married to a Gusii. Jecinta felt that mother tongue was not that important as long as there was efficient communication. She proudly told the researcher that her children did not speak either of the languages and she did not consider it a problem.

Although they could not utter a single word in either language, they understood what was being said. She even went ahead and proudly told the researcher that she had no problem when she spoke her mother tongue to her children and they responded in English or Kiswahili as long as the message was put across. This needs to be reviewed but if only parents played their roles properly. Parents should team up with teachers and mentors and ensure that they play their respective roles in the formative process of children and in especially encouraging them learn and communicate their mother tongue.

The researcher concurs with Ms. Kusum who states that, "Communicating in the mother tongue lends for happier and more confident children. Speaking in the mother tongue comes naturally to kids; they don't have to think in an alien language before they

---

communicate. Besides which at an early age children have a much larger capacity of learning languages.”<sup>24</sup>

No society in the world has developed in a sustained and democratic fashion on the basis of borrowed or colonial languages. Under-development in Kenya and in Africa at large can partly be associated with cultural division, which is structured in the context of colonial languages.<sup>25</sup>

#### **1.4 TV and our Language**

Media, and especially TV through its programs, gives us a different version of language which we already know. “English is the great ‘killer language’ because the media and the corporate sector use it”.<sup>26</sup> Primordial agents of socialization e.g. parents, family, teachers and the society has been reduced and the newer media forms e.g. TV, radio, internet, magazines are becoming a very powerful part of children and young peoples’ day to day life.

Television is inserted on a number of different popular and professional discourse, for example, as a news medium, entertainment, great time waster, babysitter gone out of control, source of everyday chit-chat and a cause of negative social effects.<sup>27</sup> This is unlike in the past when TV offered programs on a limited number of channels. Much of the viewing was a shared experience and the greater part of the children viewing took place in the family sitting room. This was the time when parents, older brothers and sisters would monitor what their younger siblings were supposed to or not to watch. Nowadays, TV has been left to the children all by themselves. There is no one to monitor

---

<sup>24</sup> W. Kusum, <http://news.education4india.com> 26-02-2009

<sup>25</sup> Mathooka, M (2009) *The Journal of Pan African Studies*, <http://www.jpanafrican.com>. 27-03-2009

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.apnaorg.com/articles/rehman/rehman2.html> 27-02-2009

<sup>27</sup> D. Peter, *Television and The Public Sphere*, 24

what they watch. They thus end up watching programs which exposes them to violence, early relationship and rebelliousness among other vices. Such do not benefit them in any way. If anything, they instill negative attitudes on them.

Extensive viewing can lead children to identify with television characters. Such identification may make the viewer to be receptive to encoding and adopting the behaviors displayed by those characters and influenced by the content viewed.<sup>28</sup>

Such people include pop music stars, movie actors/actresses, models and the real public figures like Hillary Clinton, Tyra Banks among others. The effects of entertainment-education strategy occur particularly as a result of pro-social interaction and role modeling by audience individuals with positive or negative media characters.<sup>29</sup> This is the reason why the TV screens are full of these personalities as their presenters.

The reason advertisers cover or use stars in their adverts is because the stars will be appealing to the target audience and therefore they will generate sales. A good example is the “*Tujipange*” advert which uses most of the secular artists including Wahu, Juacali, and Nameless in putting the message across. When young people see that these celebrity figures are protecting themselves against HIV, they will follow the step.

The researcher suggests some of the ways through which this can be achieved to promote local languages in Kenya. The main languages these characters use in the adverts is a particular mix of languages. Language mix is sometimes a concoction of Kiswahili and English, giving birth to a new language called Slang (code mixing of English and Kiswahili) and Sheng (a way of corrupting Kiswahili). Slang and Sheng are fast gaining popularity: their vocabulary keeps on growing and the young ones are rapidly embracing it. A good example of this adverts include the “*Tumechill*” advert

---

<sup>28</sup> O.F. Willis, *Early Childhood Television Viewing and Adolescent*, 2001, 102

<sup>29</sup> S. Arvind- R.M. Everett, *Entertainment and Education*, 140

(which means we have abstained), mostly aired in local TV stations. In this advert, a lot of Slang is used for example they say, “We gat plans za maisha, we want to succeed, lazima tu- work hard”, that is “we have got plans for the future, we want to succeed, it’s a must we work hard”. In this advert, the target audience is definitely the young people and that is why the use of Slang is highly used.

The role of media as a tool of communication has become the new way of socializing children.

These children are not only confronted with the proliferation of new communication facilities at early ages also their responses to these facilities are much more rapid as compare to the older generation.<sup>30</sup> The researcher’s line of thought is that with the invention of vernacular stations in the country, the same characters can be used to do adverts in their mother tongue and the young people will emulate them. This will help boost native language speaking among urban children.

Real public figures also affect the language children use because they are role models of the society. For example, the sitting President at times uses Sheng when giving his speech. One time he was gave a public speech and he said, “*Nendeni mkajienjoi*” which means, “Go and enjoy yourselves”. If a president who is not only supposed to be a role model of children, but also the country as a whole communicates in Sheng, what will make a child not want to do the same? The researcher cannot stop to wonder how Sheng is growing and is being appreciated even by the president himself! The researcher therefore suggests that if anything positive about local languages should be done, it should start with parents, politicians and celebrities who are the role models of the young ones.

---

<sup>30</sup> O.F. Willis, *Early Childhood Television Viewing and Adolescent*, 2001, 100

### 1.5 Culture, Language and Self –Esteem

Culture is dynamic. With the effects of globalization and technology, things are changing very fast. As much as change is unbeatable, we need to embrace our culture. Cultural values need to be instilled in every individual from birth through the process of being raised up.<sup>31</sup>

Culture can be defined as that complex whole which includes beliefs, morals, laws, knowledge, customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.<sup>32</sup> Language experts observe that today's children tend to lose their cultural identity, language and culture, the language being a prime transmitter of human culture from one generation to the next.<sup>33</sup>

Anthropologists concur that all language users, through all stages of cultural evolution, leave a mark on society. This means that if a generation misinterprets its language, its culture is automatically in danger of misinterpretation.<sup>34</sup> Language is the soul of the people; it is the mind of the people, and their spirit. People who have lost use of their mother tongue are culturally stripped in soul, spirit and mind.<sup>35</sup>

In the past, people valued their culture and traditions and held to it with utmost respect. Traditional culture refers to a culture that has maintained a way of life based on stable traditions passed on from one generation to the next. These cultures do not generally value change but rather place a higher value on remaining true to cultural traditions.<sup>36</sup> Traditionally, people used to be very proud of their mother tongue as compared to now. This is because they could easily communicate with their peers and families. It was an indispensable tool for communication, interaction and socialization.

---

<sup>32</sup> Z. Samita, *Culture Communication and Society, Class Notes*, Tangaza College CUEA, 2007

<sup>33</sup> <http://www.eaststandard.net/magazines/society/articles.com> 21-1-2009

<sup>34</sup> <http://www.eaststandard.net/magazines/society/articles.com>, 21-1-2009

<sup>35</sup> <http://www.language literacy and community.com>, 21-1-2009

<sup>36</sup> A.J. Jeffrey, *Adolescence and Emerging Adulthood*, 5

Today, many people tend to develop a negative attitude towards their mother tongue. This attitude is picked up by upcoming generations. The mostly used languages today include French, German and mostly English. This results to diminishing mother tongue from one generation to the other.

