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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Secondary Traumatic Stress Levels among Judges and Magistrates in Rift Valley Region, Kenya</b> <i>Peter Muchemi and John Kanjogu Kiumi</i> .....	1
<b>Alternative Livelihood as Means of Climate Change Adaptation among the Pastoralists in Kenya: Opportunities and Challenges</b> <i>Janet Naisoi Mashara</i> .....	14
<b>In Search of a Pedagogy for the Preparation of Secondary School History Educators in Kenya: Hirst's 'Forms of Knowledge' Construal as a Conceptual Optic</b> <i>Kefa Lidundu Simwa</i> .....	26
<b>Headteachers' Preferred Parent-School Conflict Management Styles in Public Primary Schools in Nyahururu Sub-County, Kenya: The Effect of Gender and Headship Experience</b> <i>John Kanjogu Kiumi</i> .....	40
<b>The Role of Trade Unions in Effective Management of Schools: Case of the Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT)</b> <i>Jane Muli, George Muthaa and Mercy Wanja</i> .....	52
<b>Influence of Classroom Teacher Presentation on Learners' Achievement in English Functional Writing in West Pokot County Secondary Schools, Kenya</b> <i>Benjamin Koros and Lilly Salat</i> .....	65
<b>Phonemic Awareness Instructional Strategies for Elementary Grade Learners in Nyeri County, Kenya: Towards Best Practices</b> <i>Moses Gatambuki Gathigia and Albert Rutere Mugambi</i> .....	77
<b>The New Quota Admission Policy as a Discursive Force for Social Class Differentiation: Perceptions of Public and Private Primary School Actors in Isiolo Township, Kenya</b> <i>Fredrick Meeme Irimba, Jacinta Ndambuki and Felicia Yieke</i> .....	87
<b>Women, Patriarchy and Power: Perspectives from Marjorie Oludhe Macgoye's Writings</b> <i>Stephen Mutie and Nicholas Kamau Goro</i> .....	100
<b>A Critical Analysis of the Female Husbands' (FH) Language Use in Woman to Woman Marriages (Maweto) Among the Akamba in Yatta Sub-County, Kenya</b> <i>Leah Syombua Solomon, Jacinta Ndambuki and Albert Mugambi Rutere</i> .....	110
<b>No Thank You: How and Why Street Families Sometimes Decline Offers - the Case of Isiolo Township, Kenya</b> <i>David Asule Mukoba, Felicia Yieke and Vicky Khasandi-Telewa</i> .....	125
<b>Code Alternation in the News Media: Motivations for Its Use in Classic 105 Radio Station Morning Show Debate</b> <i>Serah Wanjiru Mbaria, Jacinta Ndambuki and Pauline Ndoro</i> .....	138
<b>The National Language and the Question of Identity in Kenya</b> <i>James Ogola Onyango</i> .....	151

## Secondary Traumatic Stress Levels among Judges and Magistrates in Rift Valley Region, Kenya

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### Abstract

*The Judiciary is responsible for fair and efficient administration of justice. Officers working in the judiciary encounter clients whose rights may have been violated and who vividly narrate stories that bear content of trauma. Due to adjudication of cases involving such clients, the officers may get vicariously traumatised and hence suffer secondary traumatic stress (STS). This scenario, if unaddressed, may impact negatively on judicial officers' capacity to resolve conflicts effectively. In this regard, this study purposed to find out the extent to which Kenya's judicial officers were experiencing STS. The study was guided by Constructive Self Development Theory. Using ex-post facto research design, data was collected from 83 judicial officers in Rift Valley region of Kenya, through a self-administered questionnaire. Collected data was analysed through mean calculations and percentages. Analysis task was accomplished through the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) programme, version 22.0. The key findings of the study were that respondents' STS level was moderately low. Nonetheless, level of STS was high with respect to reminders of testimonies given by traumatised clients, flashbacks of traumatising stories given by clients and anxiety after dealing with traumatised litigants. The study further revealed that STS among respondents can be mitigated through counselling and debriefing of officers, in addition to encouraging them to join social groups such as sports clubs. The study offers useful insights to the Judiciary in and out of Kenya. For instance, it can borrow useful ideas relating to how it can enhance judicial officers' capacity to manage STS through well managed counselling programmes. Finally, scholars in the counselling field may identify investigation pathways that can be followed with a view to not only improving STS coping capacity among judicial officers but also unearthing other STS related challenges they could be encountering in the course of justice delivery within and outside Kenya.*

Keywords: Coping, judge, magistrate, secondary traumatic stress (STS), trauma.

### Introduction

Psychological trauma was initially associated with victims of traumatizing incidences like military combat; those experiencing violent personal assault, being kidnapped or taken hostage, being tortured, being incarcerated as a prisoner of war, experiencing natural or manmade disasters, surviving severe automobile accidents, or being diagnosed with a life threatening illness (APA, 2000). Victims of such incidences would eventually suffer excessive arousal and irritability behaviours to avoid reminders of traumatic material, emotional numbing of responses and impaired memory for the original events where the victim is unable to remember certain aspects of the trauma. Intrusions by the traumatic event into consciousness as 'flashbacks' in the form of nightmares are also common (APA, 2000).

A more recent development has been the recognition that psychological traumatization is not confined solely to the victims of overwhelming events. It can also affect those endeavouring to help the victims or those who 'learn about' a traumatic event occurring to family members or close associates (Figley, 1995). Professionals such as police, emergency services and medical personnel called to the scene, including therapists who treat the victims and must empathize with

the intensely distressing accounts offered by survivors may all develop secondary traumatic stress (STS) (McCann & Pearlman, 1990). This phenomenon emanates from the experience of being exposed to stories of cruel and inhumane acts perpetrated towards the affected individuals and the society at large. STS therefore denotes the distress and emotional disruption associated with hearing about trauma suffered by others or working with clients who are victims of a traumatic event (Figley, 1989; Bride, 2007; Peebles-Kleiger, 2000).

According to Hall and Simmons (1973), traumatised persons have unique effects on those around them such as wives and children. Some trauma therapists have even pointed out that individuals who empathize with traumatised victims tend to assume the pathology of the victims through experiencing their suffering in addition to absorbing their distorted world and familial views (Figley, 1995). McCann and Pearlman (1990) have similarly observed that professionals who help victims of trauma are at risk of experiencing the trauma vicariously. Figley (1989) first emphasized that sexual abuse and trauma counsellors are likely to suffer STS. Later he identified police officers as a group at risk of developing STS symptoms. Other professionals at risk of such harm are nurses, social workers, child protection workers, emergency service workers, and medical practitioners (Bride, 2007; Bride, Robinson, Yegidis, & Figley, 2003; Figley, 1989). This observation suggest that any professional group working with clients who have been traumatised including judicial officers, are likely to experience STS.

Past researchers, as has been observed, tended to focus on occupations other than the judicial profession in their studies on STS. Perhaps, judicial officers have in the past been perceived as less prone to STS. However, Richardson (2001) has observed that judicial officers are also highly likely to be affected by STS due to the fact that they are continuously exposed to stories with traumatising content in the course of listening to case evidences and determining cases. This position have been supported by researchers like Chamberlain and Miller (2009), Jaffe, Crooks, Dunford-Jackson and Town (2003), and Zimmerman (2006) who have shown that the process of justice delivery exposes judicial officers to an environment that can have negative consequences on the officers' psychological well being and health, which may consequently have an impact on delivery of justice in a country. They observe that judicial officers confront a haunting side of human nature. The interaction between judicial officers and trauma victims and the fact that the judges and magistrates are captive audiences who have no choice but to view in some instances, chilling photographs of traumatic events besides hearing heart wrenching testimonies of such events, places the officers at risk of suffering STS symptoms (Flores, Miller, Chamberlain, Richardson & Bornstein (2007); Robertson, Davies & Nettleingham, 2009).

In Kenya today, incidences of disaster, heinous crime and tribal crashes are happening more often. As a result of this, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) levels and consequently STS levels among helpers including judicial officers could be on the rise.

### **Statement of the Problem**

As adduced in the introduction, it is clear that judicial officers are likely to suffer from STS due to listening to cases with traumatising stories. In the recent past, Kenya has experienced an upsurge in criminal activities including rape, defilement, child abuse, domestic violence, terrorism, assault, robbery with violence, fatal land and family disputes, and divorce, among others. Victims of such incidents, more often than not, seek justice in courts of law. This implies that Kenya's judicial officers are more likely to encounter chilling evidence in the course of adjudicating on cases involving such victims. A recurring observation in the background to this study is that judicial officers are likely to experience STS through exposure to cases in which the victims may be distressed. However, there is a paucity of research in Kenya with regard to the extent to which determination of traumatised clients' cases could be generating STS on judicial



officers. This is the knowledge gap that this study sought to fill, with a view to identifying the relevant intervention strategies that can help judicial officers overcome the STS challenge.

### **Purpose and Objectives of the Study**

The overall purpose of the study was to determine the extent to which judges and magistrates working in Kenya, in general, and those working in Rift Valley region in particular could be experiencing STS through adjudication of cases involving traumatised victims. This study sought to achieve the following two objectives: to determine the level of STS among judges and magistrates in Kenya; and to establish ways in which judges and magistrates' capacity to manage STS could be enhanced.

In order to achieve the study objectives, the following research questions were developed: What is the level of STS among judges and magistrates in Kenya? In which ways can judges and magistrates' capacity to cope with STS be enhanced?

### **Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS) Levels among Judicial Officers**

This section presents reviewed literature relating to STS among judicial officers. In a study conducted by Jaffe et al. (2003) where 105 judges were involved, 63 percent of the judges reported experiencing one or more short-term or long-term vicarious trauma symptoms. The symptom categories identified as stemming from judicial work in this study included; cognitive symptoms (like lack of concentration), emotional symptoms (anger, anxiety), physiological symptoms (like fatigue, loss of appetite), Post Traumatic Stress Disorder symptoms (flashbacks), spiritual symptoms (losing faith in God or humanity), and interpersonal symptoms (like lack of empathy, sense of isolation from others). This study clearly indicates that judges' exposure to the graphic evidence of human potential for cruelty exacts a high personal cost.

Judges in the study by Jaffe et al. (2003) identified coping strategies that they used to manage STS symptoms. These included personal, professional, and societal strategies. Personal strategies included physical activity (80.7%), rest and relaxation (74.3%) and social contacts (65.1%). Professional strategies included attending workshops (60.1%), peer support (53.2%) and reading educational materials (29.4%) while societal strategies included public speaking on the role of the courts (41.3%), coordination of courts and community services (37.6%) and court reform to facilitate the administration of justice (29.4%). Majority of the STS prevention strategies identified by the respondents were in the personal coping domain, which included achieving balance between work and home life, developing healthy philosophies, and maintaining a sense of humour.

Jaffe et al. (2003) however observe that the sample was not random since all of the participants were attending a professional development workshop, which in and of itself had been identified as a prevention strategy. Additionally, because of the open-ended nature of this survey, interpretations about base rates of particular symptoms must be made very cautiously. Chamberlain and Miller (2009) on the contrary conducted a research on STS among nine Caucasian judges. The researchers identified 54 responses that suggested that judges were experiencing STS. Particularly, thirteen messages were identified as potential indicators of STS in the judges. The researchers agreed further that 10 of the 13 messages showed that the judges were at risk of STS, yielding a 77 percent agreement rate. In this study, several themes emerged from the analysis of comments relevant to STS. The judges in the study remarked that the courtroom can be a very emotional setting noting that family related cases generated more emotions than other cases. The comments imply events in judicial setup are inherently emotional and that judicial officers may be prone to experiencing STS.

Further, the judges in the study by Chamberlain and Miller (2009) mentioned that judges deal with death, paraplegia, burning, infant trauma, divorce and people who have been horribly hurt or otherwise murdered. They pointed out that evidence heard from such cases can be traumatic. These comments suggest that these judges were affected by the traumatic experiences of others, which may foster development of STS. Participants in the study also indicated that they had become emotionally involved in trials hence being empathetic for those who had been traumatized. For instance, it was observed that judges struggle to keep their emotions in check where others have turned emotionally numb. A judge in this study for example disclosed that judges feel the need to provide some counselling to clients after some cases generated empathic concern.

The judges therefore recognized the toll that the court process takes on those involved in the proceedings revealing that after listening to harrowing evidence for between 3 to 4 hours, none of the players including judges, parties, witnesses and lawyers wants to be in court any more. The authors observe that although the judges in their study did not explicitly state that they had experienced stress from others' traumas, the findings suggest that they may be at risk of STS.

Chamberlain and Miller (2009) provided a variety of recommendations intended to provide a basis for addressing the negative impacts of STS for judges. They recommended that judges should be trained to recognize the effects of these occupational stressors. Additionally, they observed that it is important for judges to seek help from physicians, counsellors, and psychologists if necessary. Judges should also be encouraged to take time off to relieve the effects of difficult occupational experiences. Anxiety stemming from occupational responsibilities can be remedied by an occasional break from work. Chamberlain and Miller (2009) add that even an extra day off to engage in a favourite hobby and having longer sabbaticals can help a judge come back to the bench refreshed and relaxed. Moreover, researchers need to be funded to study stress. More employees are also needed to take some of the heavy load off judges and also allow them to take time off when needed. Ultimately, the government should provide greater funding to protect this important branch of government.

A limitation of the survey by Chamberlain and Miller (2009) is that the judges were not directly asked if they had experienced STS. Instead, more general questions about stressful and anxiety-provoking experiences were asked to avoid introducing a response bias. A related limitation is that judges may be unwilling to disclose their symptoms and experiences since such an admission would imply weakness in judicial decision thus making an outcome that is presumably undesirable for all judges. Another limitation of the research is the restricted generalizability of the results due to the small and homogeneous sample. However, the current study provides a picture of judges' experiences though in a limited context.

In a study by Flores et al. (2007) where a convenience sample of 163 American trial judges participated, the judges indicated that they had experienced a moderate amount of stress ( $M = 4.29$ ). Ninety nine (61% of the total sample) reported feeling irritable, 79 judges (48%) reported anxiety, 72 judges (44%) reported sleep disturbances, and 24 judges (15%) reported nervousness. A total of 31 judges (19%) indicated that they experienced other emotional forms of stress; the most common of which were eating problems, depression, feeling distant or cut off and irritability or anger. On average, judges exhibited moderately low scores on a PTSD-types symptoms measure of stress (scores ranging from 7-35,  $M = 12.74$ ).

A study by Robertson, Davies and Nettleingham (2009) that consisted of 64 respondents working with the judiciary in United Kingdom, indicated that jurors experienced a range of symptoms of distress, of which restlessness, sleep disturbances, sadness, feeling isolated headaches, waking at night, flashbacks and feeling tense all the time were most common.

Another study by Lustig et al. (2009) revealed that immigration judges by virtue of the traumatic stories to which they are subjected to, on an ongoing basis, were at risk for STS. Immigration judges indicated that they experienced significant symptoms of STS, scoring a mean of 2.33 out of 5.

According to Miller, Flores and Dolezilek (2007) and Bremer (2003), courtroom stress can be addressed through judicial mentoring programmes. The authors suggest that judicial mentoring programmes are necessary to help new judges adapt to their occupations. Mentors can act as important confidants and help newer judges recognize and address their stress. Bremer (2003) observes that older judges enjoy mentoring the younger officers, which could increase job satisfaction and reduce stress. Additionally, according to Bremer, psychologists should focus on developing programmes that focus on preventive measures and debriefings other than treatment measures. Preventive measures are of utmost importance because they promote well-being and help jurors and judges avoid some stress. Debriefings assume that judges are normal individuals experiencing abnormal stressors. In contrast, counselling carries a stigma that prevents help-seeking and dissuades positive attitude change.

Chamberlain and Richardson (2012) suggest that to minimize or prevent the impact of STS among judicial officers, certain interventions should be put in place. These include: reduction of caseloads hence reducing the cases with gruesome evidence per officer; encouraging judges to take longer breaks (for instance, retreats, longer sabbaticals) away from work to minimize work-related burnout; allowing judicial officers to attend conferences where they can share common goals and experiences with other officers; developing hobbies outside of the law; and staying in touch with mentors. Chamberlain and Richardson suggest that these interventions allow judges to normalize experiences of secondary trauma and decision-making stress.

### **Emerging Issues in Kenya's Judiciary that may have a Bearing on the Level of STS among Judges and Magistrates**

The Constitution of Kenya (Kenya Law Reports, 2010) has radically altered the state of the Judiciary (Mutunga, 2012). This indicates that the work life for judicial officers is undergoing considerable and continuous change. Judicial officers sit at the bench and dutifully listen to evidences in order to determine cases. Some of the materials revealed in the evidence are traumatising. For example, the self confession of serial killers and the evidence they willingly reveal later, serves as an indicator of what judicial officers in Kenya listen to on a daily basis (Mukinda & Mwangi, 2008). Evidence produced in court by the police and victims of rape and murder is consistently rife in Kenyan courts and in this era of technology, evidence is likely to be more real and hence more traumatising than has been in the past (Ombati, 2010). The continuous exposure to such kind of human cruelty is likely to take a toll on an officer's mental health as observed by one of the judges in Kenya (Anonymous, 2009).

According to an East African Standard newspaper reporter in Kenya (Anonymous, 2009), a judge in Kenya told how he was moved to tears in his chambers after taking a plea from an eleven year old boy charged with murder. The Justice told a judicial officials' meeting that judges and magistrates had emotions like other human beings and required counselling. He indicated how he was forced to fight back tears in the court because the boy was trembling and his advocate was shedding tears while the murder charge was being read to him. He added that after taking the plea, he adjourned proceedings and went to cry in the chambers. The officer disclosed that judges and magistrates see and hear a lot in the course of their duties adding that photographs and evidence adduced in court during murder, robbery with violence and rape cases speak volumes of what they undergo. He went ahead to recommend that counsellors should be

employed in the Judiciary to assist judicial officers handle stress emanating from such traumatising cases.

Drawing from the afore-discussed emerging issues in Kenya's judiciary, it is reasonable to suggest that judicial profession in Kenya could gradually be emerging as one of the most challenging and by implication stressful careers in the country. This scenario underscores the need to explore STS related issues among judicial officers with a view to remedying the situation.

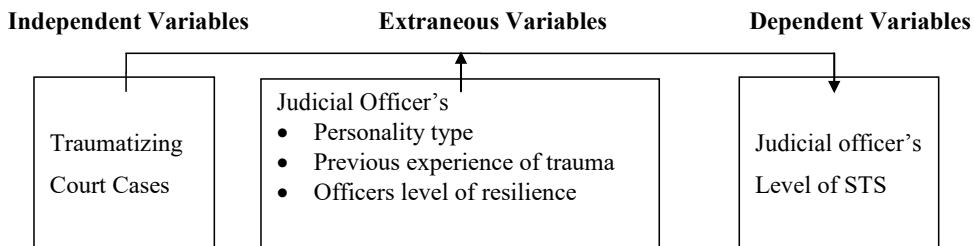
### Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

This study was guided by constructivist self development theory (CSDT) which was postulated by Derubeis, Tang and Beck (2001). According to this theory, traumatic events can be understood only within the context of the victims' unique meaning system. This implies, for instance, that STS may be rooted in an individual's distorted information processing system, which results in a consistently negative view of himself/herself. When applied to STS among judicial officers, it is highly likely that judicial officers who continuously listen to evidences of violations to human rights may be prone to distortions in their schematic perceptions.

McCann and Pearlman (1990) indicated that schemas are beliefs, expectations and assumptions about oneself, other people, and the world. In other words, schemas may be conceived as templates that individuals develop through their experiences that they use to label, classify, interpret, evaluate, and assign meaning to objects, events and future experiences. The schematic make-up of an individual is drastically altered by trauma. Utilizing this understanding of schemas, one can infer the implications of trauma work on the officers within the judiciary. Initially, judicial officers enter the field with defined schemas of themselves and their world. Thereafter, these officers' schematic makeup is often negatively impacted on by consistent descriptions of violence and brutality of the clients they serve (McCann & Pearlman, 1990; Iliffe, 2000). Hence, the officer's central psychological needs of safety, trust, independence, power, intimacy and self esteem are negatively impacted on by trauma.

As judicial officers continue listening to traumatising evidences, their experience of self is negatively impacted; this is thus a situation where the officer loses confidence gradually and becomes a workaholic who progressively loses trust, respect for clients and people in general. Iliffe and Steed (2000) point out that environments rich in peer support and supervision can assist to identify these changes in the officer's 'experience of self'. Otherwise, cognitively defining trauma in negative frameworks can be detrimental not only to the officer, but also to clients and court organizations in which they serve.

The conceptualized relationship between adjudication of traumatizing court cases and the level of STS is schematically depicted in Figure one.



**Figure 1: Relationship between Adjudication of Traumatizing Court Cases and Level of STS among Judicial Officers**

As has consistently been reviewed in the literature, judicial work can expose officers to stories that would otherwise contain traumatising content. The officers are therefore likely to suffer STS. However, it is important to note that the level of STS as caused by adjudicating on traumatizing court cases may be moderated either positively or negatively by three extraneous variables; an officers' personality type, previous experience of trauma, and officers' level of resilience from stress.

### **Research Methodology**

The study utilized survey research design of the *ex-post facto* type. This is a type of design in which the researcher establishes any existing relationship between independent and dependent variables retrospectively (Kathuri & Pals, 1993). This design category is adopted in situations whereby the independent and dependent variables have already interacted (Kerlinger, 1986). In this regard, the outcome of this interaction has to be investigated retrospectively. The design was therefore deemed ideal in view of the fact that judicial officers had already interacted with victims of trauma in the process of adjudication of court cases.

### **Population and Sample of the Study**

The study was conducted among judges and magistrates serving in the Rift Valley region of Kenya. The region has a number of communities with diverse cultures. Some of the cultural practices within the communities are likely to cause serious violations to human rights. Such cultural practices include female genital mutilation (Wilson, 2013), child neglect, child abuse and domestic violence (World Organization Against Torture, 2008). Further, the cosmopolitan nature of people living in the region multiplies religious differences and diversity in economic undertakings. Due to this cosmopolitan nature, the region is prone to human conflicts that may lead to trauma; for example, cattle rustling and conflicts involving land boundaries and water resources (Cheserek, Omondi, & Odenyo, 2012). The area is also covered by a greater mileage of The Great North Road and could therefore be experiencing more road accidents and road crimes compared to other areas in Kenya, (The Kenya Police Service, 2014). The judicial officers serving in the region, therefore, could be handling a significant number of traumatised litigants and hence may be exposed to court testimonies with traumatising content. The officers in the selected region were therefore an ideal population who could appropriately provide the information sort by items in the questionnaire. The region has fourteen Counties which include Nakuru, Baringo, Elgeyo Marakwet, Trans Nzoia, Turkana, Uasin Gishu, Kericho, Nandi, Narok, Kajiado, Laikipia, West Pokot, Bomet and Samburu. Each County has one court station save for Nakuru and Laikipia Counties, which have three court stations each, and Bomet County which has two court stations.

According to the Judicial Service Commission (Kenya) records, there were eighty three (83) judicial officers serving in the region. At the time of data collection, these judicial officers were distributed in twenty court stations in the fourteen Counties, with 74 percent of the court stations having less than five judicial officers (Republic of Kenya, 2014). In view of the relatively small population of judicial officers in the study area, the study adopted a census enquiry in which all 83 officers were included in the study.

### **Instrumentation**

The study utilised a self-administered questionnaire which captured information on officers' personal profile, level of STS and suggestions on how judicial officers' capacity to cope with stress related to exposure to traumatising court cases could be enhanced. Three elements of ethical considerations were deemed critical in this study. These were respondents' consent,

anonymity and confidentiality. These were made clear to the respondents at the introductory part of the questionnaire. Permission to collect data was sought from the Chief Registrar of the Judiciary and the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). Respondents mean scores were utilised in generating Level of STS (LSTS) index whose average score was expected to range from a maximum mean score of five to a minimum mean score of one, representing very high LSTS and very low LSTS respectively. The mean scores were grouped into four quotas, which represented the expected different levels of STS as shown in Table one.

**Table 1: Expected STS Mean Score Ranges by Level of STS**

<b>Mean Score</b>	<b>LSTS</b>
4 – 5	Very High
3 – 3.99	High
2 – 2.99	Low
1 – 1.99	Very Low

### ***Validity of the Research Instrument***

Efforts were made to validate the instrument. This was accomplished in two ways. Firstly, the instrument was submitted to the two supervisors of the study in the department of Psychology, Counselling and Education Foundations at Laikipia University. Secondly, the instrument was also presented to five randomly selected judicial officers in Nakuru court station of Nakuru County. The two supervisors and the five judicial officers were requested to comment on the capacity of the instrument to elicit data that would facilitate the attainment of the targeted objectives. Based on the expert advice from both the supervisors and judicial officers, extensive literature search was carried out on the suggested content areas. Moreover, utmost care was taken to ensure that items in the instrument were prepared in line with the objectives of the study as suggested by Singh (2007).

### ***Reliability of Research Instrument***

External reliability of the instrument was estimated through test-retest technique whereby it was administered to five judicial officers in Nakuru court station in Nakuru County and subsequently administered to the same subjects after two weeks. Scores from the two instrument administration conditions were in turn correlated using Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient. This computation generated correlation coefficients of  $r = .78$  (78%) for the STS scale. This correlation had the implication that the external reliability of the instrument was high.

