



## An Assessment of the Availability of Kiswahili Instructional Resources in Kapseret Division, Uasin Gishu County, Kenya

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**ABSTRACT:** Kiswahili one of the compulsory subjects that is nationally examined but there has been complaints about the poor performance both at primary and secondary school levels. This paper is a report of a study carried out in 2012 in Kapseret Division in UasinGishu County . It assessed the availability of Kiswahili instructional resources in Kapseret Division. It was guided by sociocultural theory (SCT) and was descriptive in nature. Simple random sampling was used to select 15 out of 50 schools and 20% (750) of standard six pupils from each of the selected schools. Purposive sampling was used to select 30 upper primary Kiswahili teachers and a Kiswahili panel head from selected schools. Data was collected using questionnaires and observation checklists. It was analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques. The investigation found out that pupils' course books, teachers' reference books, chalkboards and teachers' notes were available and frequently utilized as learning resources in the teaching and learning of Kiswahili. However, supplementary books, charts, posters, school radios, tape recorders, video tapes/CDs and newspapers were not available and rarely used in learning of Kiswahili. The study recommended that teachers and school administration should work together to provide instructional resources and Ministry of Education should recommend a standardized Kiswahili course book to be use in all primary school.

**Key words:** Instructional resources, Second language acquisition, Kiswahili, teaching.

### I. INTRODUCTION

Language is the greatest distinctive feature by human species. It is the only species that is known to use language for communication. Kiswahili is one of the languages that contributes to this civilization and is one of the fastest growing languages. Kiswahili is shared by many countries in Africa, it has the highest population of speakers compared to other African languages illustrated in Africa's linguistic pyramid. It enjoys national, sub-regional, regional and international status unlike any other African language.

Research reports indicate how Kiswahili is the lingua franca in most of the countries including Kenya. It is a medium of instruction in peri-urban areas, and an examinable subject up to form four in Kenya. It provides a medium through which Kenyan children conceptualize their world in a uniform way and thereby perceive themselves as members of the same nation (Mutua, 2007). Despite Kiswahili having more advantages over other African languages, it is poorly performed in Kenyan schools.

Koeh report (1999) notes that, the quality and adequacy of such resources as physical equipment, teaching and learning materials have a direct bearing on quality as they determine how effectively the curriculum is implemented. A wide variety of materials and equipment is necessary for play, learning and development of the children (KIE, 1999). Villamilan de Guerrero in Iantolf (2002) also showed that concrete artifacts like dictionaries and textbooks are effective means of improving academic achievement of the Second Language (L2). Indeed, when relevant instructional resources are available, teachers and learners have materials to read and work with.

Makokha (2009) revealed that, teachers have positive attitude towards the use of instructional resources in teaching of Kiswahili poetry and they were not using the variety of instructional resources.

Birenge (2006) established that, most of non-projected media resources suitable for teaching and learning of English composition were not available, while few available ones were not used at all except chalkboard and English class text.

Andala (1998) noted that, in some of the best rated secondary schools there were few recommended Kiswahili textbooks as compared to the number of students. The ratio in primary school was found to be an average of one book for every four or more learners. In relation to this, Muruguru (2000) adds that in Brazil 2<sup>nd</sup>

and 4<sup>th</sup> grade students who received textbooks scored significantly higher in the test of mathematics than students without textbooks. This meant that the textbooks played a very important role in mediating learning. Gorman in Andala (1998) notes that, a teacher in one province thought the recommended book was too simple for a particular level while another in a different province thought that the same book was too complex for the same level. This is relevant to the current situation in the primary school where the content is still not well graded.