Modern children think that not knowing their mother tongue shows that they were born in the city and have no links with “rural Africa”. John Mwazemba asserts, “We no longer value our mother tongue”. Surprisingly, people who can speak their vernacular are generally seen as being outdated by their fellow peers. It is even worse when they are made to believe that commitment to their mother language is of no economic value: it would make them lose opportunities in today’s globalized world.

When people are made to feel so, they stop using the language and even pass that belief to the successive generation.<sup>37</sup> In his book *Cultural Conditions of Economic developments*, Grandona concludes that culture is viewed to be more powerful than economics or politics.<sup>38</sup>

The researcher concurs with Harding and Riley (1986) that:

A child who has a positive attitude towards the native community (mother tongue) is going to try to make friends within this community: this in turn is going to make demands on his/her learning abilities and will also increase his/her motivation to learn. If the child feels rejected or ignored, on the other hand, he/she will not attempt to forge links with the native community and will consequently have a very low motivation and confidence. The child will then reduce the number of occasions that would require communication in that language.<sup>39</sup>

Many times, people feel shy and feel that they are being despised if they fluently speak their vernacular. Children, especially those from the elite families are made to

---

<sup>37</sup>J. Mwazemba, (2008) “Speak Your Mother Tongue With Pride”, *The Standard*, April ,30, 16

<sup>38</sup> C.f. H. E. Lawrence- H. P. Samuel, *Culture Matters*, 298

<sup>39</sup> [http://www.kottke.com/Bilingual\\_conversation.org](http://www.kottke.com/Bilingual_conversation.org) 04-02-2009

believe that mother tongue is for the older generations and people in the rural areas. The researcher hopes that the society can take time to encourage these children to learn and appreciate their mother tongue here by preventing them from robbing themselves of their cultural richness. Edward states that, "A man without culture is not a man".<sup>40</sup>

In learning a language, one adopts a "language ego". This refers to the way in which one's self-concept and sense of self-esteem are intertwined with language. This also relates to the degree to which, in language transactions, one's ego is exposed.<sup>41</sup> As children grow mentally and emotionally, they slowly develop an individual identity and an emotional bond with their parents, based in part on a shared language.

If the children have been raised speaking English, it would be difficult for the parents to introduce another language (mother tongue) at a later stage. Mother tongue should therefore, be held with high esteem. Those who already know the language should not be humiliated. Instead, they should be contented because their identity has not been ripped off from them. Alternatively, they should be delighted since they have an identity and a culture to be proud of.<sup>42</sup>

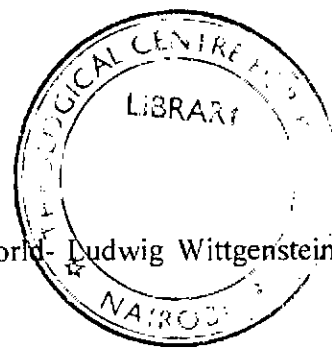
Parents and the society at large should, therefore, take it upon themselves to teach and encourage children to learn and speak their mother tongue with pride. This greatly helps them boost their self-esteem, and in so doing, help the children improve their academic performance. Children do not learn a mother tongue or any other language spontaneously. The process is not automatic. It requires time, attention, concentration, effort and an emotional bond between the children and their parents.

---

<sup>40</sup> H. T. Edward, *Beyond Culture*, 220

<sup>41</sup> J. Mwazemba, Speak Your Mother Tongue With Pride, (2008) *The Standard*, April, 30,16.

<sup>42</sup> <http://www.bbcnews.com.22-1-2009>



## 1.6 Ways to Promote Mother Tongue

The limits of my language means the limits of my world- Ludwig Wittgenstein.(1889-1951)<sup>43</sup> The researcher concurs with UNESCO that;

The 21st of February is celebrated as World Mother Tongue Day. The UNESCO, which hopes to make people conscious of the importance of the mother tongue, declares in its latest publication *Education in a Multilingual World* (2003), that the most suitable language for teaching basic concepts to children is the mother tongue.<sup>44</sup>

Peter Mwaura, a *Daily Nation* journalist stated that World Mother Tongue Day recognizes the sanctity of all vernacular languages, promotes mother tongues and creates greater awareness of linguistic and cultural traditions.

It recognizes that mother tongues help to preserve and develop our heritage; and strengthen the unity and cohesion of our societies. It is part of UNESCO's drive to protect and preserve mother tongues.<sup>45</sup>

The government through the media should do something about this day if it claims to be protecting cultures in any given region and should stop taking this day for granted. Most mother tongues are also dying because the competent users are fewer and the existing users lack good command of the language. For instance parents fear that their children will be left behind if they teach them their mother tongue since they think that the language does not determine one's future in the job market.<sup>46</sup>

The researcher therefore proposes some of the ways to promote mother tongue which includes: Writing books, research papers and other documentation using mother tongue.

---

<sup>43</sup>W. Ludwig. <http://www.kameme.co.ke> 27-02-2009

<sup>44</sup> <http://www.un.org/Depts/dhl/language> 27-02-2009

<sup>45</sup> P. Mwaura, *The Daily Nation* (2009), February 20, 12

<sup>46</sup> P. Mwaura, *The Daily Nation* (2009), February 20, 14

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

This chapter seeks to identify the audience needs with regard to mother tongue use as well as help the researcher to come up with the desired results. The responses will also help the researcher in designing a proposal which will fit the needs of the audience. Secondly, it will help the researcher in coming up with a TV program proposal which will act as a channel which shall help to describe the communication strategies. The guests will also be used to encourage the audience who will appear on the show and those who will be watching from home that poor command of mother tongue adversely affects the integral development of a child, especially in linguistic skills.

Thirdly, most children think it is important to know their mother tongue though they do not speak it. Fourthly, people need to appreciate their culture through the TV program.

The researcher also analyzes the findings, using SPSS. The social and cultural situation is also explained here, using data from the questionnaires and interviews carried out by the researcher.

#### **2.1 Research Methods**

The researcher used both quantitative and qualitative methods. The researcher had prepared both open and closed-ended questions which helped her in gathering data. She also did participant observation and conducted four in-depth interviews.

## **2.2 Location of Study**

The researcher carried out her research at Olympic Estate, Kibera. This is where the researcher lived and schooled hence she is familiar with the place.

The estate is populated most by middle class people. It is full of people from different ethnic groups which need to communicate and socialize.

Most of them communicate in the national language Kiswahili and English. This leaves a very small percentage speaking their mother tongue. This is what motivated her to undertake research in this area, to establish if there is any change.