The other reliability domain is internal reliability. This is a measure of the extent to which the instrument is measuring a single idea (or construct for that matter) and hence whether or not the items in the instrument are internally consistent. This reliability domain was determined using Cronbach's alpha. The objective was to assess whether items in the instrument were really measuring the level of STS among judicial officers in the study area. The alpha coefficients obtained for the STS scale was 0.88. This was an indication that the internal reliability of the instrument was high (Marczyk, Dematteo & Festinger, 2005).

### ***Data Analysis Procedures***

Data analysis involved the use of descriptive statistics, specifically frequency counts and percentages. This aspect of data analysis was carried out in regard to nominal scale data on respondents' personal characteristics; that is, gender, age and work experience. Responses from the one open-ended item on respondents' suggestions for enhancing stress management capacity

of judicial officers were grouped into eleven (11) themes. The proportion of respondents who supported a given theme was similarly determined through frequency counts and percentages. Ordinal scale data from the likert scale matrix items was analysed through mean.

## **Results and Discussions**

The study sought to determine STS levels among judges and magistrates in Kenya. This section presents the findings generated by the study and discussions relating to the findings. Out of the 83 copies of the questionnaire administered to the respondents, 64 duly filled copies of the questionnaire were received back. This represented 77 percent response rate, which according to Dillman (2000) is acceptable in social science research.

### ***Respondents' Biodata***

A summary of findings on respondents' gender, age, level of formal education, professional rank and work experience is presented herein below.

- i) Over half of respondents (53%) were female while 47 percent were male.
- ii) Majority of respondents (45%) were in the 31-35 years of age bracket while the least proportion of respondents (9%) were over 51 years of age.
- iii) Of the 64 respondents who participated in the study, over three-quarter of respondents (77%) had only a first degree in law while those with Master's and PhD law degrees constituted 22 percent and 1 percent respectively.
- iv) The highest proportions of respondents (39%) were resident magistrates followed by principal magistrates (16%), senior principal magistrates (14%), senior resident magistrates (14%) and chief magistrates (11%). Only four respondents (6%) had attained the status of a judge.
- v) Majority of respondents (44%) had worked in the judiciary for a period ranging between 1-5 years followed by those who had worked for a period ranging between 6-10 years (22%). Only 6 percent in each case had been in the judicial profession for 16-20 and 26-30 years respectively.

### ***The Level of STS among Judges and Magistrates in Kenya***

The first objective of the study aimed at finding out the level of STS among respondents. The level of STS among the 64 respondents was determined through computation of mean scores for each of the indicators of STS. Based on the global mean score from the 17 STS indicators (mean = 2.53), it can be said that on average, respondents level of STS was low. This finding is in line with the findings by Flores et al. (2007) which indicated that judges exhibited moderately low scores on a PTSD-type symptoms measure of stress. However, a closer analysis of the mean scores nonetheless shows that level of STS was high (refer to Table 1) with respect to reminders of testimonies given by traumatised clients (mean = 3.34), flashbacks of traumatising stories given by clients (mean = 3.28) and anxiety after dealing with traumatised litigants (mean = 3.12). This confirms research findings by Jaffe et al (2003) that observed that indeed judicial officers suffer from STSD related symptoms including flashbacks.

Indicators that had very low effect on respondents' level of STS were inability to concentrate when serving traumatised clients (mean = 1.89) and low memory level on matters pertaining to resolution of court cases with traumatic evidence (mean = 1.81). This finding seems to contradict the findings of Chamberlain and Miller (2009) who found out that judges had serious cognitive challenges after dealing with traumatised clients' court cases. There is therefore need for further research using a larger population. The result of this computation is summarized in Table two.

**Table 2: Respondents' Mean Score per each Indicator of STS**

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Mean Score</b>	<b>Standard Deviation (SD)</b>
I feel that my ability to feel emotions is less, e.g. ability to have loving feelings, can't cry when sad or feeling numb.	2.38	1.175
I found myself panicking when I thought about my work with traumatising stories of the litigants I serve.	2.58	1.081
I tend to have flashbacks of the evidence stories I listen to in court.	3.28	1.215
I have been having persistent difficulty in falling asleep or staying asleep.	2.44	1.139
I feel discouraged about my future.	2.03	1.195
Reminders of testimonies given by traumatised litigants make me feel upset.	3.34	1.057
I feel detached or cut off from others around me as a judicial officer.	2.88	1.397
I feel anxious or unsettled after dealing with traumatised litigants.	3.12	1.091
I tend to be less active than usual after listening to cases with traumatising evidences.	2.67	1.155
I thought about my work with traumatised court clients when I didn't intend to.	2.98	1.228
I have trouble concentrating when offering services to traumatised clients in court.	1.89	.928
I avoid people, places or things that remind me of my work with some traumatised people I serve in court.	2.67	1.381
I tend to have disturbing dreams related to stories narrated by litigants or their relatives.	2.05	1.105
I would like to avoid working with some traumatised litigants or their relatives.	2.45	1.234
I tend to be continuously irritable or having outbursts of anger.	2.17	1.017
I tend to expect something bad to happen in my life.	2.28	1.147
I tend to have low memory on matters relating to court sessions with traumatic evidence.	1.81	.957
<b>Total</b>	<b>2.53</b>	<b>1.147</b>

### *Ways of Enhancing Capacities of Judges and Magistrates to Cope with STS*

The second objective of the study sought to determine ways in which judges and magistrates' capacity to manage stress relating to adjudication of traumatising court cases can be enhanced. To achieve this objective, respondents were asked to offer suggestions with regard to ways in which judicial officers' capacity to cope with traumatising cases' related stress can be enhanced. Respondents' responses in this question item were grouped into 11 themes, which were in turn analysed by way of frequencies and percentages.

The data shows that the most endorsed suggestions for enhancing judicial officers' capacity to manage traumatising cases' related stress were frequent counselling of the officers (61%), provision of debriefing sessions (30%) and the need to encourage the officers to join sports clubs (17%). The least cited suggestions (at most by 6% of the respondents) were the need for the officers to lead a healthy life (6%), security enhancement in workplaces (5%) and provision of IT facilities in court premises which was supported by only 2 (3%) respondents. These strategies are in line with findings by Chamberlain and Miller (2009) in helping judges and magistrates deal with stress emanating from the stressful nature of their work. Table three summarises these discussions.



**Table 3: Respondents' Suggestions for Enhancing Judicial Officers Capacity to Manage STS**

<b>Response</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
Frequent counselling of judicial officers	39	61
Provision of debriefing sessions to judicial officers	19	30
Encouragement of judicial officers to join sports clubs for physical exercises	11	17
Provision of more leave time and time off from work	10	16
Provision of quality social support to officers	9	14
Regular arrangements for retreats and exchange programmes	7	11
Higher payment/remuneration for overtime duties	6	9
Provision of stress management training to judicial officers	6	9
Healthy living among judicial officers	4	6
Security enhancement in workplaces	3	5
Provision of information technology (IT) facilities in court premises	2	3

### **Conclusions and Recommendations of the Study**

The study sought to explore STS levels among judges and magistrates in Kenya. Firstly, the study established that the respondents' level of STS was on average low (mean = 2.53). Secondly, the study established that the highest STS symptoms among respondents were those relating to reminders of testimonies given by traumatised clients (mean = 3.34), flashbacks of traumatising stories (mean = 3.28) and anxiety after dealing with traumatised court clients (mean = 3.12). Lastly, from the respondents' point of view, the most efficacious ways of enhancing judicial officers capacity to manage STS include, frequent counselling of officers on how to manage stress, provision of debriefing sessions to the officers after presiding over traumatising court cases and the need for the officers to join sports clubs.

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

- i) The study revealed that respondents were experiencing STS challenges through exposure to cases involving traumatised clients. The study therefore recommends that judicial officers in Kenya be sensitized on how to identify STS symptoms in order to take the necessary intervention measures before such symptoms reach a critical stage. This task should be undertaken by the Judicial Service Commission (JSC), which is charged with overseeing the welfare of judicial officers in the country.
- ii) Based on the observation that certain STS symptoms were more prevalent among respondents, there is need for JSC to organize workshops involving exposure of officers to simulate enactment of traumatic events and consequently offer counselling service to them with a view to enhancing their STS coping capacity.
- iii) Inferring from respondents' suggestions on how to ensure that judicial officers are least susceptible to STS, it is recommended that besides counselling and debriefing of the affected officers, there is also need for the officers to join social welfare groups such as sports clubs, in addition to sensitizing them on how to lead healthy lives.

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## **Alternative Livelihood as Means of Climate Change Adaptation among the Pastoralists in Kenya: Opportunities and Challenges**

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### **Abstract**

*Pastoralists play a significant role in terms of contribution to the economic development of a given nation especially with regards to livestock products, tourism, and ecosystem management through indigenous knowledge. It contributes to 90 percent of all employment opportunities and 95 percent of family income. As climate change and high levels of poverty among the pastoralist communities continue to become more and more unpredictable, the limited livelihoods of pastoralists become threatened. Pastoralism relies mainly on migration as a strategy to safeguard livelihoods of pastoralists from fluctuating climatic conditions. This paper provides a brief analysis of a number of opportunities and challenges which if taken into consideration by the county governments, the national government, policy makers and other stakeholders can help affected communities overcome the harsh effects of climate change. The study was conducted through an in-depth literature review and analysis of past studies on the same study area. Two case studies are also incorporated to shade light on the role of women in climate change adaptation.*

**Keywords:** Adaptive capacity, alternative livelihood, climate change, indigenous knowledge, pastoralist communities.

### **Introduction**

The Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASAL) of Kenya play a key important role in the county's socio-economic sector. The main livelihood in the ASAL areas is pastoralism which despite the challenges it is facing due to climate change, its economy accounts for 90 percent of all employment opportunities and 95 percent of family income and livelihood security (Kenya ASAL Policy, 2012). Pastoralism is the extensive production of livestock in rangeland environments. It takes many forms, but its principal defining features are livestock mobility and the communal management of natural resources (GOK, 2011).

Most of the pastoralists in East Africa are found in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania, however, others can also be found in Somalia and Ethiopia. In Kenya, Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASALs) occupy 89 percent of the country and are home to about 36 percent of its people and approximately 70 percent of the national livestock herd (Kenya ASAL Policy, 2012). There are approximately seventeen pastoral communities living in Kenya. They include Turkana, Maasai, Nandi, Kipsigis, Pokot, Ilchamus, Samburu, Rendile, Boran, Suk, Somali, Gabra, Orma, Ariaal, Kamba, Teso and the Dassanetch (Saranta, 2013). Pastoralist communities in Kenya mostly dependent on livestock products, which include milk, meat, blood, hides and skins for their livelihood (GoK, 2005).

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) (2012) defines adaptation as the adjustments in the natural or human systems in response to actual or expected climate stimuli or their effects, which moderates harm or exploits beneficial opportunities. The nomadic aspect of pastoralism was a form of adaptation which resulted in seasonal migration of people and their livestock in search of pasture and water. According to a report from a conference held in N'Djamena, Chad in 2011 on adaptation to climate change, Indigenous Pastoralism, Traditional Knowledge and Meteorology in Africa, pastoralism evolved in Africa specifically as an adaptive

response to climate and environmental conditions that limit agricultural expansion (N'Djamena Declaration, 2011). However, due to continued change in the weather patterns, nomadic pastoralist migration calendar is no longer reliable. In addition, the prolonged drought in the ASAL areas is threatening the livelihoods of pastoralists.

Livelihood is defined as sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stress and shocks, maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets, provide sustainable livelihood opportunities for the next generation and generate net benefits for other livelihoods at the local and global levels, in both long and short terms (Chambers & Conway 1992). Pastoralism serves both as a livelihood and a cultural identity. Faced with a myriad of challenges predominant in the ASAL areas of Kenya, the pastoralist communities have developed mechanisms to safeguard their livelihood apart from migration. These mechanisms (Hesse & MacGregor, 2006: 7) include:

- a. Investing in animals, particularly fertile females, to build up herd size as an insurance against drought, disease and raiding;
- b. Splitting herds across different locations and movement patterns to spread risks from lack of grazing and exposure to diseases, and so on;
- c. Keeping different species and breeds to make use of different ecological niches;
- d. Selecting animals for different traits that enable survival in prevalent conditions;
- e. Loaning surplus animals to family and friends for their subsistence requirements and building of their herd, to develop and strengthen social relations as a form of social capital; and
- f. Matching the number of animals to the availability of natural pastures and water.

Adaptive capacity denotes the ability of a system to adjust, modify or change its characteristics or actions to moderate potential damage, take advantage of opportunities or cope with the consequences of shock or stress (Brooks 2003). Intensifying climate change and deepening drought combined with poor institutional support has overwhelmed people's existing adaptive capacity (Schilling, Opiyo & Remling, 2011). Consequently, traditional pastoralism practices no longer provide adequate livelihood return. The pastoral households in the Northern, Coastal and Eastern Regions of Kenya have developed livelihood systems that accommodate periods of resource scarcity due to drought; these include charcoal production and selling, commercialization of livestock products, wage labour, shop keeping, renting out houses and conference facilities, hospitality industry, beadwork, and crop cultivation.

On the converse, opportunities for alternative livelihoods, like agriculture for instance, are limited due to high rainfall variability, recurrent droughts, violent conflicts, harsh climatic and environmental conditions (Olivier de Sarden, 2005; Homewood, 2008). Charcoal burning is becoming a lucrative business in most of the ASAL areas; however, this subjects the already vulnerable environment to further degradation and desertification. Therefore, the communities living in ASAL areas continue to face a myriad of challenges ranging from physical, socio-cultural, political and economic ones that undercut their ability to sustain and improve their livelihoods. According to the IPCC (2014), Climate change is expected to have significant negative impacts on human society over the next decades, in some areas potentially reversing years of progress in human development.

The aim of this paper is to assess the adaptive capacity of the pastoralists with regard to climate change. The study was guided by the following two research objectives: to examine the challenges that hinder the pastoralist communities from effectively adapting to alternative livelihood; and to identify the potential opportunities which the pastoralists can explore while striving to adapt to alternative livelihood in the face of climate change. In order to address the stated objectives, the study was conducted through an in-depth review of literature and analysis

of past studies. In addition, the study incorporates brief excerpts from case studies of two women groups; namely, Kiltamany women group from Samburu and Merigo women group from Marsabit. The aim of including the case studies is to highlight the role of women in climate change adaptation. Discussions of the findings are presented in the next two sections that follow.

### **Challenges that Hinder Pastoralist Communities from Effectively Adapting to Alternative Livelihood**

The challenges that are considered a major hindrance to the pastoralists in their efforts to adapt to venture into alternative livelihoods are discussed in this section. The argument is that if these challenges are logically addressed, the adaptive capacity of the pastoralists to climate change will be enhanced. In addition, the pastoral systems will become sustainable in the process. These challenges are identified as land tenure, conflicts, poor infrastructure in terms of road and communication network, as well as an increasing population.

#### ***Land Tenure***

Land tenure can be defined as the way by which land is held or owned within societies (FAO, 2005). A Land tenure system to a large extent determines the nature and extent of land use. During and after the colonial era, land tenure has continued to impede proper land use planning in most of the African countries. Egemi (2006) points out that land tenure remains at least one of the complicated combinations of the structural factors contributing to poverty and violence in contemporary Africa. Therefore, in order to enable communities utilize land sustainably, the government ought to have appropriate policies that considers the specific needs for various communities. This is because when tenure rights are certain, they provide incentives to use land in a sustainable manner or invest in resource conservation whether for the individual or group of individuals (Ogolla & Mugabe 1996). A good land tenure system that is appropriate for the ASAL areas is that which promotes the sustainability of the pastoral systems.

Most of the pastoralist communities for a long time have had well-developed systems of communal land management which was initiated by the government of Kenya in 1960s through the Land Adjudication Act aimed at formalizing land rights (Republic of Kenya, 2012). Subsequently, there was the creation of group ranches particularly in Narok and Laikipia. In Samburu County for instance, land ownership is divided into four categories namely; Trust, communal, Government and Private. Communal land is managed by the communities while private land encompasses group ranches. The bulk of the land is not registered; a situation that affects its full potential exploitation. According to the Samburu County CIDP (2013), only 5 percent of the population in the county possess the title deeds. This indicates that majority of land is communally owned under the group ranches (Samburu County CIDP 2013). The same case applies to parts of Narok and Kajiado counties. Among the pastoralist communities, the communal right has become so entrenched in their culture to a point where residents regard it as indigenous and believe in its efficacy to regulate their access to land and adjudicate social conflicts (Shanmugaratnam, 2008)

Group ranches are usually preferred due to various reasons. Firstly, the regulations by group ranches managers on sustainable use of land is enhanced by ensuring balanced grazing therefore minimizing land degradation. Secondly, there is regulated access to land resources which include harvesting of trees and herbs. Thirdly, it encourages infrastructural development such as water, schools and health facilities. However, there are concerns that individuals within the group may not have direct influence over land use activities leaving livestock farming as the only activity. There is also lack of transparency and accountability which has resulted in conflicts between the ranch officials and the community members.

Individual land ownership on the contrary enhances individual responsibility and autonomy on land use; that is, the owners bears the benefits and losses that accrue from a land use activity he/she chose to undertake. In addition, individual land owners can use the title deeds as collaterals when seeking financial support in form of loans from financial institutions. In cases where individuals are not able to develop land, they can rent it out. It also simplifies inheritance processes. The system can also be disadvantageous in that with population increase coupled with land inheritance, the land gets more and more fragmented. When the number of livestock is not reduced, this leads to overgrazing. In areas where crop farming is practised, intensive farming will have to be conducted. Consequently, there will be environmental degradation, hence drought and poverty.

By assessing the 2 types of land management (one managed by the group ranches and the other which is individual land ownership), it is clear that individual tenure rights needs to be fully implemented in most of the pastoralist areas. This has been emphasized by international development institutions (like United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and World Bank) as well as researchers like Fratkin (2001; 1997), Doherty (1987), Campbell et al. (2003) and Campbell (1993).

### **Conflicts**

Insecurity and conflict hinders any development initiative irrespective of any geographic or cultural setup. This includes inter-community and inter-clan disputes over land and water points, banditry (highway robbery) and cattle rustling. Coupled with climate change, conflicts in pastoral areas are often aggravated by politicization and lack of adequate or appropriate intervention by security forces (Office for the Coordination of the Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), 2008).

Conflicts in pastoralist communities do not only disorient the day to day activities of the society but also slows down the rate of economic development of that society. The effects of violent conflict may be felt directly or indirectly to victims who are usually women, children and the elderly. This is because they are rendered more vulnerable. Some are assaulted, while others are murdered indiscriminately. In some instances, most women end up being widowed and children orphaned. According to Schilling et al. (2012), violent conflicts in Turkana are likely to undermine the gains made so far in supporting the adaptation programme in the area if not managed.

For a long time, most of the pastoralists have adopted circular migration as an adaptive response strategy for the survival of their livestock and families. With the increase in population and land privatization, most of them have adopted sedentary lifestyles with some practising crop farming. However, with the increased destruction caused by conflicts which have resulted into masses of people being killed in the name of cattle rustling, most of the communities are forced to move in case of attacks. Therefore, the movements witnessed among the pastoralist communities living in Samburu and Marsabit counties have an aspect of forced migration arising from conflict and drought.

Violent conflicts in these areas have been increasing with time. Some of the major causes of these conflicts include: lack of infrastructure; cattle rustling, increased number of illicit arms; inadequate policing and state security arrangements; diminishing role of traditional governance systems; competition over control and access to natural resources such as pasture and water; land issues; political incitements; ethnocentrism; and increasing levels of poverty and idleness amongst the youth (Pkalya, Adan & Masinde, 2003; OCHA, 2008).

The resultant effects of conflicts include:

- a) Loss of already existing livelihoods. For instance, those who had already established crop farming will lose out on it in cases where they get displaced (Shilling et. al., 2012: 10). In some instances, the crop yields are reduced because of lack of total concentration in relation to farmers' calendar given the fact that the region receives low and quite unpredictable amounts of rainfall. This translates to food insecurity in the already vulnerable society.
- b) Loss of lives. Currently the conflicts in the pastoralist communities have been on the rise and are less manageable (Shilling et. al., 2012: 9). The kind of attack has been killing people and robbing them of their livestock. The number of people killed during cattle raids have also been on the rise.
- c) Increased number of school drop-outs and delayed transition from one level to another. Sedentary lifestyles have made it possible for pastoralists to access basic services like education, health and water supply (Pkalya et al., 2003: 31, 35). However, conflicts have resulted into frequent closure of schools and in some instances interrupted learning when the community affected decides to take refuge in a learning institution, or teachers being recalled from the war-torn areas. Children whose parents have been displaced may end up delaying transiting to the subsequent levels of studies depending on the nature of attacks and the duration it takes for the conflicting communities to reconcile.
- d) Closure of businesses: people flee their homes and abandon their businesses in case of conflict.
- e) Spread of human and livestock diseases (Pkalya et al., 2003: 39).
- f) Overgrazing: This is usually the case when herders are restricted to one area which acts as their refuge zone when conflicts occur (Pkalya et al., 2003: 49). It also happens when huge herds of livestock because of cattle rustling have to be grazed in one secret point for some time to prevent them from being discovered.

The above effects act together to slow down the rate of socio-economic development while exacerbating food insecurity. In addition, insecurity weakens the viability of alternative livelihood systems.

### ***Poor Infrastructure – Road and Communication Network***

Roads networks improve the ability of governments to provide equal levels of public services (including security, schooling, health care, policing, courts, and so on) across their territories, thus making growth more balanced and enabling the poor to better help themselves. This reduces horizontal inequalities, exclusion and marginalization, as well as all major sources of grievances and conflict (Kaplan & Teufel, 2016).

The socio-economic development and subsequent economic growth of any nation is strongly linked to its infrastructure. Pastoralist areas remain the least developed parts of Kenya. The economic disparity with the rest of the country is prominent. Infrastructure is poorly developed or non-existent; in vast areas there are no roads, no schools, no telecommunication services, scarce health facilities. In the case of Northern part of Kenya, the transport network is thin, disjointed, and in some places it is non-existent. An area covering nearly 400,000km<sup>2</sup> of land has less than 1,000 kilometres of tarmac, much of which is in disrepair (GoK, 2011).

The poor state of road networks and weak communication network act as catalysts to violent conflicts. It also contributes to slowed economic development and marginalization. According to Kaplan and Teufel (2016: 2-4), road networks can be used as a platform for enhancing equality and resilience and address fragility through five channels that include: regional integration and cooperation; increased social cohesion of the population; improved state effectiveness across distance; growth poles and corridors; and reduced inequalities.



In this study, the channels that have been listed above can be adopted to emphasize the important role that road networks play especially in a fragile ecosystem that faces marginalization as well. In addition, efficient road networks enable their resilience to weather shocks.

Most of the roads are usually impassable during rainy season thus hindering delivery of essential goods and services. The areas also lack strong communication networks and people are forced to travel long distances to make phone calls even in cases of emergencies. There is thus need for better road networks in the ASAL areas of Kenya given the fact that the residents deal with livestock as their main livelihood and that their products are highly perishable. This will provide them with easy access to other social services like health care, market, school and water sources.

### ***Increasing Population***

Rapid population increase poses a significant implication for vulnerability and adaptive capacity. This is because high numbers of people get exposed to risks associated with climate change. High population growth rate translates into increased demands for resources such as water, land, and fuel, infrastructure. Under normal circumstances, human beings depend on the physical environment for survival.

In the Pastoralist communities where technological advancement has not taken much effect, human beings and livestock wholly depend on their physical environments for food. Population growth in Kenya has been recorded to be among the highest in the world (2.6% annually) by UNICEF (2010). The effect of high population growth is evident throughout the country both by region and by place of residence. In the ASAL areas where resources are already scarce, the situation is made worse when there is an increase in both human and livestock population coupled with the effects of climate change. To develop sound adaptation strategies, it is imperative for the policy makers to understand the population dynamics. For instance, rural-urban migration can be an adaptive response to climate risks and vulnerabilities in rural areas and such drivers can help to strengthen the long term planning for adaptation (USAID, 2015).

### **Potential Opportunities which Pastoralists can Explore while Striving to Adapt to Alternative Livelihood in the Face of Climate Change**

This section presents potential opportunities which could be capitalized on in order to improve the variety of alternative livelihoods and consequently enhance the resilience of the pastoralist communities with regards to climate variability. These opportunities include devolution and relevant frameworks, role of civil society organisations, adaptive social protection, entrepreneurship, and education,

### ***Devolution and Relevant Frameworks***

Chapter 11 of the Constitution of Kenya which was promulgated in 2010 provides for devolved government whereby the county governments are required to enhance development among the local communities in Kenya. The constitution emphasizes the importance of active participation by the local communities in all decision-making processes; for instance, in policy development, budgetary process and resource management.

Even though the constitution compels the county government to involve local communities in decision making process (GoK, 2010), pastoralists have not been actively engaged in the policy formulation processes. The result is a policy that excludes critical issues relating to pastoralist livelihoods. The hope is that the continued establishment of the county

governments will create a viable opportunity for pastoralists to actively engage in matters development.

In the past, the pastoralists have developed strategies that enabled them to preserve their environment and enhance peace (conflict resolution mechanisms) through the support of traditional institutions. The Constitution of Kenya (2010) recognizes the importance of preserving the environment and natural resources emphasizes on the sustainable exploitation, utilization and management of the same. It obliges the State to protect and enhance intellectual property rights and indigenous knowledge of biodiversity and genetic resources of a community, encourage public participation in the management, protection and conservation of the environment. Chapter Four, Article 56 emphasizes affirmative action programmes that are specific to the minorities and marginalized groups through programmes that are designed to ensure they participate and are represented in governance; that they have access to employment, special education and economic opportunities, water, health services, as well as infrastructure.