Research has clearly indicated the importance of instructional resources in effective curriculum implementation. Instructional resources mediate learning as a result good performance in exams is manifested. Thus the researcher sought to assess availability of Kiswahili instructional resources in Kapseret Division.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study was based on Social Cultural theory (SCT) and the process of second language acquisition by Vygotsky (1987). Firstly, the theory has it that the human mind is always and everywhere mediated primarily by linguistically based communication and secondly, mental functioning is mediated (activity theory). Second language acquisition (SLA) as a mediated process has been viewed in three general perspectives: social mediation by experts and peers, self mediation and the artifact mediation. This research investigated the availability of other forms of artifacts like video, textbooks, newspapers which helps in the learning process. The artifacts help in involving more senses in the learning process.

## **II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

A descriptive survey research design was adopted in the study carried out in Kapseret Division. Simple random sampling was used to obtain 30 % of 50 (N=15) primary schools and 20% of 750 class six pupils in each of the selected schools. Purposive sampling was used to select; one class six Kiswahili teachers and a Kiswahili panel head from each selected school. Therefore, 150 learners and 30 Kiswahili teachers participated in this study, making a sample of 180 respondents.

Data collection instruments were observation schedule and questionnaires which were administered to teachers and learners. Content validity of the instrument was determined by discussing items in the instrument with the two supervisors from Moi University. Pilot study was done and 0.73 coefficient of reliability obtained. Data analysis was done basing on descriptive statistical techniques such as; frequencies, and percentages.

## **III. RESULTS**

### **Availability of Instructional Resources**

Teachers' responses on the availability of instructional Resources were as follows; 23.3% (N=7), 46.7% (N=14) and 30% (N=9) of the teachers stated that, Kiswahili course books were available, available but in poor conditions and not available respectively. This implies that most primary schools in Kapseret Division, had pupils' course books for Kiswahili though in poor conditions. 33.3% (N=10), 13.3% (N=4) and 53.3% (N=16) reported that supplementary books for Kiswahili were available but in poor condition, were available and not available respectively. This implied that supplementary books were not available and the few that were there were in poor condition.

As for the teachers' Kiswahili reference books, majority 60% (N=18), 6.7% (N=2) and 33.3% (N=10) stated that they were available, available but in poor condition and not available respectively. This implied that the teachers had reference material which they could use to assist the learners in learning Kiswahili.

Further, 80% (N=24), 16.7% (N=5) and 3.3% (N=1) of the teachers stated that chalkboard was available, available but in poor condition and not available respectively. Further, 66.7% (N=20), 26.7% (N=8) and 6.7% (N=2) stated that charts were not available, available and available but in poor conditions respectively. Also, 56.7% (N=17), 30% (N=9) and 13.3% (N=4) of teachers' stated that, posters were not available, available and available but in poor condition respectively. This implied that the charts and posters were not available.

73.3% (N=22), 76.7% (N=23), 73.3% (N=14) and 70% (N=21) of the teachers stated that, school radio, tape recorder, video tapes/CDs and newspapers were not available for use in the teaching and learning Kiswahili. There were 20% (N=6), 10% (N=3), 6.7% (N=2) and 26.7% (N=8) of the teachers who stated that they were available respectively. Another 6.7% (N=2), 13.3% (N=4), 20% (N=6) and 3.3% (N=1) stated that school radio, tape recorder, video tapes/CD's and newspapers were available but in poor condition. This means that, school radio, tape recorder video tapes/CDs and newspapers were not available in most schools where the study was conducted. This might affect the performance of learners in Kiswahili since it is expected that the use of school radio, tape recorders, video tapes and newspapers would promote the learning of Kiswahili as a subject in Primary schools.

80% (N=24), 16.6% (N=5) and 3.3% (N=1) of the teachers stated that teacher made notes were available, not available and available but in poor conditions respectively.

Learners' responses on availability of instructional resources were as follows; 26.7% (N=40), 55.3% (N=83) and 18% (N=27) course books were available, available but in poor conditions and were not available respectively. Supplementary books were available as stated by 20% (N=30) of learners, 25.3% (N=38) and 54.7% (N=82) of the pupils stated that they were available but in poor conditions and not available respectively. This concurs with the teachers' report on course books and supplementary books. The course books were available and in poor condition. This implies that the books were not taken good care of within the stipulated time of use by the government which is four years for upper primary school. On the other hand supplementary books were not available in most of the schools. This could be one of the reasons for poor performance since the course books do not give maximum preparation on all topics due to lack of a standardized course book by the ministry of education.