## **2.3 Sampling Criteria**

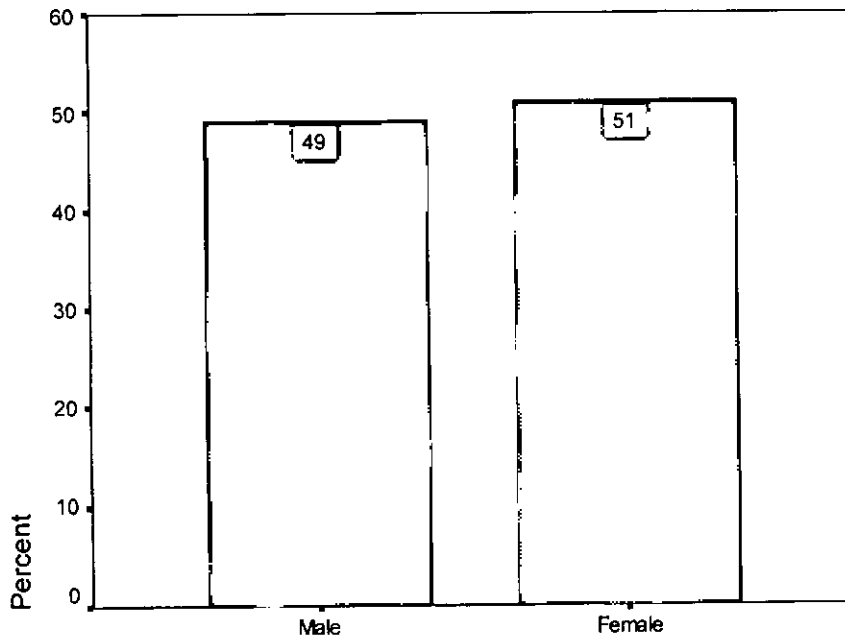
The researcher distributed 100 questionnaires. All of them were returned completed and were valid. They constitute the quantitative data. Interviews generated the qualitative data.

## **2.4 Data Analysis**

The researcher has analyzed the data using SPSS. This helped her meet her objectives set in Chapter One. The researcher also analyzed interviews she conducted.

### 2.4.1 Respondents by Gender

**Graph 1: Respondent by Distribution by Gender**



Respondent Distribution by Gender

Graph 1 above shows that female respondents (51%) were more than the male respondents (49%). During the distribution of the questionnaires, the female respondents were more approachable than the boys in completing the questionnaires. This made the percentage of the female respondents more than the male respondents.

#### 2.4.2 Distribution of Respondents by Age

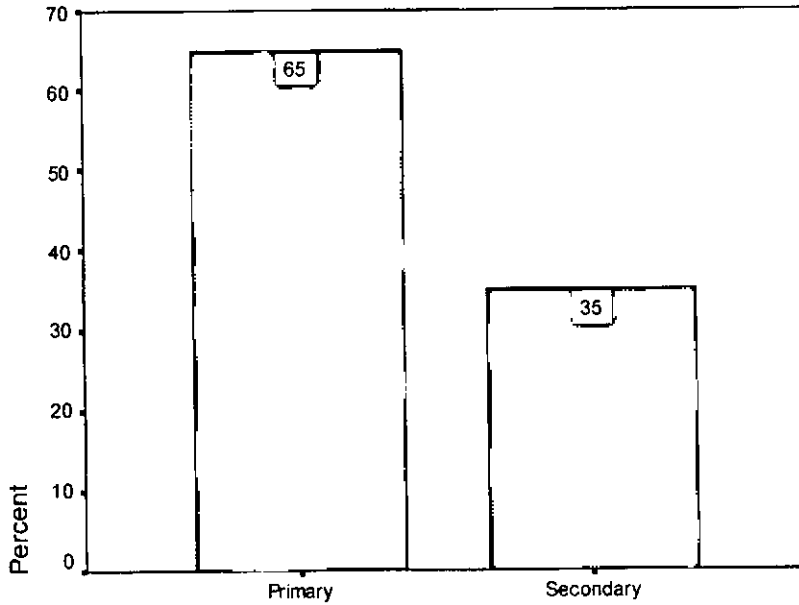
**Table 1: Respondents by Distribution by Age**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	below 8yrs	4	4.0	4.0	4.0
	9-12yrs	50	50.0	50.0	54.0
	13-16yrs	29	29.0	29.0	83.0
	16 and above	17	17.0	17.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

From Table 1 above, 50% of the respondents fall between the ages of 9 and 12 years old, 29% are between the ages of 13 and 16 years old, 17% are 16 years and above while 4% were below 8 years. This shows that the majority of respondents are between 9 and 12 years. This age group fits the researcher's definition of a child, hence she found it suitable for her research.

*2.4.3 Distribution of Respondents by The Level of Education*

**Graph 2: Respondents by Distribution by the Level of Education**



Respondent Distribution by level of Education

Graph 2 above shows that 65% of the respondents were of primary school level and 35% of secondary school level. I distributed questionnaires in the schools within Olympic Estate. There are more primary schools than secondary schools in the residential estate. This is why respondents at primary school level are more than those at secondary school levels.

**Respondent Distribution by who they live with**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Parents	86	86.0	86.0	86.0
	Relatives	3	3.0	3.0	89.0
	Gurdians	9	9.0	9.0	98.0
	Siblings	2	2.0	2.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

From Table 2 above, most of the respondents are still dependant on their parents. Evidently 86% of the respondents live with their parents, 9% live with their guardians, 3% live with their relatives and only 2% live with their siblings.

*2.4.5 Distribution of Respondents by Access to TV*

**Table 3: Respondents' Access to TV**

**Respondent Distribution by access to Television**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	yes	97	97.0	97.0	97.0
	no	3	3.0	3.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Majority of the respondents have access to TV as shown in Table 3. It is clear that 97% of the children had access to TV with only 3% lacking access to TV.

*2.4.6 Distribution of Respondents by Favorite Program and the Station the Program should be Aired*

**Table 4: Respondents by Distribution by favorite program and the station the program should be aired.**

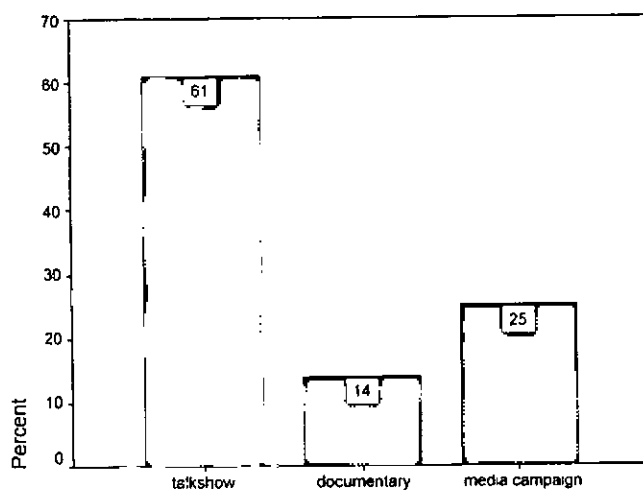
**Respondent Distribution by Favorite Tv channel \* Respondent Distribution by the station the program should be aired in Crosstabulation**

Count		Respondent Distribution by the station the program should be aired in				
		NTV	KTN	CITIZEN	KBC	Total
Respondent Distribution by Favorite Tv channel	NTV	11	6	1		18
	KTN	3	18	9	3	33
	CITIZEN	7	9	30	2	48
	KBC				1	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>21</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>100</b>

The cross tabulation carried out by the researcher in Table 4 above indicates that 48% of the respondents watched Citizen TV. Closely following 40% of the respondents wanted the program to be aired in the same station. Almost closely, 33% of the respondents liked KTN and preferred the program to be aired in this channel. NTV followed in preference of choice, attracting 21% of the respondents. KBC was the least preferred station, recording a mere 6 % preference. The reason they chose citizen was that it brings local programs and thus made the audience feel they appreciate local productions. NTV and KTN do not put much wait for local productions and for KBC, they said it was too boring and for the older generations as well as the politicians.