Other Policies and Frameworks include the policy for pastoralists implementing the AU policy framework for pastoralism which was approved by cabinet in 2012 reinforces the constitution; Vision 2030 which recognizes ASALs unique needs; African Union (AU) Policy Framework on Pastoralism and AU Framework and Guidelines for Land Policy in Africa; The East Africa Protocol on Environment and Natural Resources; East Africa Climate Change Policy; and United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People.

### ***Role of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)***

Many International and local Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have their mandates directed towards serving people living in the ASAL areas which comprise mainly the pastoralists. The NGOs have been able to bring together civil servants, traditional elders and donor funding (Umar, 1997). They mainly act as the intermediaries between the state and the local communities. They also link donors with the respective local communities. Some have assisted in supplying medicines and health services; supporting the education sector; eradicating hunger; poverty alleviation; conflict resolution, governance, awareness creation on climate change and financing small scale business and agricultural initiatives like green-house farming. The position that they occupy in the society qualifies them as crucial stakeholders in many fora that concern decision making. They help in neutralizing the differences that exist in communities.

Through the vast knowledge that they gather in their work environments, they can better articulate the issues specific to certain communities/environments to the government and to the donor agencies. In order to enhance the adaptive capacity of the pastoralist communities, it is important to utilize the already existing avenues like the CSOs in this case. The sustainability of the NGOs work has been doubted since they majorly depend on donor funding; in situations where the donors stop funding them, it means their activities will come to a standstill. Apart from mediating between the government and the local communities, some CSOs still mediate between the national level agencies and policy makers to ensure that the voices of the communities they serve are heard. In the process, they also provide feedback, which results in public awareness on various topics of concern.

### ***Adaptive Social Protection***

Social protection is understood as mechanisms taken by the state/government to protect citizens against livelihood shocks and stress (Devereux & Getu, 2013). Social protection is provided to vulnerable citizens in order to enable them access basic social services. When social protection

policies are linked to climate change adaptation measures, they are likely to yield solutions to problems associated with climate change.

According to Ellis (2010), social protection in Africa has progressed from informal insurance, to safety nets, and then to poverty targeting and categorical provision. The latter two refer to different approaches to one mechanism of social protection that has, itself, gained in popularity over recent years – cash transfers. Poverty targeting on the one hand involves provision of food aid or cash to social groups that repeatedly require emergency assistance. On the other hand, categorical provision involves giving cash transfers in form of social pensions, child support grants or both. When vulnerable citizens are given cash transfers, they plan and budget according to their priority needs. Major uses include food, health and education. Other beneficiaries manage to save and invest in small scale businesses, but majority invest in human capital by paying school fees for their children (Deshinker et al., 2012; Vincent & Cull 2012). The result would be reduced vulnerability and poverty (Barrientos & Dejong, 2006).

Climate change has been recognized as the most significant vulnerability factor in most of Africa which necessitates social protection. In Kenya, low population densities, insecurity, poor road and telecommunication networks hinder effective provision of social amenities as well as social protection. According to the World Bank (2013), countries that have social protection systems in place before a shock strikes are better able to respond particularly if they have been designed to respond to climate change. Instruments of social protection (like cash transfers, pensions, employment guarantee schemes) can be used to increase the adaptation capacities of individuals and households that are hit by climate related disasters e.g. by investing in different crop varieties or in small-scale assets (Ziegler, 2016).

### ***Entrepreneurship***

High levels of vulnerability and low adaptive capacity of the ASAL communities have been linked to high reliance on natural resources. However, there is an emerging trend of pastoralist women groups who have invented a variety of income generating activities through their small groups (*chamas*/merry-go-round). These include small scale shop-keeping where they sell items (like sugar, tea leaves, paraffin, soap, and vegetables); making and selling of ornaments made from beads; and selling of firewood and charcoal which also contributes to environmental degradation hence weakening their resilience. Some of the success stories of these response strategies are highlighted in the following case studies:

#### **Case Study 1: Kiltamany Women Group - Samburu**

Kiltamany women group is a small women group based in Samburu. After experiencing loss of their livestock through cattle rustling and harsh drought, they opted to form a group where they could make beads and sell to the tourists visiting Westgate National Reserve. They then used the money they generated as capital to start small businesses of buying and selling groceries from their *Manyattas*. Through these initiatives, the women are able to meet the needs of their families even when their husbands are away with their livestock searching for pasture.

## Case Study 2: Merigo Women Group in Logo Logo (Marsabit)

As a result of persistent long periods of drought, local communities residing in Marsabit are faced with the risk of losing their main livelihood (livestock). To prevent this, heads of the households and young men are forced to move with the livestock and search for pasture and water for as long as six months. This compelled the women to come up with strategies of generating income and making ends meet. Using their small groups (*Chamas*), they organized for monthly contributions and savings. Using the savings as capital, they started small business of buying and selling household consumables. They later approached a local NGO through which they were trained on how to write funding proposals. When they secured funding, they set up a green house farm where they farmed tomatoes and vegetables. Through the sale of the farm products, they later came up with guest houses in traditional set up, conference facilities and hotel. They have also bought tanks where they harvest adequate water during rainy season and use them for consumption, at the hotel and also for irrigation in their farms.

These two case studies points out the power of entrepreneurship as an adaptive strategy in addition to enhancing their food security.

### **Education**

Education level is proportional to the adaptive capacity of a society. When climate change effects get severe, education enables pastoralists to diversify the livelihoods and engage various options to supplement livestock keeping. Education increases the adaptive capacity of the pastoralists by presenting livelihood options that are non-natural resource based.

According to Sifuna (2005), districts situated in the arid areas of Kenya have continued to exhibit extensively lower access, participation, achievement and completion rates in education since 1963. The Ministry of Education (MoE, 2005) acknowledged the same and instituted reforms which were operationalized in an implementation document titled: Kenya Education Sector Support Programme (KESSP). The programme proposed mobile school system; provision of water supply and sanitation; as well as deployment of teachers.

Education is believed to foster unity and development; however, with ethnicity and conflict, education amplifies social distance and precipitates political violence (Bush & Saltareli 2000). This is made worse when there are economic tensions, poor governance and perceived threats to cultural identity (Ali, 2012). As the government and other stakeholders come up with solutions to improve access to education in ASAL areas, there are other emerging issues that need to be taken care of with urgency. These include the current state of education in the Northern Kenya which is getting compromised because of withdrawal of teachers owing to security threats by terrorists.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

Climate change coupled with other socio-economic, environmental and political challenges weakens the resilience of the pastoralist communities. Pastoralist communities are aware of climate change owing to indigenous knowledge and the role played by the civil society groups in creating awareness. It is also important to note that the wider the scope of viable alternative livelihoods, the stronger the resilience level is likely to be with regards to climate shocks. There are a number of avenues through which this can be done. They include; enhancing security in pastoralist communities and the rest of the country, improving access to education and training, building road networks, ensuring access to water and sanitation, and enhancing availability and access to credit facilities.

If alternative livelihood strategies are to be widely and easily embraced, improvements in the quality and accessibility of education are imperative. This is because education widens the scope of available alternative livelihoods and enables one to take risk with much ease. It is also the best platform for peace-building initiatives. Most viable livelihoods are based on land and given that land tenure systems determine the extent to which land can be utilized, it is important for the government to put emphasis on the formulation of policies that considers the needs of the pastoralist communities. It is also important to ensure community participation in any decision-making processes that involve land. This will enhance transparency and minimize conflicts that are fuelled by mismanagement of the ranches and other natural resource based conflicts.

The role of women in agriculture is very evident in ASALs especially as a form of alternative livelihood. The policies on land tenure and land use should address the rights of the women in relation to land ownership and land use especially in the marginalized areas. In addition, capacity building on entrepreneurship skills needs to be provided to pastoralist communities especially women to enable them to diversify and expand their businesses activities. Through this platform, women who depend on beadwork will also gain knowledge on how to avoid losses that come as a result of middlemen.

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## In Search of a Pedagogy for the Preparation of Secondary School History Educators in Kenya: Hirst's 'Forms of Knowledge' Construal as a Conceptual Optic

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### **Abstract**

*The preparation of pre-service teachers for secondary school teachers in Kenya, like in most other countries around the world, is offered by universities through the Bachelor of Education (BEd.) model. It is expected that a teacher preparation programme provides an education that coheres with the curricular requirements of the school subjects. This paper presents a theoretic examination of the notion of 'forms of knowledge' by Hirst (1974) and its subsequent influence on the nature of teaching required. In addition to presenting the criteria for this curricular notion, the discussion also identifies the key concepts that underlie the nature of teaching that ought to be employed. Based on this curricular orientation, an argument is developed to clarify how teaching and learning, a 'form of knowledge' should entail adherence to practices that resonate with the logic of the concerned subject. It is shown that to learn history not only requires one to appropriate propositional historical knowledge but also the acquisition of the modes of knowing that generate knowledge. Thus, teachers should expose learners to both the logic of disciplinary knowledge creation as well as knowledge communication. In turn, this dual mandate by teachers can only be achieved when they have been appropriately prepared. Their preparation ought to emphasise adherence to the rationality inherent in their specific subjects. It is a rationality that is epistemologically derived. It is by this alternative curricular orientation towards the preparation of pre-service secondary school subject teachers that the contribution of the paper needs to be understood.*

Keywords: 'Forms of knowledge', history education, Kenya, pedagogy, teacher education.

### **Introduction**

Universities in Kenya offer teacher preparation for secondary school teachers through the Bachelor of Education (BEd.) model. The secondary school teacher preparation programme is expected to provide an education that coheres with the teaching requirements of the school subjects. The BEd. programme entails a concurrent curricular structure that offers professional education courses and subject-matter/content courses. Often, the former courses are offered by school/faculty of Education while the latter ones are offered by school/faculty of Arts/Science/Agriculture, *inter alia*. This curriculum structure has been operational in the country since the early 1970s. Ideally, this institutional organisation of the BEd. programme presents a significant curricular challenge in teacher preparation. In view of this challenge, the focus of this paper is to address the question: *how else could the preparation of prospective school subject teachers be like?* In attempting to answer this question, this theoretical paper explores the notion of 'forms of knowledge' by Hirst (1974) and its subsequent influence on both the nature of teacher preparation and teaching of school subjects.

In addition to presenting the definition and criteria of what Hirst considers to be 'forms of knowledge', the discussion also identifies the key concepts that underlie the nature of teaching that ought to be employed to satisfy the criteria he considers crucial. Hirst's construal of 'forms of knowledge' resonates with numerous other scholars (Little, Feng & van Tassel-Baska, 2007; Bain, 2001; Bruno-Jofre & Schiralli, 2002; Nichol & Dean, 1997; Seixas, 2006; Grossman, 1990; Turner-Bisset, 2001; Betram, 2009; Deng, 2009; Clark, 2008; Brophy & Vansledright,



1997; Lee & Shemilt, 2003) who are used in the discussion to further clarify its specific applicability to History as a subject. From this presentation, an argument is developed to clarify how teaching a 'form of knowledge' should entail adherence to practices that are virtuous (MacIntyre, 1985).

It is argued that to learn History not only requires one to appropriate propositional knowledge but also the acquisition of the modes of knowing that are used in it (history as a subject) to generate more knowledge. Teachers of History should expose learners to both the logic of disciplinary knowledge creation as well as knowledge communication. They can only achieve this dual mandate by being appropriately prepared in similar forms of subject knowledge as guided by their inherent disciplinary logic. The paper concludes by emphasising that this is what constitutes rationality in the teaching and learning of History. It is rationality whose foundations are epistemologically derived from History as a form of knowledge. Therefore, those who prepare History teachers should not continue to compartmentalize courses (into subject content and methods of teaching) but instead aspire to initiate efforts that foster integrated, if not wholesome curriculum approaches.

### **History as a Secondary School Subject**

History as a school subject is regarded as an important medium through which national educational goals are to be achieved. Generally, the subject is considered as a platform on which the 'diverse cultural heritage of the nation can [be used to] foster national unity, moral integrity and mutual social responsibility' (Modiba & Simwa, 2011: 289). At the secondary school level, History is offered together with civic education and thereby referred to as 'History and Government' (H&G, hereafter). H&G has nine objectives (KIE, 2006: 6), namely to:

1. recognise and appreciate the importance of learning History and Government;
2. acquire knowledge, ability and show appreciation for critical historical analysis of socio-economic and political organisation of African societies;
3. understand and show appreciation of the rights, privileges and obligations of oneself and others for promotion of a just and peaceful society;
4. promote a sense of nationalism, patriotism and national unity;
5. encourage and sustain moral and mutual social responsibility;
6. identify, assess and appreciate the rich and varied cultures of the Kenyan people and other people;
7. promote a sense of awareness and need for a functional democracy of the Kenyan people and other nations;
8. promote an understanding and appreciation of intra-national and international consciousness and relationships; and
9. derive through the study of History and Government an interest in further learning.

Broadly, the objectives can be put into two groups: those that are subject-matter related and those aimed at developing civic competences. The former can be related to the following: recognise and appreciate the importance of learning H&G; acquire knowledge, ability and show appreciation for critical historical analysis of the socio-economic and political organisation of African societies; and derive through the study of History and Government interest in further learning. These objectives require learners to attain sufficient understanding of their subject; that is, its definition and purpose (utility) as well as the disciplinary knowledge (the substantive / propositional and syntactic / procedural) that distinguishes it from the other subjects. With such disciplinary competences in the subject, it is hoped that some learners may be motivated to pursue more studies in the subject upon graduation from secondary school.

In addition to subject-specific objectives, there are those that focus on the attainment of civic competences. Learners are expected to demonstrate through the study of H&G the following attributes: understand and show appreciation of the rights, privileges and obligations of oneself and others for promotion of a just and peaceful society; promote a sense of nationalism, patriotism and national unity; encourage and sustain moral and mutual social responsibility; identify, assess and appreciate the rich and varied cultures of the Kenyan people and other people; promote a sense of awareness and need for a functional democracy of the Kenyan people and other nations; and promote an understanding and appreciation of intra-national and international consciousness and relationships (KIE, 2006: 6). In this group of objectives, learners need to acquire knowledge and skills that will make them contribute to the public life of their nation and the world at large.

The diction of the H&G objectives is direct, with verbs that identify the qualities expected from learning the subject. Teachers need to teach, *inter alia*, qualities of recognition, acquisition, appreciation, promotion, encouragement, assessment, identification, understanding and derivation. They must weave disciplinary content knowledge with ways of knowing in the subject to assist learners to comprehend propositional / substantive knowledge of History and use it in broader spheres of their lives, *viz.* - personal, social, communal, national and international. These attributes approximate qualities that Little et al. (2007) refer to as 'habits of mind' and that are pillars in inculcating civic competence among learners. It is by these habits that they must be helped to be analytical about documents (as evidence), detect bias, differentiate fact from conjecture, and recognise the complex nature of human phenomena in general. Briefly, this means that the study of H&G needs to be viewed as an endeavour that goes beyond the simple exposure of learners to certain disciplinary content. Teachers must be able to develop qualities in their learners that go beyond content knowledge. They need to give considerable attention to the subject's procedural knowledge, that is the 'know-how' knowledge, so that learners can acquire the states of mind proposed in the objectives for H&G. For example, learners are expected to 'acquire knowledge, ability and show appreciation for the critical historical analysis of the socio-economic and political organisation of African societies' (KIE, 2006: 5), and similarly to 'recognize and appreciate the importance of learning History and Government'. These two objectives highlight the subject's 'ways of knowing'.

Some history education theorists support this teaching and learning that emphasizes the substantive and procedural components (see also, Bain, 2001; Bruno-Jofre & Schiralli, 2002; Nichol & Dean, 1997; Seixas, 2006). For example, Seixas (2006) sees it as providing a framework that could be used to benchmark: historical significance; evidence; continuity and change; cause and consequence; historical perspectives; and moral dimension as 'second-order' historical concepts that guide historians in building historical explanations. They are normally attached to disciplinary processes that attempt to answer the following questions: How do we decide what is important to learn about the past? How do we know what we know about the past? How do we understand the complexity of the past? Conversely, the 'first-order' historical concepts facilitate the comprehension of historical patterns and specific events. Concepts such as monarchy, regime, kingdom and despot fall in this group.

Betram (2009) argues that whereas substantive knowledge consists of the statements of fact, propositions and concepts derived from the activity of historical investigation, the procedural knowledge entails the ways of knowing or the ways of 'doing' History. Thus, it is crucial to the teaching of history that both substantive and procedural knowledge in the discipline is fostered, and teaching H&G ought to include the utility of such knowledge to enable an understanding of the nature of past human activity and its relevance to learners' present conditions. As Deng (2009) asserts, teachers need sufficient understanding of what is crucial to

educational ends. Echoing Deng's (2009) view, Clark (2008) posits that, for example, the teaching of history in schools for purposes of affirming a national orientation or character of a country's past events goes beyond a basic re-telling of what happened. It invokes the need for an examination of values and identity and requires an in-depth examination of issues using a historical inquiry framework.

The secondary school H&G syllabus in Kenya, which is guided by the means-end logic provides the teaching and learning objectives that each topic is supposed to achieve (KIE, 2006). The specific objectives for H&G, which are aligned to the general ones, are at the core of the syllabus. The syllabus also defines the content, its structure and the role of the teacher (Kenya Institute of Education, 2002; KIE hereafter). In short, it clearly delineates what is expected in terms of curriculum implementation.

The four-year course covers thirty-two thematically conceived topics. These topics deal with the social, economic and political organisation of the Kenyan society in varying historical epochs, from ancient to present times and in relation to the continental and global historical context. Specifically, details are provided on the number of lessons per topic; the number of lessons for the subject per week in the school timetable and per school term. With reference to methods of teaching, it is encouraged that emphasis is placed on the use of the subject's ways of knowing - historical methods. Hence, it is in this orientation that teachers are encouraged to be resourceful in their approaches to teaching so that '...with consistent and resourceful use of study approaches such as visitations, report writing, research and use of resource persons, the syllabus promises vibrant class discourse' (KIE, 2006: 3). Teachers are discouraged from restricting their teaching and learning activities to the suggestions contained in the syllabus document. This is expressly stated that:

The suggested list of learning/teaching resources in History is neither exhaustive nor prescriptive. A wealth of other learning/teaching resources could be explored by sharing experiences with colleagues within the school and in other institutions....Assessments are essential elements in teaching as they enable the teacher to evaluate the achievement of set objectives. Thus a variety of assessment methods have to be used to ensure that all the objectives of the syllabus have been achieved (KIE, 2006: 19).

These curricula guidelines help teachers in their preparation of scheme of work, lessons and time utilization (KIE, 2006). It is therefore reasonable to expect the History Teaching Methods (hereafter HTM) Course to prepare pre-service teachers who can translate these guidelines into teaching materials and activities. The course needs to expose them to the appropriate specialised knowledge and skills that will enable them to produce 'texts' (historical knowledge and history teaching knowledge) commensurate with their expected roles (John, 1996).

### **Conception of 'Forms of Knowledge'**

A 'form of knowledge' refers to 'a distinct way in which our experience becomes structured round the use of accepted public symbols' (Hirst, 1974: 128). Hirst argues that human experience of the world is dependent on the unique, varied and acceptable modes of perceiving phenomena that have been developed over time. These 'ways of knowing' can be characterised by four criteria. These criteria are: (a) unique central concepts; (b) a distinct logical structure that orders concepts and the relations between them; (c) a discrete way in which propositions are tested against experience; and (d) distinctive methods of enquiry. Pivotal to these criteria, though, is the criterion of a 'distinctive way of testing propositions against experience' that Hirst considers as '... the central feature to which they point is that the major forms of knowledge, or disciplines,

can each be distinguished by their dependence on some particular kind of test against experience for their distinctive expressions' (Hirst, 1974: 130). In distinguishing a discipline or a school subject, therefore, the key features are its unique concepts, logical relations and a truth criterion that is readily tested against experience. This is what Hirst emphasises when he posits that '[t]he only way in which we can successively distinguish different forms of thought is in fact by reference to the particular set of terms and relations which each of the distinct forms of thought employs' (Hirst, 1974: 118). Based on these criteria, hence, he considers subjects (disciplines) such as mathematics, history, chemistry, and physics as being part of the readily distinguishable 'forms of knowing' or experiencing phenomena. Each of these subjects has a distinct way by which phenomena is perceived, constructed and understood.

The construct of forms of knowledge by Hirst needs to be understood in the context of a specific type of education that he terms 'liberal education'. He elaborates the points of emphasis of this form of education in the following way:

...a liberal education is concerned with the comprehensive development of the mind in acquiring knowledge. It is aimed at achieving an understanding of experience in many different ways. This means the acquisition of critical training and discipline not only of facts but also of complex conceptual schemes and of the arts and techniques of different types of reasoning and judgement. Syllabuses and curricula cannot therefore be constructed simply in terms of information and isolated skills. They must be constructed so as to introduce pupils as far as possible into the interrelated aspects of each of the basic forms of knowledge, each of the several disciplines (Hirst, 1974: 47).

Out of this understanding of the type of education sought, Hirst's idea of forms of knowledge is one that eschews the preparation of a specialist and a technician *per se*. Whereas a specialist in a subject / discipline is someone who '...not only accurately employ[s] the concepts, logic and criteria of a domain but also knows the skills and techniques involved in the pursuit of knowledge quite beyond the immediate areas of common human experience...' (Hirst, 1974: 47), a technician of a subject or discipline is someone concerned with a subject's detailed application in practical as well as theoretical situations. Instead of such an inclination, Hirst seeks knowledge that immerses learners into the concepts, logic and criteria of a subject '...in order for them to come to know the distinctive way in which it 'works' by pursuing these in particular cases; and then sufficient generalisation of these over the whole range of the discipline so that his [her] experience begins to be widely structured in this distinctive manner' (Hirst, 1974). The notion of forms of knowledge espouses a form of teaching (and learning) a subject that is more generic and accommodative to all learners, especially at school level.

Hirst's idea of forms of knowledge has a significant influence on how school subjects can be viewed both as teaching and learning areas. From a teacher preparation perspective, knowledge of what constitutes a school subject and how such knowledge form ought to be taught becomes an important curriculum concern. This explication by Hirst on the criteria for distinguishing a knowledge form, thus, anchors what I now turn to in this discussion – how ought one approach the teaching and learning of subjects?

### **Teaching and Learning a 'Form of Knowledge'**

A mode of teaching/learning is implicit in Hirst's characterisation of 'forms of knowledge'. For one to be able to teach a 'form of knowledge', there must be an explicit adherence to the logic that constitutes that given form of knowledge. He posits that:

Acquiring knowledge of any form is therefore to a greater or less extent something that cannot be done simply by solitary study of the symbolic expressions of knowledge; it

must be learnt from a master on the job. No doubt it is because the forms require particular training of this kind in distinct worlds of discourse because they necessitate the development of high critical standards according to complex criteria, because they involve our coming to look at experience in particular ways that we refer to them as disciplines. They are indeed disciplines that form the mind (Hirst, 1974:129-130).

Drawing on this view, it is reasonable to argue that Hirst believes that teaching a subject is primarily concerned with the features that build up or constitute that given subject (discipline). Hirst holds that teaching a subject is not about content only. Although the content is necessary, it is insufficient for answering the question of teaching a subject. He asserts that questions about teaching a subject are different from those of scholarship within the subject (discipline). Questions of teaching a subject should begin with an interrogation of what the purposes of studying a subject are. Such a focus, in turn, shifts towards activities that are directly linked to learning a subject. Teaching a subject, hence, is about those deliberate activities that aim at enabling students to learn a subject's ways of knowing and delineating experience. In this case, the relationship between teaching and learning can be considered as being symbiotic. Therefore, Hirst refers to the relationship between teaching and learning as 'parasitic' (1974). In what way, though, does Hirst construe the notion of learning a subject or discipline?

Learning a subject is supposed to be based on its logical features (Hirst, 1974). Hirst asserts that:

... once we start looking closely at what learning [a subject] involves, important logical features appear which must necessarily characterise what goes on if the activities we are interested in are even to count as the teaching of [a subject]. Here then will be features which on logical grounds must determine the teaching of the subject (Hirst, 1974: 117).

The logical order of a subject refers to the procedures of 'knowing' that are employed within a given subject/discipline. There are two separate levels of logical relations in the procedures of knowing within a subject. At the first level, there is a network of relations between concepts. Due to these conceptual relations, meaningful propositions are constructed. Based on this realisation, Hirst argues, a subject can be said to have a logical grammar. The logical grammar of a subject consists of the rules that build the meaningful use of the terms (concepts) employed in the construction of propositions. The second level also has a network of logical relations. However, these are relations between propositions. From the propositional relations, in turn, valid explanations are formed. Based on this understanding of the second level of the logical order of a subject, it is possible to establish the criteria that characterises valid explanations in a subject. This supposition, though, presupposes the legitimacy of the propositions from which the explanations are constructed. It therefore follows that valid explanations in a subject are dependent on the progressive establishment of a logical sequence of validated propositions. To learn a subject using its logical features, it therefore follows, requires more than the mere acquisition of propositional (factual) knowledge. Students also need to be guided in the development of an understanding of such factual knowledge as well as attainment of a disposition compatible with the thought processes (thinking) of the subject. Given these logical purposes of the appropriate learning of a subject, Hirst regards it obligatory that subject teachers be engaged in the analysis of both the thinking characteristics (of such subjects) and the nature of how this thinking is learned. What, then, does the analysis of a subject's mode of thinking entail?