The researcher sought the reason for unavailability of the supplementary books and found out that Kiswahili was given less preference as compared to other subjects. Teachers believed that learners in Kapseret Division understood Kiswahili since it is a peri-urban area and was used in communicating among different ethnic groups. As a result more resources were used to purchase books for other subjects at the expense of Kiswahili.

This had a direct implication in that knowing Kiswahili could not be gauged by how well a person communicates verbally in Kiswahili, but all skills should be considered which include writing. Indeed Kaggia (1986 in Muruguru 2000) asserts that textbooks help in making the subject less abstract. Hence there is need to take care of course books and to buy more supplementary textbooks so that learners can have enough sources of exercises that will help them learn Kiswahili.

Additionally, the researcher observed that different schools use different course books whose contents were not similar. These books included; *Misingi ya Kiswahili*, *Kiswahili Kitukuzwe*, *Kiswahili mufti*, *Kurunzi ya Kiswahili* and others from different writers. All of them are in the orange book that stipulates the books that can be bought as course books. This leads to poor performance of Kiswahili since there is no uniformity on the books that are used for preparation of learner. The text books differ from each other and there is no one book that has been established to be used in the teaching and learning Kiswahili.

In some of the schools, the course book used contained many new items of vocabulary which helps the learner in the writing of Kiswahili composition as well as updating them with the new terminologies. The book is good if the learner has a good foundation in Kiswahili and the teacher keeps on updating himself on the current issues in Kiswahili as a subject. In a different school, a different book from a different author was used as course book. The book had limited examples and limited items of vocabulary which resulted in a learner being limited especially when it came to the writing of Kiswahili composition which carries forty marks in exams. Additionally, the book was limited in exercises which contributed to less practice in the language hence poor performance.

(86%) (N=129), 11.4% (N=17) and 2.7% (N=4) asserted that chalkboards were available, available but in poor conditions and not available respectively. This agrees with teachers' results that chalkboards were the readily available instructional resource for illustrations, writing sentences assignments and allows learners to visualize what the teacher is explaining. The teacher uses it to emphasize essential information or develop ideas as the class instruction progresses (Ogula and Onsongo, 2009).

As for charts 42.7% (N=64), 4% (N=6) and 53.3% (N=80) respectively stated that, they were available, available but in poor conditions, and not available. Concerning the availability of posters, 60% (N=90), 22% (N=33) and 18% (N=27) respectively of the stated that they were not available, available but in poor conditions and available for use. This concurs with teachers' findings that charts and posters were not available. The inadequacy of charts and posters had a great implication in learning of Kiswahili. Various scholars have sighted the importance of visual aids for instance; Romszowiskis (1988:122) asserts that, 'a picture can sometimes be worth a thousand words..... Pictures can encourage visual thinking and carry some kind of information more effectively, than linguistic symbol system.' Thus inadequacy of these visual learning resources meant that visual learning among the learners was not encouraged.

They are good artifacts that could help mediate the learning process as indicated by socio-cultural learning theory. For instance in one school the researcher found a poster on 'Ngeli', examples of words found in different noun groups and two sentences found on each noun group. This was a good instructional resource that a teacher kept on referring to in the process of teaching. This was different in another school where there were no such instructional resources that would help the learners to retain much of what they were taught.

Over half (56%) (N=84), 26.7% (N=40) and 17.3% (N=26) respectively asserted that school radios were not available, available and available but in poor conditions. Majority (68%) (N=102), 79.3% (N=119) of the learners stated that tape recorders and video tapes respectively were not available in schools. 28% (N=42) and 12% (N=18) stated that tape recorders and video tapes were available respectively. This implies that radio, tape recorder and video tapes/CDs were not available for the learning of Kiswahili which is similar to the

teachers' findings. This has a great significance in the investigation since the inadequacy of these instructional resources meant that not all senses were involved in the learning.