2.4.7 Distribution of Respondents by the Kind of Program They Propose

**Graph 3: Respondents' Distribution by the kind of program they propose**



Respondent Distribution by the kind of program they propose

Graph 3 above shows that most of the respondents want the program to be a talk show. From the interviews, 61% of the respondents wanted the program to be a talk show. A few respondents (25%) wanted it to be a media campaign. A remaining smaller sample of 14% wanted it to be a documentary. Those who chose talk show said they like watching talk shows even the ones that are running on TVs nowadays like Trya banks show and Sebuleni.

*2.4.8 Distribution of Respondents by Time and Duration*

**Table 5: Respondents by Distribution by the time they propose to watch the program and the duration they would like the program to take**

**Respondent Distribution by the time they propose to watch the program \***  
**Respondent Distribution by the duration the program should take Crosstabulation**

Count		Respondent Distribution by the duration the program should take			
		20 minutes	30 minutes	1 hour	Total
Respondent Distribution by the time they propose to watch the program	Afternoon	2	3	12	17
	Evening		8	16	24
	Night	2	12	45	59
<b>Total</b>		<b>4</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 5 above indicates that 73% of the respondents wanted the program to run for one hour. A smaller number of the respondents (23%) suggested that the program run for 30 minutes while very few (41%) preferred it to run for 20 minutes. When it came to specific time, majority (73%) suggested night, followed by 24% evening and 17% afternoon. Night was thus the preferred time.

*2.4.9 Distribution of Respondents by Day They Would Like the Program Aired*  
**Chart 1: Day they would like the program aired.**

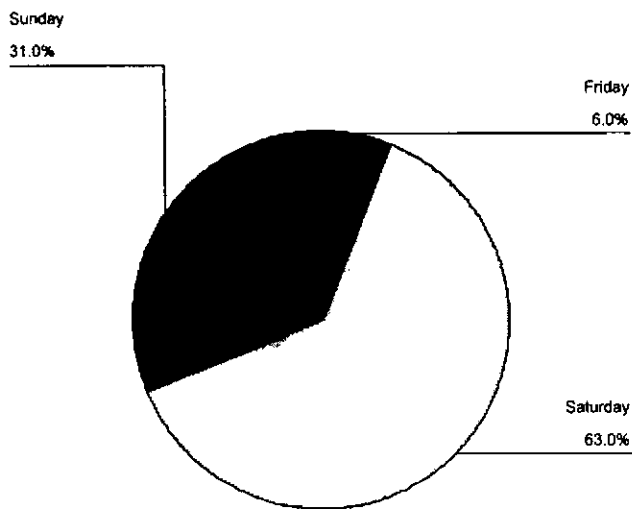


Chart 1 above shows that most of the respondents wanted the program to be aired on Saturday, with 63% of the respondents voting for this day. This was because as the researcher found out from the interviews, most of the respondents were free on this day. Some 31% of the respondents wanted the program to be aired on Sunday but only 6% chose Friday as their preferred day for the program. Respondents indicated that they were usually busy with work on this day hence could not thus fully concentrate on the program as opposed to Saturday, where most of them were free.

*2.4.10 Distribution of Respondents by the Kind of program They Liked to Watch and its Nature*

**Table6: Respondents by Distribution by the kind of program they like to watch and its nature.**

**Respondent Distribution by the kind of program they like to watch \* Respondent Distribution by the nature of the program Crosstabulation**

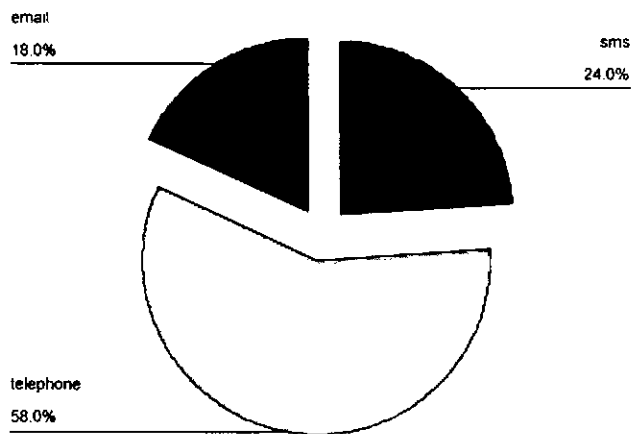
Count		Respondent Distribution by the nature of the program				
		Informative	educational	entertaining	All	Total
Respondent Distribution by the kind of program they like to watch	Informative	2	1	1	1	5
	educational	5	12	3	11	31
	entertaining	10	11	9	33	63
	fictional				1	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>17</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>100</b>

From Table 6 above, the researcher did a cross tabulation on the kind of program they would like to watch and the nature of that program. Majority of the respondents (63%) preferred watching entertaining programs, 31% educational programs and 5%, those that like informative programs. A mere 1% indicated interest in fictional programs. The respondents wanted the nature of the program to be all-rounded with 46% wanted the program be entertaining, informative and educational. A total of 17% of the respondents wanted the program to be informative, 24% educational, and 13%, wanted the program to be entertaining.

*2.4.11 Distribution of Respondents by the Mode of Interaction*

**Graph 4: Respondents Distribution by the mode of interaction**

distribution by mode of interaction



Most of the respondents wanted the program to be a talk show and for it to be more entertaining. The researcher wanted to find out how the respondents wanted to interact with the host of the program or offer their contribution. The variables as indicated in Graph 4 above shows that 58% of the respondents wanted to call-in (communicate through telephone); 24% of the respondents were inclined to use sms and 18% of the respondents would interact through email.

2.4.12 Distribution of Respondents by Whom They Want to See on the Program

**Graph 5: Respondents Distribution by Whom They Want to See on the Program**

**Chart 2:**

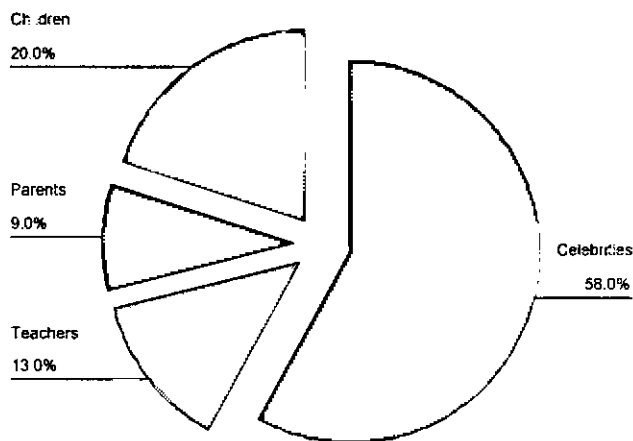


Chart 2 above shows that 58% of the respondents wanted celebrities to appear on the program as guests. As the researcher got to understand from the interviews, celebrities are well known people to the young ones. Most of the young people look up to them as their role models. Indeed of the respondents 20% wanted to see children arguing that they would easily identify with them since they were age mates. A smaller number totaling 13% wanted to see teachers. The rest of the respondents (9%) made parents their preference.