The delineation of the explanatory features of a subject's mode of thinking needs to emphasise, as shown earlier, the three main criteria that distinguish a form of knowledge. There

should be, for instance, a scrutiny of the concepts that are used to describe phenomena; the use of general (common) rules in creating coherent accounts of what is explained; and the parameters employed in the verification of the information obtained. In the case of science, Hirst explains, this accent would help to make vivid the specific utilization of terms in expressing experimental truths, the importance of general laws and the criteria for authenticating them. In his view, '[t]he only way in which we can successfully distinguish different forms of thought is in fact by reference to the set of terms and relations which each of the distinct forms of thought employs' (Hirst, 1974: 118). Therefore, it would be appropriate to infer from this outlook that subject teachers need a preparation that signifies the discernment of the three epistemological criteria inherent in a subject's modes of thinking.

There is a clear relation between Hirst's notion of what is essential in the knowledge of teaching a subject and the views espoused in the current literature on teacher preparation. The notion of a subject's logical features by Hirst seems to cohere with what has been referred to by Grossman (1990), Turner-Bisset (2001) and Nichol and Dean (1997), as the substantive and syntactic knowledge forms of a subject. The substantive knowledge of a subject can also be referred to as the propositional knowledge. This covers the 'facts of history' or 'know that' of history as a subject (Nichol & Dean, 1997). Syntactical knowledge on its part is also termed as the procedural knowledge or 'know how' knowledge of a subject. This means that for one to claim an in-depth understanding of a discipline, he or she should be able to illustrate how facts are verified as well as explain the various points of view used in the subject both to organise content as well as pursue an inquiry. These two types of knowledge of a subject are not different from what Hirst regards as a subject's logical grammar as shown earlier. Overall, it would appear that Hirst advocates for a knowledge type of subject teaching which may be equated to a 'language of a subject'. This means that to learn to teach a subject is to learn to use the subject's 'language' / conceptual lens.

Scheffler's (2007) notion of 'philosophies-of' seems to concur with Hirst's postulates on what is critical to teaching a subject. Scheffler argues that at the centre of a teacher's subject matter, knowledge is a general conceptual understanding of the subject. This conceptual grasp of a subject enables an educator to formulate a subject's content in ways that are readily accessible to learners. The philosophy of a subject plays a critical epistemological role in helping a teacher to do the following: the analysis and description of the forms of thought represented by the subject; the evaluation and criticism of the forms of thought utilised in a subject; the analysis of specific material used with the aim of systematising and exhibiting these forms of thought in a subject as worthwhile examples; and the interpretation of particular examples of the forms of thought in a subject in ways that are readily accessible to learners. In a sense, a subject's philosophy is an undertaking that a teacher readily needs to enhance his/her grasp of its language. Scheffler reiterates what Hirst views as the logical structure of a subject that every teacher should be suitably educated about to teach.

MacIntyre's (1985) idea of 'virtue' augments Hirst's espousal of what teaching a subject logically involves. According to MacIntyre, virtue can be defined as 'an acquired human quality whose possession and exercise of which tends to enable us to achieve those goods which are internal to practices, and the lack of which effectively prevents us from achieving any such goods' (MacIntyre, 1985: 191). This conception seems to speak directly to what Hirst views as the most appropriate mode of teaching a subject that educators ought to be prepared to adopt. If we adopt the conception of subject teaching as a virtuous practice, what would it require of teachers? The idea of 'goods which are internal to practices' in MacIntyre's definition, refers to intrinsic qualities or characteristics. Analogously, according to Hirst's conception of teaching, the notion of internal goods can be construed as referring to the logical structure of a subject. In

this case, subject teaching that can be described as virtuous will be one that accentuates the realisation of the intrinsic or internal goods. It will be teaching that conforms to the use of a subject's own logical grammar. To prepare teachers who are virtuous in their practice, hence, ought to be an exercise that is deliberately directed at enabling them to look for and apply the subject's logical grammar. Teaching a subject virtuously, therefore, will be an endeavour that epitomises the understanding and subsequent utilisation of the over-arching conceptual framework that is inherent in the thought forms that characterise its uniqueness.

A high degree of teacher commitment is implicit in the form of epistemological orientation that is required of a virtuous practice as espoused in MacIntyre (1985). Based on this consideration, it is fundamental that the preparation of subject teachers ought to aim at fostering a precise understanding of what is rationally essential to teaching a subject. A subject's rationality forms the foundation of how knowledge of it is constructed, communicated and understood. Subject teachers, hence, need to comprehend these forms of internal goods of a subject and from this, make use of modes of teaching that are appropriate and accessible to learners. This is an endeavour that requires commitment. It is based on this understanding that MacIntyre's concept of virtuous practice (in my case, virtuous teaching) becomes useful in providing guidance on what is needed in the preparation and eventual practice of subject teachers. To attain virtuous practice, there ought to be a significant influence on teachers that stems from how they are prepared to teach their discipline / subject. What does subject teaching preparation involve?

### **Exemplifying History as a 'Form of Knowledge'**

History is identified as one of the 'forms of knowledge' (Hirst, 1974). This means that there are concepts, logic and criteria of testing truth unique to history as a subject. According to Hirst, historical thought involves '...the recognition of the rules that govern the meaningful use of concepts and the validity of propositions' (Hirst, 1974: 118). This means that historical thinking entails an exercise that seeks concordance with the criteria that distinguish history as a 'form of knowledge'. To begin with, the development of historical propositions is supposed to be preceded by a first level (order) logicity – the development of a network of related concepts. This conceptual network serves as a foundation on which propositions are thereafter derived. The construction of conceptual networks is also guided by rules that define the nature of the possible relations (connections) among them. In this process, due to their varied meanings, some concepts must be acquired (learnt) before others. This, he explains, is necessitated by some logicity inherent in them. Hirst notes thus, '...until the rule-governed use of some terms is achieved, the rule-governed use of others is beyond achievement' (Hirst, 1974: 120). For instance, the concept of 'revolution' in history presupposes that of 'authority'. Thus, the latter concept needs to be learnt before the former. It is at this level of historical knowledge formation that he refers to the notion of a 'logical grammar' of history. As elaborated earlier, the logical grammar of a subject entails the rules that guide the meaningful use of concepts and from this – propositions are developed.

Building on propositions, a second level (order) is developed whereby relations between these propositions is emphasised. From the propositional relations, valid explanations are formed. Hirst argues that basing on this understanding of the second level of the logical order of a subject, it is possible to establish the criteria that characterises valid explanations in a subject. His supposition, though, presupposes the legitimacy of the propositions from which the explanations are constructed. It therefore follows that valid explanations in a subject are dependent on the progressive establishment of a logical sequence of validated propositions.

The notion of an extant logicity in the concepts, propositions and explanations of history has implications on how teaching the subject should be conducted. Teachers are required to recognize both the primacy of prioritising concepts and the facilitation of students' understanding of the basis of the validity of historical propositions. Teaching history as a form of knowledge hence, is supposed to reflect the logical priorities inherent in the subject's ways of knowing if it is to achieve the essence of being an avenue by which students will be enabled to attain an understanding of historical knowledge as encapsulated in historical thinking procedures.

van Hover, Hicks and Irwin (2007) view historical thinking as a feature that revolves around developing students' understandings of history (as a subject/discipline) and the process of historical interpretation. It is a disciplinary thought process that enables students to shift emphasis from 'a story well told' (or, the narrative depicted in the textbook), to stress on 'sources well scrutinized.' By thinking historically, students ought to pose questions, collect, analyze, and struggle with issues of meaning, and the eventual construction of their own historical interpretations. Teachers of history are, therefore, challenged to facilitate the development of historical thinking among learners by ensuring that they (teachers) are richly resourced in a deep understanding of 'historical interpretation and historical inquiry' (van Hover et al.: 85).

Seixas (2006) reiterates the prominence of historical thinking in historical learning. To realise historical thinking as the basis of all historical learning, he proposes benchmarking certain key structural (organisational) historical concepts that need to be emphasised. Viewed as concepts that need to be developed progressively, history teaching ought to encompass historical significance; evidence; continuity and change; cause and consequence; historical perspectives; and moral dimension (Brophy & Vansledright, 1997; Lee & Shemilt, 2003; Seixas, 2006). While historical significance dwells on issues why we care about certain events, trends and concerns in history, the concept of historical evidence focuses on how to find, select, contextualize and interpret sources for purposes of developing a historical argument. In continuity and change, the emphasis is on identifying the things that have changed or remained the same over time. The concepts of cause and consequence involve an investigation into how and why certain conditions and actions led to other phenomena. Historical perspectives require the development of an understanding of historical phenomena as 'foreign' with its different social, cultural, intellectual and all other attendant contexts that shaped lives and actions of people. In this case, historical events need to be assessed and understood within their own unique contexts.

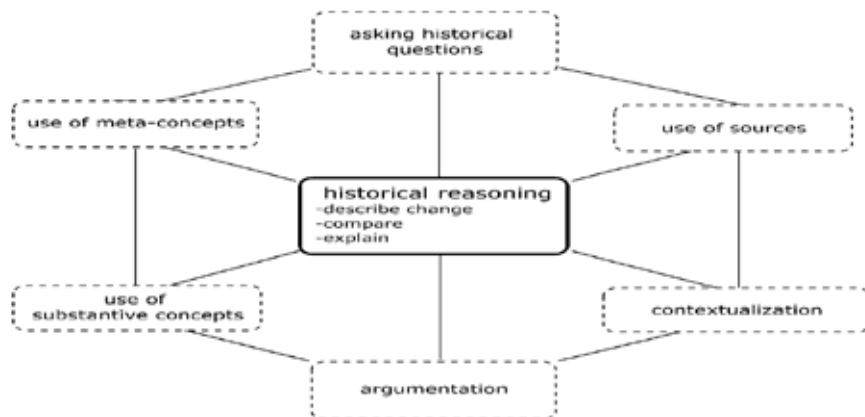
With reference to the moral dimension of historical interpretations (being a cross-cutting characteristic of historical thinking), there must be an understanding of how the present generation evaluates actors in different circumstances in the past and how different interpretations of the past reflect different moral stances in the present. All in all, as elucidated in this cluster of key concepts pertinent to historical thinking, to teach history is to be well grounded in espousing the critical building blocks of historical knowledge. These are concepts that should be used to guide students appropriately in organising historical information and ideas through generalisations, similarities and differences, patterns and connections.

The concept of historical thinking is elaborated further in what van Drie and van Boxtel (2008) have developed as a framework for analysing historical reasoning. As a feature of historical thinking (in its broad sense), historical reasoning focuses on the action:

... in which a person organizes information about the past in order to describe, compare, and/or explain historical phenomena. In doing this, he or she asks historical questions, contextualizes, makes use of substantive and meta-concepts of history, and supports proposed claims with arguments based on evidence from sources that give information about the past (van Drie & van Boxtel, 2008: 89).



In the activity of historical reasoning, therefore, one puts to practice important disciplinary ways of knowing through posing historical questions, referring to sources, using meta-concepts, substantive concepts, contextualisation and argumentation to bring forth a logical history account that may focus on description of change, comparison or explanation of an event/phenomenon (see Figure 1). This feature of historical thinking, it is appropriate to conclude, is the form of learning history that Hirst (1974) emphasises. In this sense, I extrapolate that history teacher preparation should be one that anchors these features in prospective teachers' modes of teaching history in schools.



**Figure 1: Components of Historical Reasoning (van Drie & van Boxtel, 2008)**

### **Hirst's Gaze on Teaching History at Secondary School**

Hirst's views on forms of knowledge and how these could be taught are incomplete until this discussion explores the distinction he makes between school and university (academy/university) teaching. He is cognizant of the difference that exists between these two educational institutions. He illustrates this succinctly:

In the sense of university teaching and research, the structure of disciplines is less relevant, and indeed could be a menace to certain parts of education. This is certainly true of the elementary stages of education, where an aping of university organisation would be a pretentious fraud, all the objectives being readily available outside of those structures. At the later stages too, an organisation of this sort must not mislead educators themselves, for many important school objectives are excluded from university units of teaching and research which have an explicitly intellectual emphasis (Hirst, 1974: 98-99).

Hirst is certain that university teaching is largely skewed towards intellectual ends. This is not the case with the education offered at levels below the university. Schools have their unique functions that need not be compromised in pursuit of those at universities. However, in as much as this difference needs to be maintained, he is sure that school teaching should prioritise intellectual objectives by giving importance to the logical structure (organisation) of subjects' knowledge forms. More importantly, due to the unique teaching functions of schools, there must be due consideration given to the psychological and sociological concerns that are vital in

teaching and learning of school subjects. In his view, without the latter consideration, many learners will be disadvantaged.

Sandwell (2005) corroborates Hirst's views on the difference that exists between school and university history. She argues that school teachers and professional historians do not share a common understanding of what the subject entails. While most of the teachers view history '...as a story about people, events and trends that constitutes a strong and linear nationalist narrative of progress from the past to the present and future', professional historians '...understand history as a process of critical inquiry concerning evidence left over from the past; evidence that historians interpret through complex, varied and contested narratives' (Sandwell, 2005): 1). This difference between teachers and professional historians is further captured by what Nichol and O'Connell (2001) note of history curricula from most education systems around the world. From their study of school history curricula in thirteen countries from different parts of the world, they conclude that history curriculum is overtly a political construct. In other words, history in schools does not necessarily serve the interests of those who work in the academy/university. In that sense, this orientation of school history has far-reaching implications on how the subject is taught in schools.

According to Sandwell (2005), historians' conception of knowing in the subject has moved 'beyond the positivism that largely defined nineteenth-century historical writing' while the school teachers' mode of teaching continues to be based on the nineteenth-century conception. Lee (2005) augments this by showing that the classical and social scientific approaches to history that dominated the development of historical writing of textbooks in the 19<sup>th</sup> through to the middle decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries '...have influenced the goals of history instruction, provided instructional content as well as the form of secondary source writing used in history classroom' (Lee, 2005): 2). Essentially, this orientation emphasises the notion of a grand narrative about the past that is well told but most importantly, eschews any attempts at injecting variance in the existing accounts of the past histories. From this situation, it is self-evident that teaching history in schools tends not to adhere to Hirst's postulation. In a way, this phenomenon explains the schism that is witnessed between the conduct of professional historians and the way teachers teach history at school.

Teachers cannot teach history effectively if they do not understand its logical grammar (Hirst, 1974). In the instance given by Sandwell (2005), disciplinary changes in history have occurred that require significant conceptual shifts by school teachers (and curriculum developers in general) to take on the ways of knowing employed by professional historians. This is what Hirst, as shown earlier, recommends in the conception of the logical grammar of a subject. A teacher ought to know this aspect of the subject in order to be effective. The logical grammar of a subject reveals the elements of logical order that teaching that subject ought to follow. Hirst has appropriately argued that to know a subject is to learn its logical grammar and logical order. To attain these forms of a subject' knowledge, there has to be a detailed analysis of the key concepts used in the subject's construction of propositions and explanations. This emphasis on teacher knowledge for teaching a subject has important consequences on how subject teachers need to be prepared.

The arduous task of subject teacher preparation is at the specific subject area teaching methods course (John, 1996). It is at this level of the subject methods courses that pre-service teachers are enabled to amalgamate the knowledge obtained from the academic courses in their subject area and what the school curriculum expects them to eventually teach at the school level. For instance, in the academic courses of History, it is expected that prospective teachers acquire historical knowledge - historical thinking, historical explanation and historical understanding. Ideally, this is disciplinary knowledge. It is knowledge of the academy/professional history.

However, in such a form, prospective teachers of History for the secondary school level still do not possess knowledge specific to teaching. It is only after it has been configured or formatted through a teaching knowledge lens in the subject methods course that it can be claimed as suitable for school teaching.

At the school (secondary/primary) classroom level, as indicated earlier in the objectives of H&G, a teacher is expected to help students learn (logically) the school subjects' modes of viewing and understanding experience. The centrality of the HTM course in the BEd. teacher education programme is therefore anchored in this knowledge transformation that the prospective subject teachers need guidance. In that case, the HTM course teacher educator is expected to guide student teachers learn the logical grammar of H&G they are preparing to teach. This logical grammar provides scaffolding necessary for school subject manner or mode of learning. For example, in the case of the subject teaching model for History at the secondary school level, the prospective teacher is supposed to work with a form of teaching and learning history that is commensurate with the objectives of this level. The subject teaching methods course is, therefore, one that 'crafts' a specific curriculum (mode of learning how to teach) suitable for the teaching and learning of secondary school history. From Hirst's views on 'forms of knowledge' and how to teach them, the curriculum in a subject methods course ought to emphasise, among other concerns, the logical organisation of knowledge within History.

### **Conclusion**

The discussion in this paper has dwelt on an explication of Hirst's notion of 'forms of knowledge' and its implications on the teaching of a subject. This conception emphasises modes of knowing within a subject that are logical. Teaching a subject ought to focus on enabling learners to acquire the specific ways of knowing that are consistent with a subject. This means thought processes and ways of understanding content within a subject must be prioritised over anything else. In tandem with Hirst's epistemological orientation on the teaching of a subject, the contribution by MacIntyre (1985) on virtuous practice has been utilised in this discussion to clarify further the important features of subject teaching rationality that need emphasis. Teaching history, as shown in the discussion requires a deliberate effort by both those who prepare teachers as well as teachers themselves to employ modes of historical thinking that give prominence to the historical method. Through the example of historical reasoning (van Drie & van Boxel, 2008), the concept of historical thinking presents a logical way of learning history. This form of learning history engages both the learner and teacher in a collaborative endeavour that prioritises history's ways of knowing. According to Hirst, therefore, 'forms of knowledge' in the context of a liberal education aim at such an endeavour. According to Hirst, teaching and learning of history at school level should not aim at preparing a specialist but rather enabling a student to perceive and understand phenomena through a conceptual lens of history as a form of knowledge. Indeed, the objectives of H&G, at the secondary school level in Kenya, resonate with the same teaching and learning focus. The onus, if not a curricular challenge, is left especially to those who prepare prospective teachers to interpret and enact a commensurate curricular orientation and pedagogy.

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## Head Teachers' Preferred Parent-School Conflict Management Styles in Public Primary Schools in Nyahururu Sub-County, Kenya. The Effect of Gender and Headship Experience

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### Abstract

*Formal education is a critical determinant of the rate of development in a nation. In this regard, the government of Kenya has initiated strategies to enhance access and completion rate in primary education. Some of the key initiatives include the school feeding programme in arid and semi-arid areas and the provision of Free Primary Education (FPE). However, nearly 30 percent of primary school graduates fail to secure secondary school places in the country, a factor that has in some cases generated parent-school conflict in low performing schools in the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) examination. Pupils learning outcomes is a high stakes issue and as adduced from management literature, disputes relating to the same can be addressed through integration rather than avoiding, compromising, competing or accommodating approaches. What is not clear is the styles/modes that headteachers in the study area are inclined to. This is what informed the study. Using a modified Thomas Kilman conflict mode instrument, data were collected from 58 headteachers in Nyahururu sub-county and subsequently analysed using t-test and ANOVA statistics. The results showed that the head teachers had a higher preference for the avoidance mode while the least preferred was accommodation mode irrespective of their gender and headship experience. Male head teachers, in addition, had a higher preference for competing mode than females ( $p > .05$ ) while females inclination towards collaboration mode was stronger compared to males ( $p > .05$ ). Preference for competing mode lowered towards the more experienced headteachers ( $p < .05$ ) while the converse was the case for the collaborating mode. Based on these findings, headteachers should minify the use of avoiding mode in favour of collaborating mode. Headteachers can be assisted in this paradigm shift through workshops and seminars organised by the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) and Ministry of Education.*

**Keywords:** Conflict management styles, head teachers, parent-school conflict.

### Introduction

Formal education plays an important role in the development process of a nation. This is because the process of schooling enhances people's capacity to improve their well being in addition to enhancing their capacity to effectively participate in nation building (Psacharopoulos & Woodhall, 1985; Sifuna, 1990). Kenya's education system comprises four cycles of learning. These are pre-primary, primary, secondary and tertiary levels (Republic of Kenya, 2016). Pre-primary cycle forms the basic foundation of learning in which children acquire cognitive, motor and communication skills. Primary education on the other hand provides children with basic reading, writing and mathematical skills along with an elementary understanding of the social sciences (KIE, 2002). Effective mastery of primary education curriculum is therefore critical for successful transition of pupils to secondary schools (Republic of Kenya, 2005).

In view of the central role that primary education is expected to play in this country, the government introduced the Free Primary Education (FPE) in 1974 (Sifuna & Otiende, 1994). Although this initiative was shelved in 1988 following the introduction of cost-sharing policy (Gogo & Othuon, 2006), it was reinstated in 2003 (UNESCO, 2005). Consequently, public spending (as a percentage of gross domestic product) in the primary education sector rose from 6.2 percent in 2002 to 6.5 percent in 2003, reaching a peak of 7.4 percent in 2005 (Republic of

Kenya, 2016). Although the level of public expenditure in the sector declined to 5.3 percent in 2015 (World Bank, 2015), there is no doubt that the government is committed to enhancing access to primary education in the country.

Returns from investment made in primary education have however been low if pupils' performance in the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) exit examination is anything to go by. For instance, the national KCPE examination mean score in 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016 was 250.19, 250.27, 250.14 and 251.13 respectively out of a possible maximum of 500 marks (KNEC, 2017). This level of performance tends to imply that a significant proportion of KCPE examination candidates may have experienced challenges in accessing secondary education between 2014 and 2017.

The noted low performance in KCPE examination has generated parent-school conflict in some schools, particularly those that have consistently performed below parental expectations. This conflict has been characterised by unfortunate incidents such as demand by parents for the affected schools to be closed, calls for the transfer of headteachers, and in some extreme cases, physical attack of teachers by parents in the presence of pupils (Nation Team, 2011; Home News Team, 2012). While parents justified in demanding quality teaching of their children, such conflicts have the potential to diminish teachers' respect by pupils and by extension, the wider society. This may in turn lower teachers' morale, motivation and commitment to pupils' learning needs. In the final analysis, pupils are likely to fare poorly in the academics as well as other measures of school success such as attendance, resilience and character development (Linda, 1998).

Hanson (2002) has noted that the most potent strategy for abating parent-school conflict is provision of productive leadership in a school. This is a leadership style that is typified by an inclusive school environment in which educators work closely with parents so as to realize the school's objectives. Through such connections, the head teacher will be better placed to identify parental concerns early enough and thus look for workable solutions before they reach a crisis (Hoy & Miskel, 2006). Bush (2003) has further observed that since headteachers are the central figures in their respective schools, their capacity to select the most efficacious conflict resolution strategy is key to addressing parental concerns.

According to Aamodt (2010), there are five potential strategies that organizational leaders can apply when faced with a conflict scenario. These are, avoiding direct confrontation of the issue at hand (avoidance), trying to reach an agreement with the other party (compromise), attempting to achieve one's goals at the expense of the other party's goals (competing), foregoing one's concerns so as to satisfy the other party's goals (accommodating), and striving to satisfy the needs of both parties (collaborating).

Evidence adduced from organizational management literature (for example, Kanter, 1977; Daresh & Playko, 1994; Howley, Howley & Arson, 2007) shows that there are two personal factors which are potentially capable of influencing a manager's leadership orientation and consequently his/her approach to conflict resolution. These are gender and years of leadership experience. That being the case, the study sought to determine the extent to which the two personal factors could be influencing the choice of parent-school conflict management styles among public primary school head teachers in Nyahururu sub-county.

From the general aim of the study spelt out, the following two objectives were thus spelt out: To find out whether gender has any influence on headteachers' choice of parent-school conflict management styles in public primary schools in Nyahururu sub-county; and to determine whether years of headship experience has any influence on headteachers' choice of parent-school conflict management styles in public primary schools in Nyahururu sub-county. The study therefore tested the following null hypotheses at .05 alpha level.

- Ho<sub>1</sub>: Gender has no statistically significant influence on headteachers' choice of parent-school conflict management styles in public primary schools in Nyahururu sub-county.
- Ho<sub>2</sub>: Years of headship experience has no statistically influence on headteachers' choice of parent-school conflict management styles in public primary schools in Nyahururu sub-county

### **Theoretical and Conceptual Framework**

Literature on home-school relationship is replete with terms such as partnership, sharing, dialogue, and so on. These terms as pointed out by Vincent (1996) suggests a warm community spirit which is hardly achieved in real life. In reality, home-school relationship is in most cases characterized by power struggle rather than partnership. Put differently, schools oftenly experience individualistic motives to achieve personal goals or one's agenda for that matter (Vincent & Martin, 2000). This brings to the fore the question relating to why parents and schools (in this context teachers and headteachers) conflict rather than connect. The answer to the reasons why schools tend to be arenas of conflict rather than harmony lies in the theory of micropolitics (Ball, 1987) and the negotiated order theory (Straus, 1978).

Micropolitics is a term that denotes the use of formal and informal power by individuals and groups to achieve their goals or self-interests in an organization (Mintzberg, 1985). According to Bennet (1999), the relationship between individuals and groups in schools is characterized by a lack of consensus on the intentions of their interaction. This scenario arises from the fact that different sub-units in a school are semi-autonomous and hence loosely-coupled (Hoyle, 1986). This structural looseness implies that individuals and groups have space for political activity (Weick, 1976; Wilkinson, 1987). This political behaviour as explained by Ball (1987) emanates from diversity of interests and ideologies, a factor that motivates different individuals and groups to use both power and influence to advance or protect their interests.