Just as the dialogic teacher in Vygotsky's Social Cultural Theory whose gestures and verbal moves are important, the radio, tape recorder and video tapes/CD'S are important since the learners observe gestures, verbal moves as learning takes place through these resources. These compels learner to rely on themselves in the learning process. These resources stimulate the learner's curiosity and retention of what they learn. Ogula and Onsongo (2000) established that, such resources attract the attention of the learners. A picture on the screen or even music playing enhances learner's attention thus good transfer of knowledge and retention. Therefore, in a school without this, the learning process is not up to date since retention is minimal. These resources contribute in a combined form with all the others in the learning process.

62% (N=93), 33.3% (N=50) and 4.7% (N=7) respectively stated that newspapers were not available, available, available but in poor conditions. This implies that newspapers are not available for learning Kiswahili which was similar to the teachers' report. Newspapers as instructional resource help the learner break monotony of reading books. They also help the learner to be updated on what is happening especially in line with Kiswahili. Lack of *Taifa Leo* newspaper depopularises Kiswahili since the research found that, most schools bought English newspapers, such as *Daily Nation*.

### **Utilization of Instructional Resources**

The study sought to establish level of utilization of resources, teachers' responses were as follows; 63.3% (N=19), 26.7% (N=8) and 10% (N=3) stated that pupils' Kiswahili course books were very frequently, frequently and occasionally utilized respectively as instructional resources. Supplementary books were very frequently, frequently and occasionally used as instructional resources as stated by 13.3% (N=4), 26.7% (N=8) and 53.3% (N=16) respectively. However, 6.7% (N=2) stated that supplementary books were not used.

As for teachers' reference materials, 60% (N=18), 30% (N=9) and 6.7% (N=2) of the teachers stated that they were very frequently, frequently and occasionally used respectively. But 3.3% (N=1) were non-committal. 70% (N=21) and 26.7% (N=8) of the teachers asserted that chalkboards were very frequently and frequently used respectively, as instructional resource, 3.3% (N=1) were neutral. This implied that the course books, supplementary books, teacher's reference books and chalkboard were frequently used in learning of Kiswahili.

6.7% (N=2), 10% (N=3) and 70% (N=21) of the teachers stated that charts were very frequently, frequently and occasionally used respectively. 10% (N=3) stated that charts were never used while 3.3% (N=1) were neutral. Further, 6.7% (N=2) 3.3% (N=1) and 56.7% (N=17) stated that posters were very frequently, frequently and occasionally used respectively as instructional resources, while 33.3% (N=10) stated that posters were never used. This implies that charts and posters were occasionally used in the learning process.

76.7% (N=23), 10% (N=3), and 6.7% (N=2) stated that school radios were never used, frequently used and very frequently used respectively, the rest were neutral. Tape recorders, video tapes and newspapers were never used as stated by 80% (N=24), 56.7% (N=17) and 60% (N=18) of the teachers respectively. But 0% (N=0), 11.1% (N=3) and 6.7% (N=2) stated that tape recorders, video tapes and newspapers were frequently used as instructional resources. This implies that school radio, tape recorder, video tapes/CDs and newspapers were never used in the learning process in most of the schools.

Teachers' notes were very frequently, frequently and never used as indicated in 50% (N=15), 26.7% (N=8) and 14.8% (N=4) respectively. Additionally 11.1% (N=3) stated that teachers' made notes were never used. This implies that majority of the schools frequently use teachers' notes.