*2.4.13 Distribution of Respondents by the Whether They Speak Their Mother Tongue and its Importance*

**Table 7: Respondents by Distribution by the whether they speak their mother tongue and the importance**

**Respondent Distribution by whether they speak their mother tongue \* Respondent Distribution by the importance of mother tongue Crosstabulation**

Count		Respondent Distribution by the importance of mother tongue		
		yes	no	Total
Respondent Distribution by whether they speak their mother tongue	yes	51	6	57
	no	37	6	43
Total		68	12	100

Table 7 above indicates that majority of the respondents (88%) thought that mother tongue is important, while the rest of the respondents (12%) did not recognize the importance of mother tongue. A total of 57% of the respondents spoke their mother tongue, while 43% did not speak their mother tongue. It was quite explicit that mother tongue was still prominent.

## COMMUNICATION THEORY

### 2.5.1 Introduction

In today's society, TV has been viewed as a very influential tool. Most people use it as a means of socializing. The TV has thus moved from its core function which includes entertaining, informing and educating its consumers. To an extent, most of the people who are socialized through or by TV tend to become anti-social, thereby secluding themselves from the significant others. I will use the following communication theories to elaborate my point.

### 2.5.2 Social Learning Theory

Social Learning Theory is a general theory of human behavior. Its major principle is that we learn by observing others. Bandura, uses the theory to explain media effects. He is convinced and believes that people acquire attitudes, emotional responses, and new styles of conduct through the "modeling" of films and TV.<sup>49</sup> Research findings established that 97% of the respondents had easy access to TV. This means that TV personalities could easily influence children's attitudes, emotional responses, and new styles of conduct through imitation. This is because learning mostly occurs by observing and imitating others.

The researcher has observed around and seen quite a number of children imitate artists, presenters, news anchors and other TV personalities. The researcher was once passing around a group of children playing in a residential estate, Olympic and could not help but laugh at the way one child was imitating one of the TV reporters from a local TV. This was Robert Nagila, a reporter with Nation Television (NTV). What amused the researcher was that the child did not miss the words and she flowed with ease one would have thought she had been trained to do so.

---

<sup>49</sup> A. Bandura, *Social Learning Theory*, 34

In another group of playful children, the researcher saw a group of children crowded at one place and became curious. On arrival, she saw a child who was “performing” songs done by local artists.

The child sung them so well that one would think she composed the songs for the artist. Some of the songs include “*Ngeli ya Genge*” by *Juacali*, “*Keroro*” by *Nonini* and “*Ukimwona*” is a collaboration done by *Pilipili* and the late *Lady S* (God rest her soul in peace).

In the contemporary society, TV has become a powerful socializing agent. It bestows ideas on how to associate, behave and think (*controls our thinking*). It also, in a way determines what its audience (consumers) buys and become. Therefore, the TV as medium of communication socializes us into whom we are and whom we shall be. Some of the factors which make an observer take up a behavior he/she models can be through perceived competence and perceived status.

Perceived competence emerges when an observer perceives models as being competent. Perceived status is required when individuals distinguish themselves from others in their field.<sup>50</sup> Children in this case tend to emulate those presenters and the strong public figures such as politicians. A good example is one I got from one of the respondents who told me that she liked the way PLO Lumumba gives his speeches. She expressed desire to be as fluent as him and other TV presenters.

People who are known to be fluent in their mother tongue but weak in foreign languages are viewed to be incompetent in every aspect of life.

---

<sup>50</sup> A. Nzangi, *Psychology of Communication*, Class Notes, Tangaza College (CUEA), 2007

My research findings also showed that 58% of the respondents were inclined to celebrities being the main guests in the proposed program. Obviously, celebrities impose a heavy influence on children.

From the interviews I carried out during my field research, I found out that children thought that it was important to know their mother tongue. However, they feared being left unrecognized or secluded from the emerging celebrity world where everyone wants to belong.

Perceived status is acquired when individuals distinguish themselves from others in their field. Youngsters also learn new strategies by watching more skilled children. This means that children also look up to their peers, especially those that they highly regard as being better off than them; they model what they do and pattern themselves after those. This explains why 20% of the respondents preferred their fellow children to appear as guests in the program. A good example would be the children who present the children's program Club Kiboko which is aired on KTN on Saturdays. These children are fluent and eloquent when they are presenting. Other children who watch them end up emulating them since they think they are learned or better off than them.

Social Learning Theory could also be defined as Observational Theory. This means that children observe and do what their significant others do. The latter may include their parents and teachers. Children can, therefore, learn by observing what parents and teachers do on the screen and emulate it. This is probably why 9% and 13% of the respondents would prefer parents and teachers as guests respectively.

### **2.5.3 Uses and Gratification Theory**

Uses and Gratification theory affirms that audiences use the media rather than being used by the media. It helps give a sense of personal identity as well as gratifies the

desire for entertainment and assists social interaction.<sup>51</sup> However, the media can only affect our values and behavior if we have embraced it as a socializing agent. Most people tend to believe that the media controls and sets an agenda for its audience. However, audiences also choose what to get from the media. As a matter of fact most people use it as means of entertainment as compared to an educative tool and vice-versa.

The researcher also concurs with Blumler and McQuail who classify these needs as diversion, personal identity, surveillance and personal relationship.<sup>52</sup> Diversion is escape from routine or problems or emotional release. Our findings indicate that 63% of the respondents wanted the program to be aired on Saturday, 59% of respondents then wanted it to be aired at night. They preferred that day and time since they were not busy with school work and house-hold chores.

Personal identity on the other hand is all about self reference and value reinforces. This was indicated by 58% of the respondents who wanted celebrities to appear on the program as guests.

Respondents gave reasons why they would emulate some people. For example some celebrities acted as their role models. A total of 20% of the respondents wanted to see children on the program since they were their age mates/peers hence they could easily identify with them.

Surveillance constitutes ways through which individuals acquire information. Respondents wanted an all-rounded program. Up to 46% of the respondents wanted the program to be entertaining, informative and educational.

---

<sup>51</sup> L Nick, *Media Institutions and Audiences*, 102

<sup>52</sup> C. Mcclullagh, *Media Power, A Sociological Introduction*, 38

Personal relationships had to do with companionships. In this research, the audience wanted to interact or communicate with the host of the program through telephone.

This response constituted 58% of the respondents, while 24% of them preferred the short message service (sms) as their mode of interaction. It is evident that children have greatly turned to the media for socializing and looking for people they can model and identify with.

### **Conclusion**

The above discussed theories have clearly elaborated the way the media and its audience need each other. The media can not run without an audience and the audience can not be learning and modeling the behaviors they have acquired of the media was not there. The main important thing I that both parties should consider that the other party is there to benefit, however still, they should be fair to each other and not being self-centered. The media should therefore not be money minded only but should put the needs of the people it serves at heart and the audiences should use the media to get information, education and entertainment from the media, but should be careful what they pick up from it and what to live out.

Teachers and parents on the other hand will be part of the general audience. The researcher's findings demonstrate that 86% of the respondents live with their parents. Further, children spend the better time of the day with their teachers in school. In the traditional African beliefs, a child belonged to the community.