There are a number of antecedent factors linked to the motivation to defend interests among teachers and parents. One of the factors is the universality perspective of the teacher, who is responsible for a group of students, which clashes with the parents' individualistic perspective (their own child) (Dom & Verhoeven 2006). Another factor that has the potential to trigger political behaviour tendencies is the existence of discrepant views between the school and parents on their children's needs (Lake & Billingsley, 2000). This condition may arise in a situation whereby teachers view children from a deficit model perspective (rather than taking into consideration what the whole child is like) in contrast with parents' outlook in which the child is viewed as an individual with unique strengths and abilities. Added to this is the tendency by teachers to believe that as trained professionals, they possess expert power which warrants respect from parents (Handy, 1993). This view in some cases conflicts with parents' perception that since they are the owners of children, they have a stake in the way teachers manage their children's education. These differing standpoints tend to generate political undercurrents which can translate to open conflict between teachers and parents if they are not addressed (Lareau, 1989).

Since power struggle is a typical feature of educational institutions, the most efficacious way of enhancing stability and thus positive learning outcomes is promotion of a culture of dialogue. The underlining idea behind dialogue is to ensure that different parties satisfy their interests for the common good of the school community. The value of dialogue in a school setting is best articulated by the theory of negotiated order (Straus, 1978). The theory holds that there can be no productive organizational relationships without accompanying negotiations. This view suggests that negotiation is key to organizational (in this context, this refers to the school) success. The theory further argues that all social order is negotiated order and that negotiations



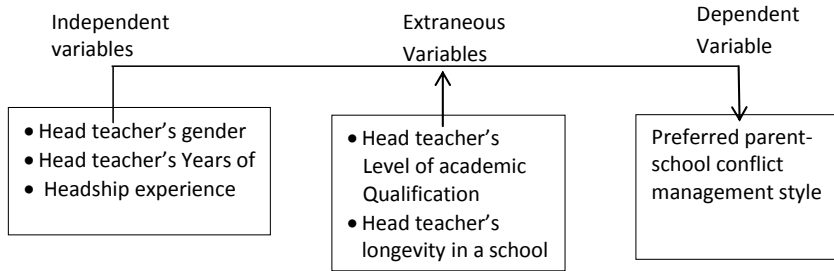
are a temporal process. In other words, negotiations are recurring stages in the never ending evaluation and evolution of social order. This, according to the theory implies that structural changes in an organization also require revision of the negotiated order (Fine, 1984). Maines and Charton (1985) have explained that negotiated order conceptualizes the question of order and change as being reflective, dialectic and temporal. Inferring from expositions put forth by the theory of negotiated order, Nadai and Maeder (2008) have come up with three defining conditions of negotiation; existence of tension between the actors, conscious or openly declared antagonistic interests and opportunities for give and take in the negotiation process.

On the basis of postulations advanced by the negotiated order theory, it follows that schools cannot escape from conflict with parents since this is a reality in any social organization. However, as Bush (2003) has aptly put it, discordant views offer opportunities for the growth and development of a school to the benefit of learners. Since negotiation is key to social order in an organization, school heads should always strive to create a culture of negotiation with parents. As Lake and Billingsley (2000) have rightly observed, power struggle in a school can be decreased if head teachers focus on productive relationship with parents through genuine negotiations. In such an environment, parents will feel more respected and valued thereby creating an atmosphere conducive to maintaining conciliatory attitudes.

Schools should however not assume that an issue resolved through negotiation with parents cannot recur again. Differently put, school heads and teachers need to take cognizance of the fact that negotiated order is not a permanent feature. Rather, there should always be room for revisiting and revising an existing social order as new circumstances emerge. In this regard, there is a need to continuously monitor emerging issues in the education sector. By doing so, schools will be better placed to discern the extent to which such changes could impact on their day-to-day operations. With this kind of information, schools will be capable of managing parents' interests through productive negotiations which is one of the central correlates for enhanced social order in a school.

On the conceptual framework, the study presumed that self-assessment of conflict handling mode is a genuine indicator of headteachers' preferred parent-school conflict management style. Based on this cognition, the study premised that head teachers' parent-school conflict handling inclination (dependent variable) is contingent upon two independent variables; namely, gender and years of headship experience. The study further hypothesized that head teachers' level of academic qualification and longevity in a school (extraneous variables) may moderate either positively or negatively the relationship between the dependent and independent variables focused by the study.

Marczyk, Dematteo and Festinger (2005) have averred that extraneous variables have the potential of generating rival/competing hypotheses that might explain the results of a study thereby confounding its internal validity. In this regard, the study controlled the two extraneous variables through randomization (Christensen, 2004). This entailed selection of headteachers in the study area through simple random sampling. This sampling design ensured that all headteachers (irrespective of academic qualification and longevity in their schools) had an equal chance of being included in the study. This helped to reduce the error effect associated with extraneous variables. The conceptualized, relationship between the dependent, independent and extraneous variables is schematically presented in figure one.



**Figure1: Hypothesized interaction between variables subsumed in the study**

### Review of Related Literature

Organizational conflict is conceptualised as a psychological and behavioural reaction to a perception that another person or party is keeping the affected individual from reaching their goal (Hocker & Wilmot, 1995). A precondition for conflict to occur is that the warring parties must be engaged in a social interaction process. Since organizations are entities in which people interact to achieve present goals, interpersonal conflict is inevitable (Hanson, 2002; Rahim, 2002). This is primarily because of differing personality interests and ideologies among organizational participants.

Organizational conflict is by and large perceived as a negative occurrence in an organization (Watt, 1994). However, conflict has the potential to engender positive results in an organization provided that the differing parties genuinely seek for workable solutions. In short, a skilfully managed conflict can enable the dissenting parties to collectively engage in the process of diagnosing the problem at hand (Rahim, 2002). This may enhance the capacities of the parties to develop a durable solution to the dispute.

Inferring from the foregoing, it can be argued that productive leadership is the sine qua non for successful organizational conflict management. This is because leadership is the instrument through which organizational members are helped to achieve their personal and collective goals (Kaahwa, 2007). Yukl (2002) has further observed that as a social influence process, leadership more than anything else is expected to facilitate the structuring of organizational activities in addition to nurturing healthy interpersonal relationships. These contentions underline the fact that other factors held constant (for instance organizational size and resource outlay), leader factor is the most powerful determinant of organizational harmony and performance.

In the school context, the headteacher is expected to coordinate the efforts of members at the individual and collective levels. Besides, as the leading figure in the school, the headteacher should always strive to cultivate positive linkages between the school, parents and the wider community (Hoy & Miskel, 2006). The negative aspects of parent-school conflict can thus be eliminated in a situation where the headteacher cultivates a pro-parent school culture. Such a cultural environment typifies schools in which important leadership decisions are made collaboratively with input from parents while relationships and interactions are characterized by openness, trust, respect and appreciations. Additionally, personal differences in such schools are not perceived negatively, but are seen as opportunities to learn and grow for both educators and parents (Sergiovanni, 2000).

The extent to which a school head will nurture a positive school culture, however, is dependent on whether or not he/she subscribes to an inclusive or exclusive leadership

orientation/style. When the two leadership inclinations are contextualized in a parent- school conflict situation, an inclusive oriented head teacher has a high likelihood of adopting an integrative resolution approach. However, a competing approach may characterize a head teacher who embraces an exclusive leadership behaviour, while a laissez faire oriented school head may opt for avoidance conflict resolution mode. Choice of leadership style (and consequently conflict handling mode inclination) tends to be influenced by the leader's gender and length of leadership experience as has been demonstrated below.

### **Gender and Leadership Style**

The topic of gender and leadership has attracted interest among scholars (both theorists and researchers) the world over. The overriding motivation in the topic has revolved around the effect of gender on leadership behaviour. While some scholars (Nieva & Gutek, 1981; Kiumi, 2008; Bass, 1981) have maintained that gender has no effect on leadership behaviour, other scholars (Ngeche, 2014; Sargent, 1981) have taken this line of reasoning a notch higher by arguing that both men and women embrace elements of masculine and feminine leadership styles. In addition, there are other researchers (Gutek & Morasch, 1982; Gitiche, 2014) who have indicated that leadership orientation may be sex-differentiated in organizations.

Individuals opposed to sex-differentiated leadership behaviour argue that women leaders occupy comparatively less powerful positions and consequently behave differently from their male counterparts. On the contrary, those subscribing to the view that leaders (irrespective of gender) combine male and female leadership traits assert that such an integration-or androgynous leadership behaviour for that matter is perceived by leaders as the best strategy for making them to be successful managers (Pounder & Coleman, 2002).

Proponents of the existence of gender-based leadership differences argue that generally, male leaders rely more on structural or position power while their female counterparts depend on referent power; that is, keeping in touch with the followers (Aubrey, 1992). Secondly, some scholars who champion this line of argumentation point out that in comparison with male leaders, female leaders tend to be more friendly, personable, expressive, socially sensitive and interested in other people (Eagly & Blair, 1990; Nelton, 1991).

Adherents of gender based leadership differentiation advance several reasons to support their claim. These include the assertion that males experience greater androgenisation during prenatal stages of development and exposure to gender-segregated play groups during childhood years (Knickmeyer, Wheelwright, Tylor, & Raggatt, 2005). Due to these differing biological backgrounds, boys tend to play in large spaces in addition to being more active and physical while girls are mostly more compliant during play time, pro-social and more likely to play while closer to the adults than boys (Edwards, Knoche, & Kumru, 2001). Other arguments that have been proffered in support of gender differentiated leadership orientation include gender role expectations spill over into the workplace (for instance men are expected to be aggressive while women are supposed to be passive and compliant) and the token status of most women in leadership positions which makes them to be more visible and hence be perceived and treated differently by their co-workers (Eagly & Blair, 1990).

### **Work Experience and Leadership Style**

The subject of work experience and leadership styles has similarly attracted the attention of scholars. Sawati, Anwar and Majoka (2013) have for instance argued that experience plays a critical role in leadership behaviour inclination. This view is echoed by other writers (Nsubaga, 2009; Katozai, 2005). In particular, there is a cross cutting view in management literature that as leaders gain experience, they are more likely to become wiser owing to long exposure to work

related challenges. However, Gronn (1993) is of the opinion that leadership style is a function of workplace conditions rather than whole of life learning, personality attributes, or experience.

Howley, Howley and Arson (2007) in their contribution to the experience-leadership style debate have opined that experienced school leaders are more likely to rely on heuristics derived from past experience in executing their leadership duties. According to them however, less experienced leaders are more likely to rely on a rational approach to achieve their organizational goals.

Howley et al. (2007) suggest that as a school head gains experience, he/she is likely to embrace the human side of the enterprise in contrast to his/her less experienced counterpart. Indeed a study by Daresh and Playko (1994) revealed that while beginning principals perceived technical skills as critical to their work performance, experienced principals rated human relations skills as the most important asset when fulfilling their role expectations in schools. These observations seem to imply that the likelihood of a school leader employing a people-oriented leadership style when handling school affairs may increase with many years of leadership experience.

### **Methodology**

The study utilized *ex-post facto* research design. This is a design category which is applied in a situation whereby the independent and dependent variable(s) have already interacted. Consequently, the researcher cannot manipulate the independent variable(s) with a view to determining its/their effect on the dependent variable(s). In this regard, the effect of the interaction between the independent and dependent variables is determined retrospectively (Kerlinger, 1986). The design was deemed ideal in view of the fact that the study sought to determine retrospectively the influence of gender and years of headship experience on headteachers' choice of parent-school conflict management styles.

### **Instrumentation**

Data was collected from 58 headteachers comprising 43 males and 15 females by use of a questionnaire which was adapted from Thomas and Kilman's (1974) conflict mode instrument. The 58 respondents were selected through simple random sampling out of a total population of 75 headteachers as recommended by Krejcie and Morgan (1970). Questionnaire response rate stood at 92 percent. The questionnaire gathered data on respondents' gender and headship experience and their level of preference for avoiding, compromising, competing, accommodating and collaborating modes when handling parent-school conflict. The conflict mode preference was measured through 30 items. The maximum mean score for each mode was expected to be 12 while the minimum mean score was expected to be 1 indicating very high and very low level of preference for the conflict mode in question respectively (see table one).

**Table 1: Expected Mean Score Ranges by Level of CMP**

<b>Mean Score</b>	<b>Level of CMP</b>
1 – 3	Very low preference level
3.1 – 6	Low preference level
6.1 – 9	High preference level
9.1- 12	Very high preference level

Based on the expected mean scores, conflict mode preference (CMP) index was first generated and subsequently used as a guide in the interpretation of the actual mean scores from responses to the 30 items. The expected mean scores in the CMP index were grouped into four

quotas which were categorized into four levels of conflict mode preference; namely, very low preference for the mode, low preference, high preference and very high preference as already seen in table one.

### ***Reliability and Validity of the Instrument***

The instrument's internal reliability as estimated through test-retest technique was moderately high ( $R=.65$  or 65 percent) while the external reliability which was estimated using Chronbach's alpha was .612 or 61.2 percent. Instrument validation on the other hand was accomplished using five headteachers in the neighbouring Rumuruti sub-county. The headteachers were requested to assess the extent to which items in the instrument were adequately representing typical conflict behavioural modes among headteachers when faced with parent-school conflict scenarios. Based on the headteachers' observations, changes which were deemed necessary were effected in the instrument prior to execution of the study.

### **Data Analysis**

Table two presents the results of the independent samples t-tests in relation to the first hypothesis, which stated that gender had no statistically significant influence on headteachers' choice of parent-school conflict management styles in public primary schools in Nyahururu sub-county.

**Table 2: Summary of t-tests on Level of CMP by Respondents' Gender**

Conflict handling mode	Mean scores		Total	p-value
	Males	Females		
Avoiding	7.50	7.53	7.52	.911
Compromising	6.86	6.20	6.53	.129
Competing	6.13	6.01	6.07	.106
Accommodating	3.20	2.90	3.05	.496
Collaborating	6.20	6.34	6.27	.710

Inferring from the conflict response index presented earlier in table 1, it can be deduced that on the whole, both genders (as captured in table 2) had a high preference for avoiding, compromising, competing and collaborating. The least preferred mode by both genders was accommodating. It is also evident that males were more inclined towards compromising, competing and accommodating modes in comparison with their female counterparts, while females were more disposed towards avoiding and collaborating modes in comparison with male respondents.

Table three reveals that irrespective of headship experience, respondents had on the whole a high preference for avoiding, compromising and collaborating modes though their inclination towards competing and accommodating modes was low. The table is a presentation of ANOVA summary with respect to the second hypothesis which stated that years of headship experience had no statistically influence on headteachers' choice of parent-school conflict management styles in public primary schools in Nyahururu sub-county.

**Table 3: ANOVA Summary for CMP Level by Headship Experience**

Years of headship experience	Mean scores				
	Avoiding	Compromising	Competing	Accommodating	Collaborating
1-5	7.57	6.54	6.57	2.54	6.04
6-10	7.60	6.95	5.41	3.10	6.40
11-15	6.77	6.59	5.20	3.82	5.95
16-20	8.20	5.40	4.60	4.20	7.40
21-25	8.50	8.00	5.00	4.31	7.50
26-30	8.67	6.67	3.67	3.84	7.67
Total	7.89	6.70	5.08	3.64	6.83
<b>P-values</b>	<b>.092</b>	<b>.688</b>	<b>.033*</b>	<b>.083</b>	<b>.278</b>

\*Significant at .05 alpha level

It is also worth noting that scores for the conflict handling modes (except competing) increased towards the more experienced headteachers though the differential effect of experience was not statistically significant ( $p > .05$ ). However, a statistically insignificant difference ( $p < .05$ ) can be noted with regard to the competing mode whose preference appears to decrease with increase in respondents' headship experience.

### Conclusions and Recommendations

Irrespective of gender and headship experience, the headteachers had a high preference for avoiding conflict resolution mode and a low preference for the accommodating mode. These findings appear to suggest that the headteachers were more likely to either avoid direct confrontation of the issue at hand or if compelled to do so be less accommodating. Since the two approaches have low potential for resolving parent-school conflict, there is a need for the headteachers to adopt a proactive conflict resolution approach. In using such an approach, the head teachers should nonetheless be accommodative to parents' interests and views. This will create a feeling of acceptance by teachers among parents and thus promote a harmonious home-school partnership.

The study further demonstrated that male headteachers and their less experienced colleagues were more inclined to the competing conflict resolution mode. This finding seems to indicate that these categories of head teachers were more likely to overprotect their interests at the expense of parental concerns compared with female headteachers and those who had a long period of headship experience. Since competing mode has the potential to disempower parents and in extreme cases attract their wrath against teacher, it should be used minimally so as to enable the school to connect well with parents. This may enhance the much needed school home partnership which is key to the realization of the desired learning outcomes.

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## The Role of Trade Unions in Effective Management of Schools: Case of the Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT)

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### Abstract

*Effective school management can only be achieved if all stakeholders are effectively involved in running of education institutions. The Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT) is registered both as a trade union and a professional body for teachers. As a professional body, KNUT participates in various government committees, commissions and boards as well as organizing training programmes for its members. This representation gives the union an opportunity to influence decisions that directly impact on education service. Despite this significant representation, KNUT has been criticized for negotiating with the government for salary increments and pressurizing for their implementation at the expense of promoting effective management of public schools. This study sought to establish the extent to which the teachers' union impacts the management of public primary schools in Nyahururu Sub-County. The study specifically sought to determine the impact of KNUT in promoting effective management of public primary schools in Laikipia County, Kenya. It established that the union was to some extent involved in appointment of Head teachers and Boards of Management (BOMs), training of Head teachers and BOMs, formulation of plans and policies as well as mobilization of resources. Additionally, though the union was involved in staffing, less effort was devoted to evaluation of staff performance. Lack of involvement and interference by the government through the Ministry of Education were cited as some of the reasons that determined the union's involvement in schools' management activities. Participatory mode of decision making and union-government collaboration was highly recommended to boost education standards in the County and the nation as a whole.*

Keywords: KNUT; Management, participation, Quality education services.

### Introduction

A trade union is a formal association of workers that promotes the interests of its members through collective action. The existence of trade unions is based on the fact that an individual worker in an organization has very little influence on decisions made by the employer about his or her job. According to Khan (2010), the core business of labour unions is to organize and press for fair terms and conditions of work, negotiate on behalf of the work force, provide services for members, network and mobilize them. In Kenya, the formation of a teachers' union representing the interest of teachers in the teaching service was seen from both the perspective of a trade union and a professional organization. According to the Kenya National Union of Teachers' (KNUT) Strategic Plan (2008-2013), one of the aims of the teachers union was to promote the development and provision of quality education in Kenya (KNUT 2008). According to the document, KNUT in furtherance of some of its aims and objectives specifically geared to the development of quality education in Kenya contributes through special Committees and Commissions, Kenya Institute of Education panels, School Boards of Governors and University/College Councils and also through its own training (KNUT 2008).

As a professional body, KNUT participates in various government committees, commissions and boards such as Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) in course

and subject panels; National Education Board (NEB); Schools' County Education Boards (CEBs); Sub-County Education Board; liaisons with Universities and Colleges; multimedia appeals tribunal; and other professional councils and boards as well as organizing training programmes for its members. This representation gives the union an opportunity to influence decisions that directly impact on education service.

Mugambi and Ochieng (2014) observe that teachers unions in Kenya have for a long time been associated with strikes and actions that blocked reforms in the teaching professions. Further, according to a report by Elimu News (2008), the Ministry of Education raised concern that KNUT is merely interested in championing teachers' welfare needs in total disregard of performance in the schools. KNUT is registered both as a trade union and a professional body for teachers. However, KNUT has often been criticized for negotiating with the government for salary increments and implementation of the negotiated agreements at the expense of the union's role in promoting quality education. This observation on the teachers' union has been blamed for the declining education achievement and especially so in Nyahururu Sub-County. However no empirical research has been conducted to explain these assertions which gave impetus to the current study. The current study sought to investigate the impact of KNUT in promoting effective management of public primary schools in Kenya.

### **Trade Unions in General Practice**

As an organized movement, trade unionism originated in the 19th century in Great Britain, Continental Europe and the United States. In many countries, it is synonymous with the term labour movement (Fajana, 1995). Adefolaju (2013) writes that since workers were the means of production, the profits of the factory depended entirely on their labour. Once workers realized that together they were strong, trade unions began to arise. Labour unions fought for shorter work days, higher pay, and healthcare benefits as the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries moved onwards. Labour unions arose due to the industrial revolution which led to the development of industrial capitalism (Adefolaju, 2013). This revolution resulted in accelerated resource accumulation and the outcome was growth of large-scale enterprises. It therefore brought together thousands of employees working together, leading eventually to the creation of management problems for the entrepreneurs. Trade union activities are therefore embedded on a class struggle between the capitalists and workers having opposing interests (Fajana, 2000). Fajana (2000) further notes that while the capitalists attempted to increase their profits by cutting down wages and increasing the hours or intensity of labour, the workers attempted to increase their wages and to shorten their hours of work. Trade unions therefore emerged from the efforts of workers to seek an improvement on existing working conditions through their collective action (Adefolaju, 2013).

Unions can be an instrument of social change but even when they play a larger role in society, their core activity remains focused at the workplace. Their principal engagement is with management though their actions may extend to lobbying, politics, and the community at both local and international levels (Verma, 2005). Armstrong (2003) notes that the fundamental purpose of a trade union is to promote and protect the interest of its members. Unions are there to address the balance of power between the employers and the employees. This assertion means that unions should be effective in carrying out their mandate. The union as a pressure group and its activities may lead to conflict with the employer (Fajana, 1995). This situation arises especially because the interests of the employer and those of the employees are divergent. Unions will strive largely to improve their members' welfare which might not augur well with the organization. Management on the contrary will strive to safeguard the interests of the firm. Decisions made thus need to be participative to allow the opinions of both parties.

In the recent past, trade-unions' capacity to serve its members and the way in which they do this has changed. Their position is now more defensive and tries to protect their members from abusive firing and from modifications of contracts and procedural agreements (Manolescu, 2009). Manolescu (2009) further notes that relating to power, trade unions are characterized as being pressure groups which act in a socio-political frame in order to assert their members' interests. Nabibya (2013) posits that employees' lack of satisfaction which make them perform poorly in their duties range from low salary, bad terms and conditions of service, to stagnation in the same job group and intimidation by their seniors. This has led to the formation of trade unions on the grounds that unity is strength; that unless workers unite, there will always be the dominance of employers and hence their grievances may not be catered for.

### **Trade Unions in Education**

Hoxby (1996) suggests two reasons why teachers might demand a union. The first reason assumes that teachers and parents have the same objective; that is to maximize student achievement. However, informational and market imperfections lead teachers to desire different school input levels. The second reason is that teachers have a different objective from parents or administrators, presumably to ensure school policies that directly affect them, such as teacher salaries, receive greater weight as opposed to policies that only indirectly affect them by affecting student achievement.

Teachers and the quality of teachers are crucially important to an education system. The output from the education system rests upon the teachers. The World Education Forum in Dakar in 2000 did not only emphasize the need to achieve education for all, but did also notice the need to improve the quality of education. The Forum made the recommendation to improve all aspects of quality of education to achieve recognized and measurable learning outcomes for all; especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills (World Education Forum, 2000). According to Gindin and Finger (2013), literature from South America provides evidence that teachers' unions affect the quality of education through teacher skills and knowledge-accumulation.

According to Lovenheim (2006), unions can impact education production in two ways; they can constrain the ability of administrators to choose freely the level and mix of inputs to education production, or they can alter the production function itself. Depending on the affected educational resources, unions can have both positive and negative effects on student performance. Lovenheim (2006) further contends that wage increases were the most commonly mentioned benefit of unionization according to the research done on 'Effects of Teacher unions on Education production'. However, another important reason for unionizing is to give teachers a voice with which to improve their working conditions as well as establish well defined rules governing hiring and firing, pay structure and promotion (Gindin & Finger, 2013).

Bascia and Osmond (2012) maintain that despite challenges from outside and within the education sector, research confirms that teacher unions have maintained a strong presence in the movement towards a more equitable and productive system of public education. One of the most common examples of teacher union initiated reforms is the provision of professional learning opportunities for teachers. Despite arguments from some teacher organizations that it is the responsibility of the school system to support teacher work, an increasing number of teacher unions have jumped in to fill the gaps (Bascia & Osmond, 2012). Teachers' unions have a great influence on how teachers view their work (Bascia & Osmond, 2012). The two note that teachers are at the centre of most current educational reform efforts, either because the reforms themselves focus on teachers, or because the reform proposals directly impact on teachers' work.

Loveless (2000) observes that teachers' unions all around the world pursue similar goals and activities. Historically, teachers' unions have been active (either proactive or reactive) participants in redefining, among other things: the way schools work; decision-making processes; hiring, evaluation and firing criteria, including grievance procedures; resource allocation (pay, benefits, promotion, increases and supplements); teaching methods; career ladders and on-the-job training programmes; and setting educational goals and standards and ways to evaluate them. In addition, unions participate in shaping the political discourse and providing opinions relating to key local and national issues. Most teacher union activities have involved aggressive efforts to raise teacher salaries, improve teacher working conditions and protect teachers' rights, even when this entailed protests and strikes or negatively affected teachers' work with students.