Learners' responses on utilization of resources in teaching and learning of Kiswahili were as follows; 86% (N=129), 9.3% (N=14) and 4.7% (N=7) stated that learners' Kiswahili course books were used frequently, occasionally and never used respectively. 13.3% (N=20) stated that supplementary books were frequently used, with 53.3% (N=80) stating that they were occasionally used. 33.3% (N=50) stated that they were never used. This agrees with the teachers' response and researcher observation on utilization of the resources. The teachers gave exercises from the course book since the supplementary books were few. Concerning chalkboard, 86.7% (N=130), 10.7% (N=16) and 2.7% (N=4) stated that it was used frequently, occasionally and never respectively. This was observed as teachers taught, they used it when emphasizing essential information and writing exercises for the learners.

30% (N=20) and 54% (N=81) and 26% (N=39) asserted that charts were frequently, occasionally and never used respectively. Another 21.3% (N=32) stated that posters were used frequently. However, 34% (N=51) and 44.7% (N=67) stated that posters were occasionally and never used. Majority (62%) (N=93) of learners stated that school radio was never used, 14.7% (N=22) and 23.3% (N=35) stated that it was frequently and occasionally used when teaching and learning Kiswahili.

Majority (65.3%) (N=98) and 69.3 % (N=104) of the learners respectively stated that they were never used Tape recorders and video tapes. Only 8.7% (N=13) and 10% (N=15) of the learners stated that tape recorders and video tapes respectively were used frequently.

Further, 30.7% (N=46) of the learners stated newspapers were frequently used. However 59.3% (N=89) stated that newspapers were never used and 10.0% (N=15) of the learners asserted that newspapers were occasionally used in learning Kiswahili.

From the observation checklist, the instructional resources frequently used were pupils' Kiswahili course books, supplementary books, teachers' references, chalkboards, and teacher made notes. It was further observed that charts posters, radios, tape recorders, videos, and newspapers, were occasionally used.

### **Utilization of School Library**

The following were teacher's responses on the availability of specific supplementary books in the library; 13.3% (N=4), 40% (N=12) and 46.7% (N=14) stated that *sarufi* (grammar) books were not available, available and available but in poor conditions respectively.

83.3% (N=25), 16.7% (N=5) and 13.3 % (N=4) stated that *insha* (composition) books were not available, available and available but in poor conditions respectively. Over half 60% (N=18), 26.7% (N=8) and 13.3% (N=4) asserted that *kamusi* (dictionaries) were not available, available and available but in poor conditions respectively. As for *hadithi* (story) books, 66.7% (N=14), 30% (N=9), and 3.3 % (N=1) of the teachers stated that they were not available, available and available but in poor conditions respectively.

46.7 % (N=14), 13.3% (N=4) and 6.7% (N=2) of the teachers mentioned that *marudio* (revision) books were not available, were available and available but in poor conditions respectively. Further, 73.3% (N=22), 6.7 % (N=2) and 20 % (N=6) stated that *mashairi* (poems) books were not available, were available and available but in poor conditions respectively. This implies that in most schools, there were inadequate supplementary Kiswahili books in the library.

## **IV. SUMMARY**

The investigation found that, pupils' course books, teachers' reference books/materials, chalkboards and teachers' notes were available and were frequently utilized as instructional resources in the teaching and learning of Kiswahili. It was noted that supplementary books were not adequate for the learning of Kiswahili. However, charts, school radios, tape recorders, video tapes/CDs and newspapers were not available and were rarely used in learning of Kiswahili.

## **V. CONCLUSION**

Instructional resources in school contributed to the performance of Kiswahili. Inadequate supplementary books in class and library affected the learning of Kiswahili since learners did not have variety of instructional resource that they would draw their examples. Charts, school radios, tape recorders, video tapes/CDs and newspapers were not available. These are important instructional resources that would help learning to be less abstract. They help in making learning real and capturing the learners' attention. Their absence in some schools influenced the learning of Kiswahili which is reflected in K.C.P.E results.

## **VI. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It was recommended that, teachers and school administration work together as a team towards provision of instructional resources that are geared towards improving the performance of learners in Kiswahili examinations. Also, Ministry of education should recommend a standardized Kiswahili course book that should be used by all the primary schools in the country to enhance competition that is at the same level.

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