### ***3.1.2 Nature of the program***

The response the researcher got from her findings was that 63% of the respondents are inclined to watching programs which are entertaining. For this particular program, 46% of the respondents wanted the program to be all rounded. Put differently, the program should be educative, informative and entertaining.

### ***3.1.3 Day and Time of Transmission***

Majority of the respondents (63%) proposed that the program will be aired on Saturday. Along similar lines, 73% of the respondents wanted the program to run for one hour. Most of the respondents suggested that the program be aired at night, between 4:00 p.m-5:00 p.m. It is at this time that the respondents felt would be convenient for them since they will be free from school work and household chores. The program will run for three episodes and if the audience wants more, I will have to plan for another shooting.

### ***3.1.4 Proposed Station***

A larger percent constituting 40% of the respondents preferred that the program be aired on Citizen TV. They chose this station since they felt that it had appreciated and continued to support local talent and production in its program schedule. Citizen TV was also considered to appreciate culture by airing programs such as Music Shows.

A case in point is *Tafrija*, a music show which brings forth songs from diverse ethnic communities of Kenya including Akamba, Agikuyu, Kalenjin, Abaluhya and Abagusii, just to mention but a few.

### ***3.1.5 Mode of Communication/ Interaction***

Respondents wanted to keep in touch with the host of the program through the phone. Here, they would be given a chance to send suggestions or ask questions related to the show. A rather small number of the respondents (24%) preferred to use the short message service (sms).

### ***3.1.6 Whom They Want to See on the Program***

Majority of the respondents (58%) suggested that they wanted celebrities to appear on the program as the guests. The celebrities whom I will invite on the show are those who do shows in their mother tongue on vernacular radio stations and musicians who sing in their mother tongue as way of selling their culture. Parents and teachers could also appear on the show to offer their opinions. A smaller number of the respondents (20%) wanted to see their fellow children because they would easily identify with them.

### ***3.1.7 Justification of the Project***

The researcher has found out that Kenya's indigenous languages are on the verge of disappearing if nothing is done. Another line of thought as to why mother language is decaying is attributed to media. In the contemporary society, media has become a very influential tool in the communication industry. In some cases, media have been left to play a part in the integral growth of children. The TV has especially been left to socialize and educate children.

From the foregoing, children acquire the so called "Popular" culture which is being introduced by the new forms of entertainment e.g. cinemas and internet. Kenyans and in particular in urban areas, have been immensely impacted by the great happenings in the West and the current pop culture. This encourages them to ignore their own traditions and adapt to the Western ways. A large contributor of this "pop" culture is the TV. A larger percentage of its programs rely heavily on foreign contents.

For example, the introduction of music programs such as the Beat which airs mostly the rap music of famous personalities such as Puff Daddy and R- Kelly. This encourages people to change their speech patterns as they want to talk like their influencers. Popular culture in many discourses occupies self-evidently positive position, and the task becomes that of distinguishing between what is truly popular and what is contaminated by hegemonic ideological infiltration.<sup>53</sup>

Peer influence is another reason for low key commitment to mother tongue. The children are on the search for an identity. They thus end up adapting to Sheng and Slang which is predominant today. This show would thus help children rediscover themselves and appreciate their culture instead of unconsciously being falsified into trends which they merely fancy in their quest for self- affirmation.

### **3.1.8 Location**

The program would be a live show. The actual shooting would be at the Citizen TV studio. But, there would be shooting for footages containing vox -pops prior to the actual shooting. The vox pops will include interviews carried out in the streets of Nairobi where individuals would present their views on the importance of promoting mother tongue.

### **3.2 Treatment**

To start off will be slide shows of various books written by authors such as Ngugi wa Thiong'o who are well known vernacular writers. This will be complimented by upbeat music. This will help in creating suspense and thus make the audience more interested in watching the program. Then slow music will follow with a voice over of a narrator who will explain the shots as they unfold. The music will be heard faintly in the background when the narrator will be speaking.

---

<sup>53</sup> K. Barber, *Readings in African Popular Culture*, 56

There will be a long shot showing the audiences the host who happens to be a celeb will then introduce herself/herself to the audience and welcome the guests who are well known celebrities, and the general audience.

The audience chose celebrities because they were convinced that they were more influential. The host will then introduce the topic and have a brief explanation on the importance of mother tongue. The guests will be asked questions. This will encourage them to give their views and discuss some of the proposed topics which complement the communication objective of promoting mother tongue.

Some of the topics proposed by respondents include encouraging children to appreciate their identity, encouraging children to appreciate the importance of being proud of their indigenous culture, help them see the importance of going back to their roots and learn their mother language. The host will then give the audience in the studio a chance to ask questions or air their suggestions. Shots of the live audience in the studio will be shown once in a while as the show goes on. The email address for the show ([backtoourroots@ctv.co.ke](mailto:backtoourroots@ctv.co.ke) ) will be scrolling from left to right at the bottom of the screen as the show proceeds. This will allow the viewers to send their comments about the show. We will then have a short commercial break.

Later, we will have inserts of vox pops from different individuals on the street. They will give their opinions on mother tongue and its importance. This will constitute the last part of our first segment.

In the second segment after the break, we will have a long shot of the entire studio which will cover the guests and the live audience as well.

This will be our opening shot for Part Two of the show. It is at this point that the host will welcome the audience and re-introduce the topic for the sake of any audience

who may have joined after the show had begun. In this segment, our guests will be language experts who will answer the questions of the viewers who are at home or among the audience if time will allow. They will also give their expert opinions on the best way which children can know, learn and appreciate/promote their mother tongue.

Most respondents suggested the following ways: introducing bilingual education to children at the pre-primary and lower primary levels; having sessions in schools where children can form linguistic clubs to teach mother tongue; being encouraged to read vernacular books.

Motivating children to go to rural areas to interact with their grandparents. Besides, it would involve bringing on TV entertaining programs done in mother tongue was also recommended. This and much more will form part of our discussion.

Towards the end of the program, a guest artist will perform for the audience. This will be followed by a vote of thanks to all those who participated and made the show a success. She will also give special thanks to the live audience who willingly appeared on the show and the audience who will be watching from home for staying tuned. The guest artist will continue to perform as the credits roll up. We will then have Citizen TV montage on air for five seconds and then fade out.

**BUDGET PROPOSAL**

<b>PRE- PRODUCTION</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>No. of personnel/equipments</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>HIRED EQUIPMENTS</b>	Studio(microphones,	4 microphones	1000(4) x3	12,000
	sound mixer, vision	1 sound mixer	6,000 x 3	18,000
	mixer, monitors,	3 monitors	6,000(3)x3	54,000
	edit suite, Camera)	3cameras	10,000(3)3	90,000
	DV 8 tapes(2)	2 DV tapes	1,000(2)	2000
		Edit suite 1	15,000	20,000
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>196,000</b>
<b>PRODUCTION</b>	Production Crew			
	Producer	1	30,000 x3	90,000
	Floor manager	1	6,000 x3	18,000
	Editor	2	8,000 x2	16,000
	Camera persons	3	7,000(3)x3	63,000
	Sound technician	1	3,000 x3	9,000
	Lighting/CCU	1	6,000 x3	18,000
	Host/presenter	1	20,000 x3	60,000
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>274,000</b>
<b>OTHERS</b>	Cost of Air time		50,000 x3	<b>150,000</b>
			<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>620,000</b>
			<b>COST</b>	

### **3.3 Funding**

The producer is a student carrying out this research for scholarly purposes. The budget was too soaring for the producer to raise the funds on her own. That is why she decided to consult some organizations which were willing to be her sponsors and promised to offer her some funds. Her donors include Kameme language and culture center. This is a center which promotes linguistics and cultural diversity by ensuring preservation of indigenous languages, especially Kikuyu. Other donations will come from the government through the Constituency Development Fund (CDF). I will also use my personal savings and get a loan with the bank which I hold an account with. This will enable the producer to be able to finish her project without financial constraints lest the finances dwindle before the production attains its objective.