Negative criticisms abound from media, press and general public about teaching forces and one wonders whether unions are up to the challenge of acting as diligent education role players who have a significant role in the transformation of education in general and public schools in particular. This study, guided by the dearth that exists in the current research thus investigated how teacher unionism can improve the status of education in the public sector. Msila (2013) contends that school managers, like union members, desire to influence policy through the utilization of their power. Therefore, school management like school governance is not devoid of political influences.

Unions are supposed to improve the working conditions of their workers who should therefore express greater satisfaction with their jobs compared to non unionized workers. However, most empirical studies have found a negative relation between unionized workers and job satisfaction. Teachers unions and collective bargaining have been criticized and supported almost in equal measure. Their influence on the quality of education cannot conclusively be determined because there is insufficient evidence to warrant such descriptive judgment. From the foregoing, it is clear that teachers unions have a huge contribution in the management of education institutions if they have to achieve quality education. However, there are a few empirical studies carried out to ascertain the role these unions have in improving the quality of education in a country.

In the United States, Conservatives, Republicans, and school choice supporters of all stripes often blamed unions for driving up the cost of public schooling and holding back improvements in educational quality in United States (Coulson, 2010). However, Sloan (2008) in a study in Indiana State found out that there is a link between teacher collective bargaining agreements and student achievement. This is because many collective bargaining agreements go beyond the mandated subjects of bargaining to include issues relative to student achievement, professional development, education reform, and more.

Guerrero (2006) notes that perhaps due to the rising tension between school administration and the teacher unions, eight states passed laws allowing student achievement to affect teacher evaluation, seven states placed additional conditions on teacher tenure and six limited the role of seniority in layoff decision making. However, the most important and inhibiting factor about these unions are their contracts permitting teacher tenure and merit pay (Guerrero, 2006). Bascia and Osmond (2012) note that some teacher organizations argue that it is the school system's responsibility to sustain teachers' work, but an increasing number of teacher unions have jumped in to fill gaps in support. They give the example of New York City where in the 1990s, the United Federation of Teachers (UFT) managed a wide range of projects and priorities to enhance the resource capacity of the city's education system and to improve teacher quality.

In Argentina, teachers unions are an increasingly important stakeholder and their support or opposition can be the deciding factor for any proposed education policy (Coulson, 2010). Murillo et al. (2002) examines the impact of teachers' unions on various education outcomes in Argentina. Their findings points out that in Argentina, the provincial teachers' labour codes are very complex and protectionist, particularly for tenured teachers. Firing tenured teachers is extremely difficult, and absence regulations are very lenient. This could mean that tenured teachers do not have the incentive to dedicate much effort to their work. However, it is also possible that the restrictions specified in the statutes prevent political discretion and provide a feeling of security to the tenured teacher, leading to better teaching quality. Although teacher tenure, which is a major union demand, has a positive effect on student achievement, it may therefore increase absenteeism (Murillo et al., 2002).

Bascia (2000) proposed that one proactive strategy teacher unions can adopt in promoting education is to initiate and demonstrate the appropriateness of reform initiatives of their own. Many unions accomplish this to some extent; for example, in Canada and the U.S., teachers have developed new professional development strategies, programmes and new courses for students, and have been working through their unions to disseminate and in some cases, see them enshrined in policy (Bascia, 2000).

### **Teacher Unions and School Management**

Hart and Sojourner (2014) notes that arbitrary or ineffective management may produce bad results for students and a strong resolve by teachers to unionize in order to assert control over an institution they value and to build power to do their jobs more effectively. On the contrary, ineffective teachers may also produce bad results for students and seek stronger job protection through unionization. According to Stephens (2003), the general education, pedagogical training and motivation of teachers all impact on the level of pupils learning. School improvement depends on an adequate administrative and management structure. Three of the factors which the Dakar Framework for Action states require for successful education are; well-trained teachers, a curriculum that builds upon the knowledge and experience of teachers and learners, and participatory governance and management (Ratteree, 2005).

Ratteree (2005) further notes that school governance is known to work best when objectives are mutually negotiated, inclusive of all stakeholders' viewpoints – teachers, parents, students and the community – and when they take account of the linkages between different levels and objectives of education. Literature shows that teachers unions in some countries have fought for their representation in education management. In Uruguay, for example, teachers' unions' advocacy and leadership has mostly achieved collaborative and democratic education management (Gindin & Finger, 2013). Their proposals would later form part of recommendations for a new education law. Evidence from India (the Loreto Day School) indicate further that quality management and leadership requires a shared vision and explicit collective values as a catalyst for profound changes within the school setting (Stephens, 2003).

Effective school management has been shown to be a crucial factor not only in encouraging teachers' professional development but also support for a range of teachers issues and concerns ranging from consultative problem-solving, transparency in school budgeting and organization and willingness to pursue teacher grievances with higher authority. Under such circumstances, teachers will respond with greater levels of satisfaction and better performance. Without quality teachers, there can be no quality education (Kirimi, 2013). Poor schooling has proved to be the greatest barrier to political, social and economic transformation in many African countries. Around the 1970s, the quality of Nigerian education was the pride and the envy of many developing and developed nations of the world. At that time, it was alleged by some that

an American degree was equal to a sixth form certificate in Nigeria (Kirimi, 2013). However, according to Kirimi, systematic mismanagement by both military and civilian rulers, the Nigerian education has so plummeted that what we have today is a mere shadow of its past glory.

In many countries, teachers have to press their employers for salary increment and good terms and conditions of service. This leads to confrontations between their trade unions and their employer which at times leads to strikes. Teacher unions function as interest groups, blocking changes to the status quo through activism, lobbying and campaign donations (Moe, 2011). According to Moe, this occurs because unions are democratic. By democratizing education and giving voice to teachers, unions can strengthen schools by tapping into the promising ideas teachers have for reforms. Tucker (2011) points out that over the course of several decades, teachers unions in the United States progressively constrained management's ability to select, promote, deploy, discipline, train staff, and let staff go when they were not doing the job.

At the same time, giving teachers greater voice reduces frustration and turnover (Kahlenberg, 2011). Kahlenberg further emphasizes that restricting bargaining to wages is a clever trap in which critics can suggest that teachers care only about money. Collective bargaining should be broadened to give teachers a voice on a wide range of educational questions. Despite, or perhaps because of the large rise in teacher organization, teachers' unions remain controversial. Critics of teachers unions argue that efforts to improve compensation and working conditions for teachers compromise student achievement. Carini (2002: 10) notes that some common arguments against teacher unionism include: unions raising the costs of education, thereby draining resources away from inputs that raise achievement; Unions removing incentives for teachers to improve instruction, for example, by shielding ineffective teachers from dismissal and by tying salaries to seniority rather than merit; increasing formalization as a result of unionization hampers principals' ability to manage their schools; unions encourage distrustful relationships between teachers and principals. Carini (2002) further asserts that due to their political clout, teacher unions can block promising educational reforms that threaten union interests. Moreover, teacher union strikes, or even their threat, disrupt instruction, lower morale, and damage community relations.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study was guided by Participative Management Approach advanced by Rensis Likert in 1961 (Likert, 1987). According to Management Study Guide (MSG), Participative Management refers to an open form of management where employees are actively involved in an organization's decision making process. According to Likert, the efficiency of an organization or its departments is influenced by their system of management. This approach emphasizes on meaningful employee involvement, industrial democracy and stakeholder involvement. Likert maintains that staff involvement in decision-making yields a high degree of professional commitment, high job satisfaction, high morale and increased productivity.

The concept of participative management is applied by managers who understand the importance of human intellect and seek a strong relationship with their employees. After a long struggle between labour and management, both parties have come closer and realized that participation and co-operation between them would solve most of the problems resulting in enhancement of labour productivity, labour efficiency and the profitability of the enterprise. McGregor suggests that in the US, new pay systems can be very useful in supporting Participative Management (Lawler, 1994).

Participative management helps to motivate employees to meet organizational goals having participated in their setting. Benefits of this management approach include providing higher status to employees since they are given a chance to participate in the decisions of the

organization. It also gives psychological satisfaction to employees because they are allowed to express their views and these views are given due consideration. There is also improved performance, free flow of communication, motivation and more commitment to goals among the staff. Participatory Management or co-determination is seen as the quick cure for poor morale, employee attrition, low productivity and job dissatisfaction.

According to Gindin and Finger (2013), the incorporation of union input leads to policies that all stakeholders feel invested in, which can lead to long-term collaboration. In such cases, unions own up the policies which make successful implementation more likely. Teachers can participate in educational decisions in a variety of ways, from informal communications with school heads on a daily basis, to participation in school councils or governing bodies. Collective bargaining may be regarded as participation in so far as teachers or at least their representatives engage in negotiations with management with the aim of influencing decisions taken at higher levels.

Teachers, as the basic production unit and as professionals in the education system, have a vested interest in the effective functioning of their schools. Teachers feel ignored in the decision-making process and powerless in their efforts to improve the learning experience of their students, despite their desire and enthusiasm. As the study findings will point out, among the factors that influenced union's involvement in matters of education was central control of power by government and inadequate involvement in decisions touching on the sector. Policy makers are increasingly making more demands and expectations on teachers to carry out new initiatives in which they had neither been consulted nor are conversant with. This not only creates a feeling of ignorance from policy implementers but also presents many obstacles in the implementation of new plans. This apparently undermines the role of teachers in education reform process and underscores the need for an improved working condition of teachers (Adedeji & Olaniyan, 2011).

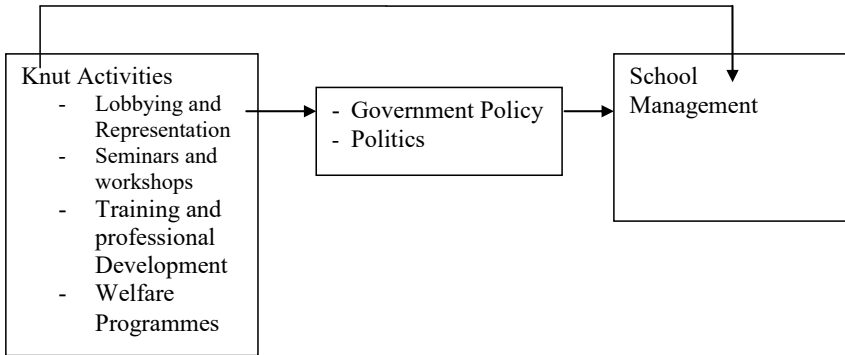
Teachers are tasked with the responsibility of implementing the curriculum at the school level. The neglect of teachers or their representatives in education debates and their exclusion from school governance often results in teachers resorting to militant unionism as the only option to make their voices be heard. Participation of interest groups and stakeholders in school management and the content and methods of teaching is the hallmark of this management theory in education. The suggestions offered by the teachers or their representatives may or may not be relevant but ignoring their views without assessing them properly may create frustration in the minds of these workers about the intention of the management or government. The belief that collective bargaining is the main road towards industrial democracy has taken a centre stage in the minds of many teachers unions. Majority of these teacher unions have increasingly favoured collective bargaining to secure participation in managerial decision-making, and has ignored the services they deliver to their learners.

Trade unions are integral to the success of participative management; they may be equally detrimental to the success of the same. Most of the teacher unions engage in welfare activities and politics and are little bothered about the quality of work. However, workers join trade unions for personal reasons such as protection against mishaps like accidents, dismissal and other problems whereby union interventions can rescue them rather than organizational reasons.

This study employed the Participative Management theory to find out the level of involvement and the impact of such involvement by KNUT in school management. This aspect is fundamental in ensuring that the services offered in classrooms are of high quality and ultimately raising the quality of education standards in public schools. Using the theory, the study sought to unearth the impact of the teachers' union as a professional body in enhancing quality education and it's strive to engender professionalism in the all-important sector.



The conceptual framework in figure one highlights the relationship between the independent variable (KNUT activities) on the dependent variable (school management). The independent variable highlights various activities that teachers unions are involved in; as lobbying and representation, organizing seminars and workshops for their members, training and professional development as well as welfare programmes. These factors influence the management of schools which consequently affect the educational outcomes. There are however other factors (intervening variables) which might hinder this relationship including government policies and unions' strong political ties.



Independent Variable                      Intervening Variable                      Dependent Variable

**Figure 1: Influence of KNUT activities on School Management**

### Methodology

This study employed descriptive survey research design. This design was appropriate for this study as the researcher sought to establish the impact of union activities on the management of public primary schools to promote delivery of quality education services without manipulation of variables. The study was carried out in public primary schools in Nyahururu Sub-County of Laikipia County, Kenya.

The target population involved teachers in public primary schools in the Sub-county who are actively involved in the KNUT activities, KNUT Branch Executive Secretary (BES) as well as Quality Assurance and Standards (QAS) Officer in the County. The target population for this study was 818 subjects made up of 816 teachers in the 73 public primary schools in Nyahururu Sub-county of Laikipia County, the KNUT executive secretary and the Quality Assurance and Standards Officer (QASO) (DEO Office Nyahururu, 2014). The researcher used a sample size of 270 subjects to take care of attrition. Out of the 73 schools in Nyahururu Sub-county, 45 schools were randomly selected. The researcher sampled six respondents from each sampled school. The head teacher and the KNUT representative at the school were purposively sampled to participate in the study. Four other teachers from the school were randomly sampled to participate in the study. The QASO in the County and the KNUT Executive Secretary were purposively sampled to participate in the study. The QASO was included in the study since it is the office tasked with the responsibility of overseeing delivery of quality services as well as prudent management of schools. The KNUT Executive Secretary on the other hand represents the union in all union matters at the branch level.

The tools of data collection were questionnaires and interview schedules. To measure reliability, Cronbach's Alpha technique was employed. The researchers personally administered the 270 questionnaires to the teachers and the head teachers and interviewed the officer in charge of quality and standards in the County (QASO) as well as the representative of the union at the regional level (KNUT BES). The respondents were assured that strict confidentiality would be maintained in dealing with the responses. Data collected was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics by use of SPSS Version 20.0.

## Results and Discussions

In a bid to determine KNUT's involvement in management of public primary schools, a total of 270 questionnaires were distributed to the respondents who included head teachers, teachers and KNUT representatives in public primary schools. Out of the 270 questionnaires distributed, 261 questionnaires were collected back thus representing 96.6 percent return rate.

### *KNUT and Effective School Management*

Information was sought concerning the involvement of the KNUT in matters related to education management and whether such involvement had any influence on the quality of education services offered in schools. The information was presented in Table one.

**Table 1: KNUT Activities in School Management**

Activity	Very				
	Great Extent	Great Extent	No Opinion	Small Extent	No Extent
Appointment of H/teacher	10.0	23.0	11.9	31.7	23.4
Appointment of BOM	3.4	24.7	14.4	23.8	33.7
Training of H/teachers	9.2	27.2	10.3	20.7	32.6
School Policies	7.8	11.6	5.2	38.4	37.0
Mobilization of resources	10.6	7.3	3.4	39.2	39.5
Staffing	19.4	49.8	3.4	13.8	13.6
Performance appraisal	8.2	4.6	1.5	41.7	44.0

Information in Table one indicated that majority (55.1%) of respondents observed that KNUT was not extensively involved in the appointment of head teachers compared to 33.0 percent who observed that they were involved to great extent and 11.9 percent who had no opinion. Majority (57.5%) of the respondents observed that KNUT was involved in appointment of Board of Management members in the school to a small extent compared to 28.1 percent who observed their involvement to a great extent and 14.4 percent who had no opinion. Majority (53.3%) of respondents observed that KNUT did not participate greatly in the training of head teachers and BOMs as compared to 36.4 percent who observed their great involvement and 10.3 percent that had no opinion. Majority (75.4%) of respondents indicated KNUT's involvement to a small extent in formulation of educational plans and policies compared to 18.4 percent who observed involvement to a greater extent.

Contrary to teachers' opinions, from the interview conducted with the KNUT BES, it emerged that the union was actively involved in the management aspects of the school such as appointment of teachers and BOMs, training of head teachers, formulation of policies, resource mobilization and staffing. The largely negative response from teachers may have been as a result of the union's lack of teacher involvement in their activities. It was clear that to most teachers, KNUT had little involvement in matters of education management. However the divergent

opinions also indicated that there were a proportion of teachers who felt that the union was playing its role in influencing management in schools. Majority (69.2%) of the respondents observed that KNUT was significantly involved in staffing compared to 27.4 percent who observed involvement to a small extent and 3.4 percent that had no opinion. This concurred with interview results that indicated that the union had been actively challenging the government to recruit more teachers in a bid to reduce the teacher pupil ratio. Majority (85.7%) of respondents observed KNUT involvement in appraisal of staff performance was insignificant compared to 12.8 percent who observed involvement to a greater extent. Amazingly, the KNUT BES admitted to the union's opposition to teachers' appraisal arguing that the government would use it for witch-hunt or in ways that contravene the interest of the members.

The teachers' views were echoed by the DQAS who stated that despite the KNUT representation in committees concerned with the school welfare (management), the union's presence only served the activism role in total disregard of matters concerned with quality service delivery. Rarely would the officials touch on pertinent issues affecting the management of the school whenever they attend meetings held by such committees. Concerning management of teachers, the QASO concurred that KNUT will always protect the teachers even when they are on the wrong, making it difficult to manage such staff. These findings coincides with Tucker (2011) who points out that over the course of several decades, teachers unions in the United States progressively constrained management's ability to select, promote, deploy, discipline, train staff, and let staff go when they were not doing the job.

The respondents were asked to give their views on the following aspects of involvement; appointment of head teachers, board of management, training of head teachers, formulation of educational plans, mobilization of resources, staffing and appraisal of staff performance. Bascia and Osmond (2013) opine that where collaborative relationships exist between teachers (and by extension teacher unions) and the government, such relationships are understood to be of critical importance to educational development and the quality of delivery; and therefore, teacher unions have strong roles in influencing policy and educational innovation. Gindin and Finger (2013) are also of the opinion that research on impact of teachers' unions on education through policy and through schools is mixed and inconclusive. However, in Uruguay for example, teachers' unions' advocacy and leadership has mostly achieved collaborative and democratic education management (Gindin & Finger, 2013).

### ***Impact of KNUT Involvement in School Management***

In this section, the respondents were asked to give their opinion on to what extent the KNUT activities influenced effectiveness of school management. This analysis was important for the study because it showed the deviation between KNUT involvement in such activities and effectiveness of such involvement.

**Table 2: Impact of KNUT Involvement in School Management**

Activity	Very Extent	Great Extent	No Opinion	Small Extent	No Extent
Appointment of H/teacher	11.5	9.4	5.3	29.7	44.1
Appointment of BOM	13.1	9.4	8.6	31.9	37.0
Training of H/teachers	14.2	8.6	5.1	38.1	34.0
School Policies	15.7	13.6	7.2	31.8	31.7
Mobilization of resources	9.2	11.6	7.3	35.1	36.8
Staffing	21.4	29.5	6.7	27.4	15.0
Performance appraisal	13.6	8.1	6.4	35.7	36.2

Data presented in Table two established that majority (73.8%) of respondents observed that KNUT was to a small extent involved in the effective appointment of head teachers compared to 20.9 percent who indicated that they were involved to a great extent and 5.3 percent who had no opinion. Majority (68.9%) of the respondents observed that KNUT to a small extent was involved in effective appointment of Board of Management members in the school compared to 22.5 percent who observed their involvement to a great extent and 8.6 percent who had no opinion. Majority (72.1%) of respondents observed that KNUT was involved to a small extent in the effective training of head teachers and BOMs compared to 22.8 percent who observed their involvement to a great extent and 5.1 percent that had no opinion. Majority (63.5%) of respondents observed KNUT involvement to a small extent in effective formulation of educational plans and policies compared to 29.3 percent who observed involvement to greater extent. A total of 71.9 percent of respondents observed KNUT involvement to a small extent in the mobilization of resources compared to 20.8 percent who observed involvement to a greater extent and 7.3 percent who had no opinion. Majority (50.9%) of the respondents observed that KNUT was involved in effective staffing to a greater extent compared to 42.4 percent who observed involvement to a small extent and 6.7 percent who had no opinion.

The generally positive response in relation to unions' involvement in staffing matters in this aspect is not surprising since the union has been in the forefront urging the government to recruit more teachers to bridge the gap in schools and lower the teacher pupil ratio in order to improve education quality in the country. While 71.9 percent of respondents observed KNUT involvement to a small extent in effective appraisal in staff performance, only 21.7 percent observed involvement to a greater extent. This comes at a time when most studies carried out in Kenya have revealed that teachers (and their unions) have a negative perception towards performance appraisals yet these are tools designed to evaluate teachers' performance against set standards. The negative response here could be attributed to failure by the unions to engage in teachers' work and thereby establish an appropriate appraisal system for them other than blanket refusal of the system.

According to Global Monitoring Report (2013/2014) on Education For All (EFA), policies can only be effective if those responsible for implementing them are involved in shaping them and teacher unions are crucial in this regard. The report emphasizes that teachers' experiences and expertise have neither generally been taken into account, nor have teacher unions been adequately engaged in the development of strategies for achieving EFA. However, the findings indicated that although KNUT is represented in various Commissions and Boards dealing with education management, its role in teachers views, was generally not felt in the following aspects of quality of education in the Sub-County; the appointment of head teachers, the appointment of Board of Management, the training of head teachers and BOM, formulation of educational plans and policies, mobilization of resources, and appraisal in staff performance.

On the contrary, KNUT was actively involved and had a lot of influence on staffing. This means that teachers perceived the union as generally ineffective in influencing management in schools which is a key determinant of quality in education. Key factors that affected the influence of KNUT on effective management of the schools were; the internal and external politics, lack of effective consultation with the wider school stakeholders, lack of representation of KNUT officials in the schools' Board of Management and interference from the government through the Ministry of Education.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

The study established that KNUT was to a small extent involved in management aspects of schools. The union played a peripheral role in appointment and training of school heads, Boards of Management, formulation of educational plans and policies, mobilization of resources and monitoring of performance through performance appraisal. The union's role was however effectively felt in its involvement in ensuring adequate staffing by pressurizing the government to recruit more teachers.

Teacher unions have a crucial role to play in the management and running of education institutions. The government should formulate policies that promote involvement of teachers at managerial level on matters of educational concern to allow teachers' participation and influence on management aspects such as appointment and training of school managers, formulation of school policies and resource mobilization among others. The government in consultation with teachers' unions should also sensitize teachers on the importance of performance appraisals to evaluate teachers' performance and productivity and come up with improvement strategies in an attempt to improve quality of education in schools.

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# Influence of Classroom Teacher Presentation on Learners' Achievement in English Functional Writing Skills in West Pokot County Secondary Schools, Kenya

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## Abstract

*Functional writing skills are important for effective communication. However, the development of functional writing skills among learners depends on the teacher presentation stages. Currently, low level of achievement in functional writing skills among learners has raised concerns in West Pokot County because it has affected overall position score in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education Examination (KCSE), from the years 2008 up to 2011, with West Pokot County being position 3, Turkana position 2 while Samburu being position 1, despite all of them being in the arid region of the North Rift. The purpose of the study was to establish the influence of classroom teacher presentation on students' achievement in English functional writing skills in secondary schools in West Pokot County Kenya. The study utilized descriptive survey and correlation research designs. Study population included 93 teachers of English from Secondary schools and 2580 form four students from 34 schools. Krejcie and Morgan formula was used to calculate the sample size of learners. The sample size included 31 teachers; 1 teacher from every school and 334 students selected through simple random sampling. Data was collected through an observation schedule and a standard test given to learners. Data was analyzed by use of frequency tables and mean. Regression model and ANOVA were used to correlate classroom presentation and students' achievement. The association was statistically significant where teachers' mark led to an increase in the students' mark by 1.67 (95%CL: 1.31, 2.05) ( $p$ -value $<0.001$ ),  $z$  value=6.73. The study revealed that teacher performance was significant in determining students' achievement in functional writing skills. Study findings recommend that Teachers Service Commission should promote teachers basing on performance but not experience since it is the determinant of students' achievement levels in functional writing.*

**Keywords:** Achievement, Classroom presentation, Functional speech writing skills, Influence

## Introduction

English functional writing skills build success in any formal setting such as academic discipline and international conferences as a mode of written communication. Functional writing involves pragmatic use of language. Examples of functional writing include formal letters, advertisements, speeches, journals, minutes writing, book review and biographies, and so on. Driscoll (2012) emphasizes that writing is fundamental to effective communication in any institution as a way of passing information from one person to another.

To achieve proficiency in functional writing, UNESCO (2004) emphasizes appropriate pedagogy, well trained teachers and learning materials which should be of core importance to improving the quality of learning functional writing skills. Despite this, studies that have been done reveal that functional writing achievement is still low. Hanaas (2009) reveals that it is essential to raise learners' awareness of the dynamics of different communicative modes in classroom. Language teachers should set up an environment with optimum learning conditions for teaching and learning of writing skills by using appropriate resources, methods and setting the right attitude for learners to achieve their goals in life. Kang'ahi (2012) holds the view that

methodology and attitude correlate positively with learners' performance in Kiswahili but a study is yet to establish influence of methodology and attitude among teachers and learners in teaching and learning of English functional writing skills.

Observations made by Barasa (2005), Ongeri (2010) and Kenya National Exam Council (KNEC) reports (2008, 2009, 2010 & 2011) point out on poor performance of English as a subject. There has been a drastic drop in the performance of English as a subject. Examination markers have given the opinion that students cannot express themselves effectively in written English. This has been observed in functional writing and composition writing. The situation has deteriorated because standards of English are still below average. In English subject examination, functional writing is tested in paper 1 and it contributes a total of 20 marks while the cloze test contributes 10 marks and oral skills 30 marks. In the year 2008, the performance of Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) showed that two thirds of candidates obtained grade D+ and below (KNEC, 2008).