### **3.4 Evaluation**

After two episodes of the program have been aired, there will be a chance given to the audience which will be generally critiquing. The show will be conducted through interviews with children. I will also seek the assistance of media experts who will help me in analyzing the success of the talk show.

### **3.5 Conclusion**

This chapter has offered and displayed a proposal which can be used to form awareness on the importance of teaching and encouraging children speak their mother tongue.

It proposes a talk show which the researcher supposes will be the best way of addressing the issue a hand. The researcher believes that with all the content in this paper, the message will be passed across effectively without major hindrances and shortcomings.

## **GENERAL CONCLUSION**

From my research work and the interviews I conducted, we can conclude that television (TV) has taken grip of the life of children. This includes their social life, culture and most of the other things we should treasure such as concentrating on the books. The TV is viewed as a very influential and powerful tool of communication in contemporary society. It plays a very vital role in not only educating, entertaining and informing, but also in socializing children. This research work has demonstrated the effects of TV on children's growth and the heavy influence it has on the use of language especially on its effects in Sheng and Slang. TV shapes the thoughts of its audience/viewers and attitudes through the various programs it airs. This paper sought to identify how TV changes children's perspectives towards using their mother tongue, influencing them to speak "corrupt" languages hence reducing their chances of knowing their mother tongue.

Chapter One revolved around social and cultural issues as well as review of related literature. The chapter also analyzed the role of parents, teachers and the society as a whole in encouraging children appreciate their mother tongue. By so doing, they end up embracing their culture with pride. Some terms related to our study were defined as well. The second chapter tested the hypotheses provided. This included research methodology, sampling criteria, collection and analysis of data of the researcher which was supported by media theories. The latter deepened the research findings.

This chapter was also designed to help identify the audience needs with regard to mother tongue use. Most of the children have a great urge to know and speak their mother tongue and see its importance as well.

Some theories I used include the Social Learning Theory. It shows that TV as medium of communication actually socializes us into whom we are and shapes our opinions as well. The theory defines the behavior of human beings, whereby the major principle is that we learn by observing others. This was evident from the findings which portrayed TV as being influential to the children. Most of them indicated that they wanted to see celebs appear on the show as the guests.

On the other hand, Uses and Gratification Theory confirmed that the media can affect our values and behavior if we have embraced it as a socializing agent. Human beings have needs which include diversion and surveillance. In diversion, we saw that children wanted the program to be aired on Saturday at night since they wanted to divert their attention from school work. Surveillance on the other hand showed that children wanted a program which would meet their need: entertaining, informative and educational.

In the third chapter, a communication strategy was proposed. The chapter was based on the idea that media is a very influential tool in communication. This was evidently pointed out in their proposed topic which was a talk show, preferred as a mode of promoting mother tongue.

Respondents wanted to interact with the host. They preferred phone as the means of interaction. It also contained the flow of the program as well as the layout of the budget I intended to use in accomplishing my communication objective as well as making this paper a success.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The primary role of the media is to entertain, inform and educate. Media should also serve all the three roles. Likewise, media can also be used to draw us away from important issues such as appreciating culture. Kenyan media especially airs a larger percent of foreign content. This becomes a vehicle through which local cultures are dying at the altar of the Western culture. The same media that has diverted our attention from our culture can also be part of solving the problem, in this case promoting our mother tongue. They can do this by promoting local productions done in mother tongue. Such productions include comedies, talk shows and plays which should often be aired on the local TVs. Media personalities and the government can also help cultivate talents by empowering people interested in such productions through training. They can also sponsor some of the local producers who are struggling to make their productions in mother tongue such as *Macang`i* who produces Gikuyu plays.

Through the free primary education, the government should also encourage bilingual education programs in schools. These would help children in these classes to learn and speak their mother tongue without restriction. School administrations should also provide learning materials such as books and other resources to help children to adapt to the language faster. Through the formation of multilingual clubs in schools, children can be helped to sing folk songs in their language. They can also be taught riddles and tongue twisters in their language. Parents on the other hand have a part to play. They should help teachers by communicating through mother tongue while at home with them.

I also recommend children to learn their mother tongue and speak in it with pride with the help of their parents, peers and significant others. It is also more effective to start teaching children when they are young. By so doing, when they grow up they will pass it on to their generation. The process will go on to the other generations as well.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

### **Books**

- Anderson, D. (1983) *Children Understanding of Television: Research on Attention and Comprehension*. New York: Academic Press.
- A.J. Jeffrey, (2001) *Adolescence and Emerging Adulthood*, University of Maryland, Upper Saddle River: New Jersey.
- Arvind, S -. Everett, R.M. (1999) *Entertainment-Education, a Communication Strategy for Social Change*, Lawrence Associates: New Jersey
- Bandura, A. (1977) *Social Learning Theory*, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.
- Baumeister, R. F. (1986) *Identity, Cultural Change and the Struggle for Self*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Edward, H. T. (1977) *Beyond Culture*, New York: Anchor Press.
- Giddens, A. (1991) *Modernity and Self Identity: Self, Society in the late Modern Age*, Stanford University Press: New York.
- Hama, J. (1986) *Interethnic Communication in Children's Own Dance and Protest*, New York. Cambridge Publishers.
- Hodge, R.Tripp, D. (1987) *Children and Television*, John Wiley & Sons: Limited, London.
- Ismail, T.S. *The Language of Post Colonial Literatures, An Introduction*, New York: Rutledge.
- H.E. - Samuel, (2002) *Culture Matters: How Values Shape Human Progress*: New Jersey; Basic Books.

- McCullagh, C. (1983) *Media Power: A Sociological Introduction*, New York: Palgrave Publishers.
- McQuail, D. (1982) *Mass Communication Theory: An Introduction*, London: Sage Publications.
- Overton, W. F. (2001) *Early Childhood Television Viewing and Adolescent Behavior*, Boston: Blackwell Publisher.
- Peter, D. (2000) *Television and the Public Sphere: Citizenship, Democracy and the Media*, London: Sage Publications.
- Shanahan, J. - Morgan, M, (1999), *Television and its Viewer, Cultivation Theory and Research*: New York, Cambridge University Press.
- Scannel, P- Philip, S. - Sparks, C. (1994) *Culture and Power, A media Culture and Society Reader*, London: Sage Publications.
- Wiener. S.H- B. Charles, (1993) *Side by Side: A Multicultural Reader*, London: Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Wilson, J.- Wilson, S. L. (1998) *Mass Media, Mass Culture: An Introduction*, Newyork; McGraw-Hill Companies.

**Class notes.**

Nzangi, A. Psychology of Communication, Class Notes, Tangaza College-Catholic University of Eastern Africa, 2007.

Samita, Z. Culture, Communication and Society, Class Notes Tangaza College-Catholic University of Eastern Africa, 2007.

**Dictionaries**

*Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*, New Edition, London, 1991.

### **Newspapers/Magazines**

Mwazemba, J. Speak Your Mother Tongue With Pride. *The Standard*, April, 2008, 15-16

Mwaura, P. *The Daily Nation*, February 2009, 12-14

Wambui, M. *Parents Magazine*, March 2008, 58-59,

James, T. Language Art and discipline, *Sunday Times*, February, 29, 2004, 18-20

### **Electronic Sources**

Bilingual conversation, Nolasco, <http://www.kottke.org>

Encyclopedia of African Littérature, Africans languages, *Why Mother Tongues are Dying*

<http://www.Students>

[www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org)

<http://www.movertonguematters.com>

<http://www.eaststandard.net/magazines/society/articles.com>

<http://www.jpanafrican.com>

<http://news.education4india.com/government-moots-primary-education-in-mother-tongue>

[www.un.org/depts/dhl/language/index.html](http://www.un.org/depts/dhl/language/index.html), [pagessociolingo.wordpress.com.kenya-why-](http://pagessociolingo.wordpress.com/kenya-why-mother-tongues-are-dying)

[mother-tongues-are-dying](http://pagessociolingo.wordpress.com/kenya-why-mother-tongues-are-dying)

<http://www.language literacy and community.com>

[www.bbcnews.com](http://www.bbcnews.com)

# APPENDICES: QUESTIONNAIRE

## TANGAZA COLLEGE

### CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN AFRICA

A COMMUNICATION STRATEGY TO PROMOTE MOTHER TONGUE AMONG URBAN CHILDREN

Dear friend,

Thank you for your time and for accepting to participate in this research study. I am a student at The Catholic University of Eastern Africa (Tangaza College). I am doing a research aimed at promoting mother tongue among urban children. The information obtained will be treated **confidentially** and only for academic purpose. There is no right or wrong answer, all I need is your **honest** response. Please **don't** write your name.

1. a) Your Age?  
 Below 8yrs    9-12yrs    13-16yrs    16 and above

b) Gender?

Male    Female

c) Level of education?

Nursery    Primary    Secondary

d) Whom do you live with?

Parents    Guardian  
 Relative    Siblings

2 a) Do you have access to television?

Yes    No

b) What kind of programs do you watch?

Educational    Entertaining    Religious    Fictional

c) What kind of a program would you like aired to help in promoting mother tongue?

Talk show    Documentary    Media Campaign

d) At what time would you like the program to be aired?

Morning    Afternoon    Evening

e) How long would you like the program to last?

Below 20minutes    30 minutes    1hour

f) On which day would you like the program to be aired?

Friday   Saturday   Sunday

ii Why? .....

3a) Do you speak your mother tongue?  
 Yes  No

ii If no, why?.....

3. a) In which station would you like this program to be aired?

NTV  KTN  CITIZEN  K.B.C

b) ) What should be the characteristic of the program?

Entertaining  Educative  Informative  All

c) What name should be given to the program?.....

d) How would you like to interact with the host of the program?

(SMS) Short Message Service  Telephone  Email

e) What topics would you like to suggest in relation to promoting mother tongue?

a) i).....

b) ii).....

c) iii).....

4) Which people would you like to see ion the program?

Celebrities  Teachers  parents  Children

Why? .....

5) Do you think it is important to know your mother tongue?

Yes  No

ii) Why?.....

## APPENDIX 2: Field Notes

**Date:** 15<sup>th</sup> January 2009

**Place:** Olympic Estate Shopping Center

**Name:** Jecinta- Shop- Attendant

Jecinta is business lady who runs a wholesale cum retail shop. She is a mother of three children married to a Gusii. She feels that mother tongue is not that important as long as there is efficient communication. She told the researcher that her children did not speak either of their languages and she saw no threat at all. Infact, she was proud with them since they spoke fluent Kiswahili and a bit of English. But mostly they used Sheng to communicate even with her or their father. It did not bother her that they could not utter a single word in either of their original languages despite the fact that they understood what was being said. She even went ahead and proudly told the researcher that she had no problem when she speaks her mother tongue to her children and they responded in English or Kiswahili as long as the message was put across.

**Date:** 15<sup>th</sup> January 2009

**Place:** Olympic Primary School

**Name:** Abigeal-Student

Abigeal is a standard five pupil aged 11yrs who claims that she is a TV addict. Every time she is not watching TV she feels something is a miss. She is mostly addicted to soaps and the western talk shows like the Tyra Banks show which is aired in KTN everyday from Monday –Friday at 6:00 p.m -6:50pm. She was being influenced by this celebrity figures and everything about them from grooming, “vibing” (which means taking) as she calls it, was the driving force for her addiction to such programs. She also emulated the stars of pop music like Alicia Keys and Mariah Carey both of whom are R n B singers. According to her, A talk show on mother tongue can not work in urban areas especially among the young people. She added that but for the old people. She however thinks it would be watched by older people like her father who makes her sick every time he gets home early. This is because he likes watching *Tafrija*; music show on Citizen and she likes watching Tyra Banks.

**Date:** 15<sup>th</sup> January 2009

**Place:** Olympic Primary School

**Name:** Steve and Samuel-Students

They are aged 12 and 13 yrs respectively and are both candidates. Steve wants to be a doctor a doctor while Samuel wants to be a lawyer after school. The two boys thought it was important to know their mother tongues but it was mostly meant for those people who wanted to be linguistic teachers or experts but not for their profession since they would merely use to communicate with their clients who they believe will hail

### **APPENDIX 3: Participant Observation**

During my observation, I came to notice that these children sung these songs in English or Kiswahili but when it came to conversing, they used Sheng or Slang and it was so hard for them to finish a whole sentence which was grammatically correct. They had to mix and it was evident that they were used to this mode of communication.

#### **Field Notes: Participant Observation**

**Date : 17<sup>th</sup> February 2009**

**Place: Olympic Estate-Kibera**

I did my observation at Olympic Estate where children were gathered. I was a passive participant. Being a Saturday, children were out playing with their mates and neighbors. I did my observation between 2:30 p.m and 3:50 p.m. I happened to arrive at the best moment when one girl child was imitating a local TV presenter Robert Nagila. She was trying to imitate the way this reporter reports and it came out just as he does it on TV. What made it even more interesting is that she would even use the body language that the reporter uses.

**Date: 17th February 2009**

**Place: Olympic Estate-Kibera**

I carried out another observation in the same place and day but with a different group. Here, there was a boy around 13 years of age who was surrounded by a group of children. I did my observation between 4: 00 p.m and 5:30 p.m. When I went close to the crowd, I found out that the boy was surrounded by his mates because he could sing songs of some various local and Western artists and it came out almost as well as the original artists do it. He performed quite a number of songs of different artists both locally and internationally and his mates encouraged him to continue by applauding and carrying him shoulders high hence making him the hero of the day.