KNEC (2009, 2010, and 2011) as well as the Minister for Education (Ongeri, 2010) strongly lamented that there has been public outcry about falling standards in English functional writing among form four candidates as observed from the KCSE results for the stated years. The problem is further revealed through official circulars, letters and public speeches whereby language errors are manifested (Ongeri, 2010). Okwara (2009) hold the view that university students are expected to be the best products of the secondary school system. This notwithstanding, the language standards of some current students are relatively low.

Studies indicate that students are normally given tests but their achievement levels in English functional writing skills has not been established through different determinants. Furthermore, it was revealed that students are not prepared well to do their KCSE examinations as seen in what they write in their scripts leading to a negative impact in the entire education system which is detrimental to the overall as revealed by KNEC (2009). The observation concurs with Tirop (2009) who observed that thirty five percent of students who sit for exams attain grade D and below on the subject. The situation was given more emphasis when the then Minister for Education lamented that both primary and secondary school learners cannot express ideas effectively in functional writing. Currently, the situation has not changed because the standards of English are below average especially in English functional writing skills (Ongeri, 2010).

KNEC (2009) revealed that West Pokot County was position three behind Turkana county and Samburu county. This trend was the same in the KNEC records for 2010 and 2011 where West Pokot County continued to maintain the same position among the counties in the arid region as shown in table one.

**Table 1: Performance in KCSE English Examination Paper 1 Functional skill by Ranking between 2008 - 2011 in Three North Rift Arid Counties**

YEAR	West Pokot		Turkana		Samburu	
	Rank	mean (%)	Rank	Mean (%)	Rank	mean (%)
2008	1	62.50%	2	48.5%	3	44.50%
2009	3	33.50%	1	40.5%	2	37.6%
2010	3	32.50%	2	43.4%	1	48.12%
2011	3	25%	2	36.5%	1	45.67%

Source: KNEC analyses reports (2008-2011)

The records reveal that performance in the English subject in functional writing has deteriorated from the previous years as reported by KNEC from the years 2008 to 2011 in West



Pokot County. The mean rank of functional writing skills has been below the average mark of 55 percent which is below a grade of C+; this reveals that the performance of functional writing skills has been dismal compared to cloze test and oral functional skills as shown in Table two. This study therefore aims at interrogating the gaps in presentation of functional writing skills as well as establishing the determinant of achievement of functional writing skill among secondary school students.

**Table 2: Performance in KCSE English Examination Paper 1 Functional skills by Ranking between 2008 - 2011 in West Pokot County**

YEAR	Functional writing skills		Cloze Test		Oral Functional Skills	
	Rank	mean (%)	Rank	Mean (%)	Rank	mean (%)
2008	1	62.50%	2	60%	3	44.50%
2009	3	33.50%	1	70%	2	48.330%
2010	3	32.50%	2	50%	1	55.17%
2011	3	25%	1	70%	2	36.67%

Source: KNEC analyses reports (2008-2011)

The Kenya National Examination Council KCSE reports in Table 2 above for the years 2009, 2010 and 2011 reveal that the standards of English functional writing skills among other functional skills have deteriorated for the years mentioned. The reports shows that functional writing competence among students was lowest (being position 3) in 2009 with a mean of 33.50 percent. In the year 2010, it was also position 3 with a mean of 32.50 percent. In the year 2011, it was position 3 with a mean of 25 percent.

The reports reveal that students cannot write to the expected levels of national education goals. Quality assurance of education reports of 2009, 2010 and 2011 of West Pokot County revealed that there have been persistent complaints about poor English language use in written expression. Functional writing has been ranked the last for the three years with the lowest mean score as shown in Table 2. Students' performance is associated with main pedagogical aspects stipulated in secondary school curriculum which include teachers' factors such as qualification, training and experience. Also, resources, methods and attitude of teachers and students determine students' achievement level in English functional writing skills. Therefore, determinants of achievement in functional writing skills are expected to be established through the current study.

### **Statement of the Problem**

West Pokot County has continued to post poor performance in KCSE English functional writing skills compared to other counties in the arid counties found in North Rift region of Kenya. Similarly, performance in English functional writing skills in West Pokot has declined compared to other skills tested in English over the period from 2008-2011. Research on determinants of achievement in functional writing skills has not been conclusive. Instead, existing research has focused more on factors affecting achievement in composition which is imaginative skills.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Theoretical implications of learning theories of behaviourists explain that teachers should reflect on their own questioning techniques to ensure that questions are open-ended without an expected answer. Pupils should be expected to discuss thoughts with their peers, and teachers should be the propeller of all discussions. The emphasis should be on the language used not the communication of what is already known, but as a tool for hearing what pupils think out and as a means of extracting ideas and clarifying thought. Once pupils have learnt something new

depending on the comprehensible input and motivation teachers direct to their learners, they should go on to exchange ideas and views with other pupils and request feedback from the teacher in order to consolidate their learning (Elliot, 2007: 48; Moon & Mayes, 1994: 54).

### **Methodology**

The research designs used were descriptive survey and correlation research designs. As Bryman (2004) observes, descriptive survey research design is relevant since it entails the collection of data through questionnaires on more than one case. Also at a single point in time, it is possible to collect a body of data in relation to two or more variables, which are then examined to detect the patterns of association. The association can be on focus of behaviour that are difficult to observe directly and when it is desirable to sample a large number of subjects for investigations. Correlation design was used because it shows the existence of some relationship between two or more variables (Saleemi, 2011).

The target population of the study was 31 English teachers and 2580 form four students in West Pokot County secondary schools. The form four students were chosen because they had been taught functional skills from form one to four. They had acquired relevant knowledge that pertain to the pragmatic use of language in relation to functional writing skills stipulated in the secondary school syllabus. The formula of Krejcie and Morgan (cited in Kathuri & Pals 1993) was used to calculate the sample size by estimating the sample size needed. The sample size was 334 students who were selected through simple random sampling technique. There were 31 teachers of English teaching form four classes who were selected through saturated sampling.

The researcher made personal visitation to different schools on different days and met the respective Head teachers and informed them about the research and arranged for data collection. Teacher observation in the classroom was done first. Thereafter, a test was administered to learners.

### **Instruments of Data Collection**

Instruments of data collection included; a teacher performance assessment criteria observation schedule and students' English writing skills test. These are described below.

#### ***Teacher Performance Assessment Criteria Observation Schedule***

Modified Teaching Practice Guide of Maseno University was used to assess whether teachers prepared well before attending the lessons of English in relation to the stages followed during the process of writing. The stages during classroom teaching started with the introduction followed by the body and finally, the conclusion. Resources, methods and appropriate content were observed in stages as shown in the assessment criteria to check whether they were up to the standard required for the achievement of writing objectives. The total number of schools was manageable and all could be included in the study. A total of 31 lessons of English functional writing were observed; this was one lesson in every school.

#### ***Students English Writing Skills Test***

A standard test which was adopted from KCSE 2009 was used to measure the achievement of students in English Functional writing. Every student was supposed to demonstrate various writing skills in functional writing that they had learnt in forms 1, 2, 3 and 4. These were thereafter correlated with determinants.

### ***Validity and Reliability of Instruments***

Validity of the instruments was ascertained by expert judgment of research specialists from the Department of Educational Communication, Technology and Curriculum Studies at Maseno University. The views of the experts were used to revise the observation schedule. The test used was a standard one that was adopted from KCSE Examinations.

Reliability is a measure of how consistent the results from a test are (Kombo & Tromp, 2006). Reliability of teachers' observation schedule was determined by the use of Cronbach's alpha formula for the internal consistency of the instruments. The results yielded 0.81 as the reliability coefficient for teachers' observation schedule.

### **Data Analysis and Discussion**

Data was analyzed by use of mean scores to determine teacher performance. Linear Regression model and Pearson product moment correlation coefficient were used to establish relationship between determinants and students' achievement in functional writing skills. Classroom observation was done to ascertain the performance of the teacher in the classroom during the time of the English lesson. During observations, presentation stage in introduction, lesson development, teacher communication, use of resources, classroom organization, teachers were rated as below average, average and above average.

#### ***Teacher Preparation***

During the observation session of the teacher performance, the first stage was teacher preparation. The study findings are presented in table three below.

**Table 3: Introduction Stage**

Stage	Below Average		Average		Above Average	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq	%
• Schemes of work from syllabus	8	22.6	21	70.9	2	6.5
• Well stated writing objectives	10	22.6	21	70.9	0	0
• Evaluation on Functional writing	18	58.1	10	29.0	4	12.9
• Lesson Plan	0	0	0	0	0	0

The findings of the study revealed that 8 (22.6%) of 31 teachers did not have schemes of work. The reason could be as a result of finishing syllabus in form three and they could only use the text book to teach as revealed from schemes of works observed. Twenty one (70.9%) of teachers had schemes of work but not complete for the whole term. Only 2 teachers (6.5%) out of 31 had schemes of works for the whole term.

Twenty one teachers (70.9%) had writing objectives well stated with appropriate content for functional skills but 18 of them (58%) did not measure the level of acquisition for functional writing skills. Only 4 (12.9%) teachers gave appropriate evaluation on functional writing skills that matched with the stated objectives. Those teachers who did not have evaluation on functional writing had objectives that were not well stated. They were neither measurable nor achievable. The content and assignment could not match the objectives and content contained in

the schemes of work. It was observed that the schemes of work produced did not tally with what was being taught in class during that lesson when the study was being carried out. This could imply that teachers had schemes of work for the sake of quality assurance officers to avoid victimization but not for the sake of the learners.

Teachers who had schemes of work derived them from the syllabus and recommended books using the format samples from the syllabus book, for the whole year which is ideal for yearly coverage of syllabus as schemed. These are the only teachers who had at least one of the professional document required by the teaching fraternity. The content covered 60 percent of the writing skills, which was above average to teach writing activities in terms of resources and appropriate methods of teaching and learning of writing skills.

The study revealed that the absence of schemes of work may have suggested that teachers just taught following the writing activities that were available in the textbooks. However, it was observed that those teachers who did not have the schemes of work could have assumed that form four is a class of revision and there was no need to prepare schemes of work as textbooks already have the information required. Absence of schemes of work is evidence of failing to follow the rules and regulations of teaching as stipulated by K.I.E (2006). Also it is very difficult to know whether the syllabus was covered or not.

The findings from the study revealed that no teacher had a lesson plan. It is very hard to prepare a lesson plan without inferring to schemes of work; this may have been the reason why teachers did not prepare lesson plans. This finding was considered to be crucial for any preparation of writing skills. Availability of lesson plan could be used to show teachers' seriousness in delivering their service in schools while teaching writing skills.

In any lesson, objectives are very important to show that teachers meet the demands of learners. The objectives that existed were abstract although it was noted that a teacher wanted to fulfil certain objective in writing through what they were teaching. This revealed lack of seriousness and consistency in teachers as they teach. The finding of this study is consistent with the findings of Okwara (2009) who observed in their studies that no teacher had a lesson plan and yet the profession stipulates that a lesson plan is an important document that teachers should have. Instead, teachers were using notes only, to teach. Okwara further notes that lesson notes should not replace the lesson plan. Therefore, teachers should have a positive attitude towards preparation of a lesson plan to fulfil the needs of learners.

Certainly in any profession, there are certain sets of attitudes essential to the effective conduct of that profession as noted by National Council of Teachers of English (NCTC, 1996). A study by Street (2002) demonstrates clearly the important relationship between teachers' attitudes about writing and their performance in trying to explore where writing attitudes originated and how they influence practice and are thus worthy of attention.

### ***Presentation Stage***

The second stage of teacher assessment was the presentation stage where the teacher was delivering content. The findings, which are presented in table four revealed that 30 (96.8%) of 31 teachers were below average in terms of setting induction on writing. They were not aware of setting induction, which is very important for learners to get ready for writing activities. Perrot (1982) outlines the importance of setting induction as follows: Focusing attention on what is to be learned by gaining interest of students; moving from old to new material and linking of the two; providing a structure for the lesson and setting expectations of what will happen; and finally, giving meaning to a new concept or principle, such as giving examples. Lack of the above mentioned importance of set induction has led to learners not getting prepared to learn writing skills.

**Table 4: Presentation Stage**

Stage	Below Average		Average		Above Average	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
• Set induction	30	96.8	-		1	3.2
• Lesson development content adequacy	16	51.6	14	45.2	1	3.2
• Strategies and methods appropriate to functional writing	15	48.5	13	41.9	3	9.7
• Questioning, stimulus use of teaching skills motivation, reinforcement, variation and verbal exposition	14	45.1	17	54.0	0	0

Okwach (2009) emphasizes the importance of induction that helps teachers to get practical tips, hints and classroom activity ideas that are useful in teaching. The findings of the current study are in agreement with the one by Namachi, Okwara, Indoshi, Shiundu, & Namachi (2011) that noted that induction is still not known by majority of teachers in primary and secondary schools. However, motivation and reinforcement variation for teachers were found to be 15 (48.4%) while 13 (41.9%) of the teachers tried their best to reinforce and motivate students. After lesson development, communication aspects of presentation were observed.

Teachers had mastery of content on various issues of functional writing. Under the category of teachers who scored average marks were 17 (54.2%). Their presentation of content had some logical sequence, bits of content of writing skills that corresponds with the skill that was being taught. However, 12 of them (38.7%) were below average. They had not mastered the content they were teaching and they kept on referring to the text book. Teachers also in this category were able to strategize and use appropriate methods to teach writing that made students understand topics being taught. Most of the teachers congratulated learners by telling them 'very good', followed by reinforcement by giving more examples to illustrate the skill that was being taught. Their mastery of content scored maximum of 18 marks out of 20. The best categories are teachers who were above average in terms of their lesson development. One respondent (3.2%) developed the lesson in a correct manner, while 17 of them (54%) were below average. The type of learning was teacher centred because the teachers did most of the work in class. This was revealed by the large number of teachers who did not give a chance to learners to participate in learning. From the research carried out, it was noted that time allocation was not enough to allow the use of group work conducted by the learners under the guidance of the teachers.

### **Communication Stage**

Communication in the classroom which is next stage in lesson observation was characterized with 15 of teachers (48.49%) being below average. They had some challenges which included hanging conversation, interjections as well as repetition. As a sign of not being sure of what to say, some teachers' language was characterized by code switching and direct translation of ideas. Such issues hampered articulation of ideas thus making them to be rated below average (see table five).

**Table 5: Communication Stage**

Stage	Below average		Average		above average	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
• Verbal features (voice, pitch, audibility and use of appropriate language teaching functional writing)	15	48.4	14	45.1	2	6.5
• Non verbal communication	10	29	6	22.6	15	48.4

There were 14 teachers (45.14%) with average good mastery of English language and good articulation. Two of the teachers (6.5%) were able to communicate well and used professional language that was simple for learners to understand. However, almost half of the teachers (48.4%) used non-verbal communication whereby appropriate forms like demonstration and gestures were used to explain ideas of writing formal letters in one of the lessons observed. The observation made from the study hold the view that teachers who did not express themselves well must have tried to express ideas through non-verbal forms of communication. These findings on the state of communication concurs with that of Okorodudu (2006) who observed that effective classroom communication process enhances teaching and learning process as was shown by 6.5 percent of the teachers who were above average in their communication process in the classroom. This was also cited by Kang'ahi (2012).

### **Resources Use**

Table six gives the results of use of resource material in the classroom. The number of teachers who were below average was 12 (38.7%). They are the kind of teachers who did not use resources like chalkboard and reference books. The teachers also lacked creativity and innovativeness and did not have lesson notes on the writing skills that they were teaching. They were using textbooks only to see what to teach as it contained different formats for different writing skills. Those teachers who were average in terms of how they used the chalk board as resources were 15 (48.4%). They were able to use the chalkboard to illustrate functional writing activities showing different aspects of skills in functional writing.

Fourteen (45.9%) of the teachers used the blackboard but did not maximize appropriately with illustrations. Majority of the teachers (70.9%) had textbooks as reference materials. They did not have lesson notes but only read directly from the textbook and wrote on the board for students to copy. This may have an implication for learner preparation before the start of lesson. One teacher said that '*learners mostly are not ready to learn because you will find them doing work for other subjects like mathematics*'. The implication may be that learners prefer other subjects more than English. Teachers who scored either average or above average were 8 (29.1%). They had notes and were able to be creative in making close reference to notes they had

as guideline in teaching writing skills. They demonstrated competence in terms of teaching. These findings are the same as those of Kilickaya (2004) who noted that effective teachers embrace the use of appropriate resources to teach learners as required.

**Table 6: Resources Use Stage**

Stage	Below Average		Average		Above average	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
• Use of resources	12	38.7	18	58.1	1	3.20
• Chalk board use	14	45.1	15	48.4	2	6.5
• Reference books	5	16.2	4	12.9	22	70.9
• Innovation, Originality and Creativity	29	93.5	2	6.5	0	0
• Lesson notes on functional skills	22	70.9	5	18.2	3	12.9

### ***Classroom Management Stage***

In the stage of classroom organization and management, 17 teachers (54.0%) were below average. Very few students participated in writing activities. Use of group work and provision of individual difference was seen during observation. Also, these teachers hardly checked the students' written work. Averagely, 13 teachers (41.9%) were able to get control of the classroom to some extent. They were able to give a chance to learners to participate in writing activities. Also, 14 of the teachers (45.1%) were able to utilize group work and attended to weak students who had difficulty in understanding writing aspects. They were able to check the students' work thereby creating rapport with their students. In the above average category, there was only one teacher who managed and organized classroom with high standards as portrayed by the general classroom task. Learners participated fully through different discussion groups while the teacher went round the classroom checking what learners were doing.

### ***Conclusion Stage***

The final stage of lesson observation was the conclusion. This is illustrated in table 7.

**Table 7: Conclusion**

Stage	Below average		Average		Above average	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
• Conclusion: Closure skills; review, questions concerning Functional writing, evaluation and assignment	15	48.4	12	48.7	4	12.9

15 of the teachers (48.8%) were below average (ranging from 0 – 2 marks) in the manner in which they concluded their lessons. Their closure skills like questions concerning writing activities, concluding about writings in terms of evaluation, and giving writing assignments did not appear in their conclusion. However, 12 teachers (48.7%) summarized their lessons with appropriate closure skills and gave learners some writing assignments concerning writing skills. Above average on this task were 4 teachers (12.9%) who finished their lessons excellently; they asked learners questions about what they had learnt, and about writing skills (see table 7). Responses from learners showed that they had learnt some skills in writing. Some learners even went further to request for functional writing excises. The implication is that teachers who dedicate their work fully in teaching make students perform better in functional writing and other areas of the English subject.

After observing all 31 teachers during their lessons with individual assessment mark, the average for all them was 51 during the teaching of functional writing skills. The mean shows that the teachers' performance was average. A study by Namachi et al. (2011) revealed that teachers' performance is below expectations. The findings hold the same views with the current study. The findings of students' achievement levels in functional writing skills are shown in Table eight.

**Table 8: Students' Achievement Scores**

Teachers' Performance			Students' performance		
Range of marks (%)	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Mean mark(std)
<=45	4	13	40	12	29(14.2)
45-50	8	26	86	26	44(20.4)
50-55	14	45	153	46	47(22.0)
>55	5	16	55	16	60(16.9)
Overall	31	100	334	100	46(21.7)

The findings revealed that 13 percent of teachers scored below 45 percent during their lesson presentation, with 12 percent of students having a mean of 29 percent which is far below the overall mean. However in the score range of marks ranging from 45-50, there were 26 percent of teachers with 26 percent of students having a mean of 44 which is slightly below average. The number of teachers in a range mark of 50-55 was 45 percent with 153 students having a mean of 47 which is below the average mark. Majority of the students were found in this range of score. The findings revealed that ability level of students ranged within the score mark of the range. The final range of marks was above 55-100, where 16 percent of the teachers with 16 percent of the total students were able to have a mean of 60 which is above the average mark.

The overall findings revealed that a small number of students were above average in their achievements while a large number were below average. The current study findings are almost the same as the research findings presented by Awg, Hamzah and Rafidee (2010) whereby the average mark of majority of the learners is below 50. Leal (2012) also revealed that majority of the students were below average mark and they could not communicate effectively in written work thus portraying poor writing skills. The average student performance was below average; 46 (sd: 21.7). The median student mark was 50 (ranging: 25-60). The big disparity between the average mark and the mean mark indicates that there were more students who score marks below 50 thus pulling down the average student marks. The Relationship between Teachers' Marks and Students' Achievement in English Functional Writing Skills are presented in table 10 below.



**Table 10: Relationship between Teachers' Marks and Students' Achievement in English Functional Writing Skills.**

Teacher factor	Coefficient(95%CL)	p-value
Teacher's average mark	1.67(1.31,2.05)	<0.001

The findings reveal that relationship between teachers' performance and students achievement is statistically significant 1.67 (95%CL: 1.31, 2.05) (p-value<0.001). The findings show that when you compare two teachers, one with a mark higher than another teacher, teacher who had a mark higher than the other teacher was more likely to perform better by scoring 1.48 marks higher. The difference between the groups of students was statistically significant (p-value<0.001). Findings from the linear regression model show that it is the teacher's actual classroom performance that has more influence on students' achievement levels in English functional writing.

### Conclusion

The study concludes that teachers who performed better in classroom made their students to do better in their examination and those teachers whose performance was below average also make their students' performance to be below average. General students' performance in functional writing was below average, and was attributed to different teacher factors. The most significant factor is teacher classroom performance that determines achievement levels of learners in functional writing skills as shown in regression model. It is very important that Teachers Service Commission promote teachers basing on their performance. As a way of recommendation, a study should be carried out to establish external factors determining teacher performance in English functional writing as well as on the subject as a whole.

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## Phonemic Awareness Instructional Strategies for Elementary Grade Learners in Nyeri County, Kenya: Towards Best Practices

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### Abstract

*Phonemic awareness is a metalinguistic skill that is important to the successful acquisition of reading and writing. The study, in which this paper is based, therefore, discusses the instructional strategies employed by teachers of English in the teaching of phonemic awareness instruction for elementary grade learners. To achieve this purpose, the study is guided by Vygotsky's theory of socio-cultural development which posits, among other principles, that learning experiences should be meaningful and relevant to the individual. The data for this study was collected using interview schedules from purposively sampled 20 teachers of English of elementary classes in Nyeri County, Kenya. This study found that effective strategies employed by teachers of elementary grade classes include; phonemic segmentation, phonemic manipulation (phoneme substitution, phoneme addition and phoneme deletion), phonemic blending, phoneme isolation and the use of oddity tasks. The study concludes that phonemic awareness instructional strategies need to be embedded in naturalistic context consonant with the principles of emergent literacy. This study recommends that scaffolding explicit phonological awareness interventions is necessary to ensure that students achieve success in reading and writing.*

**Keywords:** Best practice, elementary grade learners, instructional strategies, phonemic awareness, scaffolding.

### Introduction

Phonological awareness is the ability to notice, hear, identify and manipulate words and word parts including phonemes, syllables, onset, and rhyme (Armbruster, Lehr, & Osborn, 2001). According to Reutzel and Cooter (2005), phonological awareness is not synonymous with phonemic awareness; phonemic awareness is only part of phonological awareness. Phonemic awareness, therefore, is the most important phonological element in the development of reading and spelling (Yopp, 1992; Reutzel & Cooter, 2005). According to Yopp, phonemic awareness refers to the ability to tune in to the separate single sounds in order to play with them, blend them together, segment them, swap them around, and so on. To be precise, phonemic awareness refers to an understanding of the smallest units of sound that make up the speech stream; phoneme, while phonological awareness encompasses larger units of sounds as well, such as syllables, onsets, and rhymes (Juel, 1994). Since phonemic awareness focuses on the phonemes (Yopp, 1992; Griffith & Olson, 1992), a good understanding of the individual sounds is critical. Armbruster, Lehr and Osborn (2003: 2) argue that 'Phonemes are the smallest units of sound that make a difference to a word's meaning'. Similarly, Griffith and Olson (1992:516) posit that phonemes are the 'raw material of reading and writing'.

Research has shown that phonemic awareness is a powerful predictor of success in learning to read (Stanovich, 1986; Share & Stanovich, 1995). Adams (1990) argues that the best two predictors of beginning reading success are the *alphabetic principle* and *phonemic awareness*. Although the alphabetic principle is also a term for which a common definition is somewhat elusive (Neuman, Copple & Bredekamp, 2000; Sulzby & Teale, 1991), the

commonality in views across the literature, however, is the understanding that there is a systematic relationship between the sounds of letters in spoken words and their graphic representation. Orthographic awareness and phonological awareness crucially depend on each other and ultimately work in concert to help the learner break the code of an alphabetic writing system. Ukrainetz, Nuspl, Wilkerson, and Beddes (2011) demonstrate that phonemic awareness can be taught in naturalistic contexts more consistent with the principles of emergent literacy.

Although phonemic awareness is not easy for many children (Adams, 1990), it can be fostered through language activities that encourage active exploration and manipulation of sounds, which in turn can aid in the development of reading and writing in children (Yopp, 1992). Classroom language, therefore, should be related to the child's experiences and should be used to achieve cognitive engagement (Goswami & Bryant, 1992). There is also emphasis on the need for the teacher to be skilled in improvisation. It is, therefore, against this backdrop that this paper investigates the instructional methods employed by teachers of English of the elementary classes in Nyeri County, Kenya. In this study, elementary classes comprised elementary grade learners in class 1, 2 and 3. These are learners who enjoy working cooperatively and become engrossed in the activity at hand.

### **Statement of the Problem**

There are several lacunae from which this study is premised. First, one of the most basic difficulties in learning to read stems from a failure in acquiring phonological awareness. In second language acquisition, for example, some phonemes may not be present in the native language and thus, it may be difficult to pronounce phonemes, distinguish them auditorily and even place them into a meaningful context. Further, some phonemes found in L1 and not in L2 may impose a foreign pronunciation to an adjacent phoneme in L2. Second, while there has been strong support for systematic instruction in phonemic awareness (Adams, 1990), there has been little attention to explicitly include explicit phonemic awareness in a manner more consistent with principles of emergent literacy instruction. Finally, there is a lack of information on how to embed phonemic awareness within activities which may enhance phoneme awareness among learners of elementary grade classes. It is against this background, therefore, that this paper aims to address these gaps in order to increase insight into the best practices that can enhance phonemic awareness among learners of elementary grade classes in Nyeri County, Kenya.

### **Rationale**

The choice of elementary grade learners in this study is based on various reasons. First, it is argued that poor readers who enter first grade phonemically unaware are very likely to remain poor readers at the end of fourth grade (Griffith & Olson, 1992), since their lack of phonemic awareness contributes to their slow acquisition of word recognition skill (Juel, 1994). Second, appropriate exposure to effective instructional strategies makes children develop phonemic awareness skills with relative ease during the preschool and kindergarten years (Stanovich, 1993). As Adams (1990: 412) postulates, children who fail to acquire phonemic awareness 'are severely handicapped in their ability to master print'. The implication is that children who know how to manipulate sounds in words at an early age have greater success in learning how to read in the first and second grades (Adams, 1990; Juel, 1994). Further, phonemic awareness is one of the best predictors of success in learning to read in kindergarten and first grade level (Adams, 1990) as it has been proven to help children learn to read and spell more efficiently (Yopp, 1992).

The motivation of studying phoneme awareness is based on a number of reasons. First, there is a growing consensus among researchers that the basic difficulties in learning to read and

spell stem from weaknesses in alphabetic and phonological coding (Adams, 1990). Second, Stanovich (1986) concludes that phonemic awareness is a more powerful predictor than nonverbal intelligence, vocabulary, and listening comprehension, and it often correlates more highly with reading acquisition than tests of general intelligence or reading readiness. In addition, measures of phonemic awareness are a more reliable indicator or predictor than measure of intelligence (Griffith & Olson 1992; Yopp, 1992; Stanovich, 1993; Adams, 1990). Further, phonemic awareness remains an essential skill serving as a precursor to reading acquisition (Sensenbaugh, 1996; Shaywitz, 2003). In Kenya, the language policy in education stipulates that children should be taught in the language of the catchment area, an African language in the lower primary (Classes 1-3), while English and Kiswahili are taught as subjects. However, despite the recommendations of the Koech Report on the re-alignment of the education sector to the constitution of Kenya 2010 and official communication by the Ministry of Education through the Sessional Paper 14 of 2012 on reforming education and training sectors in Kenya (The Republic of Kenya, 2012), teachers have continued to pay lip service to the use of mother tongue languages in the lower primary. This is what has led the authors of this paper to analyse phonemic awareness instructional strategies as used in the teaching of English in Nyeri County, Kenya.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study was based on the sociocultural theory of human learning as propounded by Lev Vygotsky in 1978. The sociocultural theory describes learning as a social process and the origination of human intelligence in society or culture. The major theme of Vygotsky's theoretical framework is that social interaction plays a fundamental role in the development of cognition. Vygotsky held the position that the student is his or her own best teacher and his/her experiences are important in learning. Consequently, the educational experience needs to be based on the student's activities. The role of the teacher, therefore, should be one of guidance and structuring educational opportunities for the students to explore. In other words, peer social influence and expert's facilitation are important in promoting children's cognitive learning and language development (Vygotsky, 1978). In addition, the sociocultural theory also emphasizes on the importance of scaffolding in an educational context so that the teacher can model the desired learning strategy or task and then gradually shift responsibility to the students.

The sociocultural theory also creates a zone of proximal development (ZPD); that is to say, learning awakens a variety of internal developmental processes that are able to operate only when the child is interacting with people in his/her environment and in cooperation with his/her peers. Thus, Vygotsky advocates that good instruction should proceed ahead of development and should awaken and rouse to life an entire set of functions, which are in the stage of maturation and lie in the ZPD. Children should, therefore, be actively encouraged to move through the ZPD by giving them opportunity to engage in problems which are beyond current level of ability but are within the ZPD. It is because of these principles of the sociocultural theory that it was chosen for this study.

### **Research Methodology**

The study employed the descriptive survey research. According to Aggarwal (2008), descriptive research is devoted to the gathering of information about prevailing conditions or situations for the purpose of description and interpretation. The descriptive survey research was found appropriate since the objective was not to generalise but to understand the instructional strategies employed by teachers of English in the teaching of phonemic awareness instruction for elementary grade learners in Nyeri County, Kenya. According to Merriam (2002), a qualitative

study is designed to uncover or discover the meaning people have constructed about a particular phenomenon. Therefore, the researcher conducted interviews to obtain information to gain an in depth understanding of the instructional strategies employed by teachers of English in the teaching of phonemic awareness instruction for elementary grade learners.

Data was collected and analyzed qualitatively from interviews administered to 20 teachers of English purposively sampled from Nyeri County, Kenya. Creswell (2012) notes that researchers may purposefully and intentionally select respondents that can best help them to understand their central phenomenon. This is in consonance with Creswell (2012) advice about qualitative research that researchers may purposefully and intentionally select sites [respondents] that can best help them to understand their central phenomenon. Since the qualitative model of data collection and analysis allows for a small sample size (Barker, Elliott, & Pistrang, 2004), 20 research participants were sought. The study used an interview schedule as the tool of data collection. As Borg and Gall (1989) note, interviews are normally more flexible and are capable of producing data of great depth. Interviews were conducted in person with all the 20 teachers of English of the elementary grade learners in Nyeri County, Kenya. Almost all the interviews lasted from fifteen minutes to twenty minutes.

The collected data were carefully coded and studied intensively in order to develop themes. The interview schedule consisted of two questions: question one helped in the identification of the instructional strategies, the reasons for the effectiveness of the instructional strategies and the examples of the instructional strategies; question two helped in the identification of the recommendations that would ensure that elementary grade learners achieve success in reading and writing. The data elicited through the interview schedule was subjected to content analysis.

### **Studies on Phonemic Awareness**

There are various studies on phonemic awareness across the globe. Ukrainetz, Cooney, Dyer, Kysar and Harris (2000), for example, examined the possibility of teaching phonemic awareness in a holistic, scaffolded, responsive approach, using conversations embedded in literacy activities of shared reading and writing. The study noted that the type of phonemic awareness considered critical for reading and writing is awareness of phonemes or speech sounds. In addition, the study noted that controlled studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of phonemic awareness training in individual and classroom situations for typically developing children and children with language impairments.

In yet another study, Reading and van Deuren (2007) undertook an investigation over a 2 year time period with 92 kindergarten children comprising even numbers of male and female. The kindergarten children were divided into two groups (by classroom) each year, totalling 4 groups overall. There was a control group who did not receive systematic and explicit phonemic awareness instruction in kindergarten, and a second group that received systematic and explicit phonemic awareness instruction in kindergarten via the Open Court Reading System curriculum. The curriculum-based measurement system of Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) was the assessment module to test phonemic awareness abilities of all students. Students were tested at the beginning, middle and end of first grade in subtests provided by DIBELS. The Phonemic Segmentation Fluency (PSF) is the measure by which DIBELS calculates a student's fluency when segmenting spoken words into sounds. The study found that learning phonemic awareness skills beyond a sufficient level did not necessarily improve reading scores.

McCarthy (2008) explained the use of sound boxes in the classroom to encourage students to become more familiar with phonemic awareness tasks. In this strategy, the teacher

would use picture clues at first with the students (only three-sound-words, such as pig or feet), then, show the students how to slide counters into three boxes for the sounds that they heard. This required students to attend to each sound heard in these words. The study found that sound boxes enhanced students' familiarity with phonemic awareness tasks. McGee and Ukrainetz (2009) too, found that scaffolding phonemic awareness instruction is necessary to ensure that students have success with learning to sound out words. By using intonation, probing questions and repeated practice, teachers were able to explain the process of phonemic awareness and segmentation to students who were otherwise unable to produce the answer the teacher was eliciting. Similarly, a study conducted by O'Conner, White and Swanson (2007) found that repeated reading not only improves reading rate, but also word identification and reading comprehension for elementary grade learners. This implies that repeated and monitored oral reading improves reading fluency and overall reading achievement.

Atwill, Blanchard and Gorin (2007) explained the cross-language transfer of phonemic awareness in students whose native language was Spanish. The subjects were attending an elementary school near the USA-Mexico border and the sample size was 68 children; 26 boys and 42 girls. All students were native Spanish speakers and none were identified as special education students. None of the students had attended private or public pre-school centres. All phonemic awareness portions of the tests used were given using English and Spanish versions of DIBELS. The measures studied included initial sound fluency and phoneme segmentation fluency. The students were tested in English and Spanish, with similar results. If students were able to score proficiently (average or above-average receptive vocabulary ability) on the English version of the phonemic awareness DIBELS measures, they did just as well on the Spanish measures.

Another research which merits mention is a study by Griffith and Olson (1992), which outlined the reasons of importance of phonemic awareness, including its effect on later reading achievement, and the importance of acquiring spelling skills through phonemic awareness tasks. Griffith and Olson also addressed the assessment methods for gauging levels of phonemic awareness, including using game-like tasks to measure a student's ability to recognize rhyme, blend phonemes to make words, isolate beginning, ending and medial sounds in words, and deletion and substitution of phonemes in spoken and written language.

In Kenya, for example, Gathigia and Njoroge (2016) assessed phonemic awareness among Grade One learners of Public Primary Schools in Mathira Sub-county of Nyeri County, Kenya by using the Yopp-Singer Test of Phoneme Segmentation. Gathigia and Njoroge found that learners experienced pronunciation problems with the voiceless palato-alveolar fricative sound /ʃ/, the voiced dental fricative /ð/, the voiced palato-alveolar affricate /dʒ/, the high, long, back and rounded vowel /u:/ and the diphthongs /ai/ and /ei/. Gathigia and Njoroge recommended that phonemic awareness strategies that take into cognizance the alphabetic principle and orthographic familiarity should be employed in the teaching of phonemes.

In another study in Kenya, Orago (2015) investigated the phonological awareness skills of learners with reading disability by using a sample of pupils in Class Six from selected schools in Nairobi County. The Phonological Awareness Theory and the Rapid Naming Theory guided the study. The data for the study were obtained from tape-recorded texts from the respondents and analysed to establish their nature of phonological awareness. Orago found that the respondents displayed phonological awareness skills in some tasks and experienced difficulties in others. Orago identified various deficits in phonological awareness such as mis-articulations of substitution, phoneme deletion, phoneme insertion and reading of the entire word instead of identifying the sounds.

The aforementioned studies demonstrate that phonemic awareness can be fostered through language activities that encourage active exploration and manipulation of sounds, which in turn, can aid in the development of reading and writing in children. However, none of the studies interviewed teachers of English to identify the instructional strategies employed by them in the teaching of phonemic awareness instruction in the elementary grade classes. It is, therefore, evident that there is a clear gap in research where the ‘best practice’ are discussed; hence, the need for this study.

### **Research Findings and Discussion**

The objective of this study was to discuss the instructional strategies employed by teachers of English in the teaching of phonemic awareness instruction for elementary grade learners in Nyeri County, Kenya. The instructional strategies discussed below are in agreement with Vygotsky’s theory of Socio-cultural development that learning experiences should be meaningful and relevant to the learner.

First, phonemic segmentation was identified as one of the ‘best practices’ employed by teachers in Nyeri County, Kenya. Phonemic segmentation involves the decomposition of a syllable into its component phonemes (Yopp, 1992). The rationale behind this strategy is that graphemes correspond to individual phonemes and that only manipulations of individual segments help the learner to acquire abstract representations of phonemes. The teachers interviewed in this study noted that teaching young readers to segment words into individual phonemes is one of the best practices in helping children learn to read. The same view is echoed by McGee and Ukrainetz (2009) who felt that emphasis should be placed on segmenting words into phonemes. Teachers noted that segmentation normally involves various segmentation operations like counting sounds or phonemes. One of the teachers proposed that the teacher can ask the learners how many sounds he or she hears in a specific word like ‘hut’. The teachers also noted that phonemic segmentation may also involve syllabic awareness in which the teacher asks the learners to identify the syllables in a word. In addition, phoneme segmentation may also entail the onset / rime awareness in which the learners can identify the first sound in a word (onset) and then identify the vocalic / syllabic consonant in the word (the rime). This finding is in consonance with the idea by Juel (1994) that children appear to naturally use the onset-rime division in their early attempts at segmenting syllables. Moreover, phonemic segmentation may also help the learners identify the last sound in a word.

Second, the teachers identified phoneme manipulation as an effective strategy of teaching phonemic awareness. According to Yopp (1992), the ability to manipulate sounds to form different words in order to support the flexible use of sound knowledge is one component of the reading and writing process (Yopp, 1992). The teachers argued that having learners move letters as they pronounced phonemes in given words was a ‘best practice’ in phonemic awareness instruction that produces transfer of learning to reading and spelling. One of the teachers opined that phonemic manipulation may also take the form of *phoneme substitution*, *phoneme deletion* and *phoneme addition*. Phoneme substitution occurs when the initial sound, middle sound or the final sound in a word is replaced / substitute with another sound. For example, a teacher can ask learners to replace / substitute the first sound in *cat* with /s/. Substitution may also take the form of *vowel substitution*, for example, when a learner is expected to replace the vowel in *slap* with /i:/. Phonemic manipulation involves the learner being asked to pronounce a word after its first, middle, or last phoneme has been deleted. This is also called *phoneme deletion*. For example, when a learner is expected to delete the initial sound in a word and read *sleep* without the /s/ or the deletion of the final sound as when one is expected to say *pit* without the /t/. Moreover,



phonemic manipulation may take the form of *phoneme addition* as when a learner is expected to add the /s/ to the beginning of a word like *murk*.

Third, teachers also noted that blending phonemes to come up with a word is an effective method of teaching phonemic awareness instruction for elementary grade learners. Phoneme blending is a best practice in which learners listen to a sequence of spoken phonemes and then combine them into a word. For example, one can take the sounds /p/, /a/, /t/ and blend them to create the word *pat*. One of the teachers noted that the ability to orally blend words may involve first, the blending of syllables and second, the blending of the onset and rime, and lastly, the learner can be asked to blend phoneme by phoneme. This, as one of the teachers noted, should be done in a playful environment to scaffold phoneme awareness. As Yopp (1992) argues, phonemic awareness tasks need to be conducted while focusing on playful or game-like strategies. In addition, such a strategy is in sync with Vygotskian perspective which posits that children acquire literacy through conversations and supported purposeful engagements in literacy events.

Fourth, teachers noted that phoneme isolation is also an effective strategy of teaching phonemic awareness. Phoneme isolation refers to the ability to recognise the separate phonemes in words (Yopp, 1992; Jenkins, Fuchs, van de Broek, Espin & Deno, 2003). The teachers argued that first phoneme in a syllable are the easiest to identify, then the final phoneme, and lastly, the middle phoneme in that order. Therefore, as one of the teachers noted, a learner can be asked to name the first sound in a word, then, the last sound and then, finally, the middle sound in a word. This will help the teacher check that the children understand the concepts of first, last and middle before asking questions. Another teacher argued that such a strategy will make learning fun and interesting. This is in consonance with Yopp's (1992) postulation that phonemic awareness instruction needs to be performed in a playful, fun environment where experimentation with language is encouraged. According to Turuk (2008), any strategy which emphasizes the importance of social and collaborative aspects of learning can scaffold and assist in the second language acquisition process. Scaffolding, as aptly captured by Kao (2010), is one of the cardinal concepts in the socio-cultural theory, in which the teacher creates supportive conditions in which the learner can participate, and extend his or her current skills and knowledge to higher levels of competence.

Fifth, the use of oddity tasks was identified as an effective strategy of teaching of phonemic awareness instruction for elementary grade learners. Oddity tasks involve comparing and contrasting the sounds of words for rhyme and alliteration (Adams, 1990). As a best practice, oddity tasks are tasks involving the learner to identify which word is different when presented with a set of three or four words (for example, *mat, sat, hip, hat*). A teacher can, for example, ask the learners which word is the odd one out or which word does not rhyme with the others from a list of words. In addition, a teacher can also ask the learner which two words begin with the same sound or which two words end with the same sound from a list of words like *tan, tick, pick*. A teacher argued that one can also ask the learners which word does not have the same middle sound in a list of words; for example, *make, cake* and *fair* or which two words have the same middle sound in a list of three words like *mop, top* or *hood*. This phoneme awareness strategy is consistent with the view by Mathes and Torgesen (1998) that the use of oddity tasks enhances phonological awareness. Such interaction between the teacher and the learners is a prerequisite for collaborative learning, which is a vital component of the socio-cultural theory.

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

This paper makes the following conclusions: first, phonemic awareness instructional strategies need to be embedded in naturalistic context consonant with the principles of emergent literacy.

Second, phonemic segmentation, phonemic manipulation (phoneme substitution, phoneme addition and phoneme deletion), phonemic blending, phoneme isolation and the use of oddity tasks are necessary to ensure that students achieve success in reading and writing. Third, phonemic awareness is a prerequisite for understanding the alphabetic principle; namely, that letters stand for the sounds in spoken words. Finally, dyadic interactions between the learner and the teacher are important in promoting children's cognitive learning and language development. Such dyadic interactions, according to the socio-cultural theory, involve teacher-students / student-student activities jointly engaged in problem solving and knowledge building which enhance the effectiveness of classroom language teaching and learning.

In order to promote best practices in teaching early literacy and phonemic awareness in elementary grades, this study recommends that policymakers should provide resources to develop curricula that are engaging and fun to learners in line with Vygotskian perspectives. Therefore, educationists, linguists and researchers should provide special support for curriculum focused on phonemic awareness for teachers of English as a second language. Second, there should be in-service training for teachers of English, to deepen their understanding of literacy approaches to be employed in the preschool that would enhance phonemic awareness. Third, the present study also recommends that researchers and linguists assist educators of elementary grade learners develop a foundation for language, literacy, and knowledge of the world around them by employing an eclectic approach that takes into cognizance the 'best practices' of phonemic awareness; that is, phonemic segmentation, phonemic manipulation (phoneme substitution, phoneme addition and phoneme deletion), phonemic blending, phoneme isolation and the use of oddity tasks. Finally, this study recommends that scaffolding explicit phonological awareness interventions and writings is necessary to ensure that students achieve success in reading and writing.

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## The New Quota Admission Policy as a Discursive Force for Social Class Differentiation: Perceptions of Public and Private Primary School Actors in Isiolo Township, Kenya

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### Abstract

*Admission to national schools at form one level based on whether a candidate is from a public or private school instead of individual merit has caused an outcry of discontent among some parents and pupils from private academies. In this paper, we argue that this misrepresents some of those with children in private academies as rich; a social class that may just be ideological since by being in private school, one is believed to be rich. This state of affairs perpetuates misleading and negative social class awareness between the private and the public primary school actors. This paper, therefore, sought to examine the role of the new Quota System Discourse in the construction and maintenance of the ideological social class difference. Specifically, the paper sought to identify and describe the key social class indicators used by pupils, teachers, parents and proprietors in assigning class ranks; to examine linguistic strategies employed by pupils, teachers, parents and proprietors and their implication on social class relations between private and public schools within Isiolo Township. Fairclough's model of Critical Discourse Analysis was used to analyze spoken texts from private and public primary school actors collected through audio recording of four Focus Group Discussions and eight semi structured interviews conducted after the inception of the new quota admission policy. The key finding of this study was that the actors used discourse strategies that systematically glorify private schools while using deficit discourses that emphasized abject poverty and other negative socioeconomic attributes of public primary schools parents. There was mismatch between the social class perceptions held by various education actors and the reality on the ground within Isiolo Township. This mismatch is detrimental to the achievement of one of the key goals of primary education in Kenya: to foster unity and cohesion among learners.*

Keywords: Kenya, new quota policy, perceptions, social class differentiation.

### Introduction

One of the recent reforms characterizing the Kenyan education was the inception of the new quota system of admission. Admission to national schools at form one level which was based on whether a candidate was from public or private school instead of individual merit caused an outcry of discontent among some parents and pupils from private academies. They felt discriminated against and perceived as being rich; a class that may just be ideological. This admission method was seemingly crafted as a solution to the problem of the unprecedented mismatch between the number of students qualifying to join national schools and the actual national school facilities available at the time of this research. The recent expansion in education has however seen national schools increase from eighteen (18) schools in 2011 to one hundred and three (103) schools in 2017 hence there being no further need currently for the new quota admission that was the practice then.

This paper examined the role of discourse of the new quota system in the construction and maintenance of ideological social class difference between private and public primary schools within Isiolo Township. Discourse is a social corrective action that uncovers hidden power relations (Wodak, 1997: 98). The change in the quota admission policy has caused a shift in discourse thus presenting a new discourse agenda for study yet there have not been adequate

studies in this area especially with regard to the case of Isiolo Township. Specifically, this paper sought to identify and describe the key social class indicators used by the pupils, teachers, parents and proprietors in assigning class ranks; to examine linguistic strategies employed by pupils, teachers, parents and proprietors as well as their discursive implication on social class relations between private and public schools in Isiolo Township. It is hoped that the findings will uncover the underlying social class identities embedded in discourse that may in the long run hinder achievement of the educational goals of fostering unity and national cohesion. The findings should be useful to the government and especially the education sector in policy formulation with a view to resolving conflicting and often persistent debate on the new quota system that has since been abandoned. It is also expected that the findings of this study should further bridge the gap in linguistic knowledge regarding how language functions in the discursive construction of social class in the new quota placement practice.

Non-state funded schools across the world have been associated with prestige, high quality of education, quality physical infrastructure and high social status (Runyon, 1976: 160). Runyon says that although public schools may have government approved teachers, they lack essential physical infrastructure and often have high teacher to pupil ratio. The distinction between private and public schools based on the facilities they own may not be clear cut though. It is common to find the so called elite public schools which are well equipped and also well staffed. On the flipside of these elite state funded schools, however, we also have the informal private schools, charity based academies and the low cadre private schools found in the slums and other marginalised areas. These private schools may be characterised by lack of essential facilities and are mainly attended by the poor as opposed to the elite public schools whose access is limited to those perceived to be rich.

From the foregoing, any general classification of those learning in private academies as rich and their counterparts in the public schools as poor, which the new quota system of admission in Kenya does, may only be perceptual, erroneous and discriminative. The arguments and counter arguments from both the public and the private education actors may have enhanced the formation of certain mindsets regarding class relations between public and private schools within Isiolo Township. It is against this backdrop that discourse of the new quota system becomes an object of investigation in this paper.

### **Social Class, Power Struggle and Education in Kenya**

The nature of human society and its structures and institutions is discovered in the behaviour of individuals (Goffman, 1974:13). Language is one of the human behaviours that Goffman alludes to. Goffman further asserts that all we do is socially situated and this social situatedness gives rise to indicators, expressions or symptoms of the existing social structure such as social class relations.

Although class structures in Kenyan society borrow heavily from Britain which was her colonial master, debates are sustained on whether social classes are distinctly formed to an extent of warranting calling Kenya a class society (Orina, 2004:19). Lister (1996) also describes the concept 'underclass' which he argues comprises majority of people in most societies and refers to those that rely on the state welfare for survival, since they are disadvantaged in many ways. According to Lister, majority of members of the underclass come from the most underprivileged and marginalized areas of the society. Isiolo falls in the marginalized regions in Kenya and also portrays these characteristics in various ways. The state of insecurity, poverty and escalating prostitution may be clear pointers to this fact and have drawn the attention of interest groups such as the Tumaini Fund (2010) that carried a situational analysis and placed Isiolo as one of the poorest regions in the country.

In Kenya, there exists a link between social stratification and public policy development (Lando & Abdalla, 2009:69). The new quota system of admission is one of the public policies alluded to by Lando and Abdalla. The government of Kenya provides a veritable social force in class differentiation through biased patterns of allocation of state resources and access to social programmes (Orina, 2004:7). Education is one of such social programmes that Orina alludes to. According to Runyon (1976), it is a widespread perception the world over that academies are associated with prestige and wealth on the part of those studying in them. Whether such perception is true of all private academies in Kenya, especially within Isiolo Township is partly the concern of this work. This is especially in view of private schools in estates considered to be inhabited by the poor as well as schools started by charitable organizations and the church to help the needy pupils from nomadic groups in the arid and semi arid zones most of which are marginalized in terms of public education. Goffman (1974) asserts that all we do is socially situated and this social 'situatedness' gives rise to indicators, expressions or symptoms of the existing social structures such as social class relations. The indicators that Goffman refers to may serve as pointers of the underlying ideological motivation.

According to Giddens (1978, 2009), social class perceptions are accounted for by various social class indicators exhibited by the members of the given perceived class. Giddens (2009) provides a clear link between social class and other dimensions of social life which include; health, voting pattern, access to quality education, physical health and appearance, prestige of residence, occupation, and so on. These dimensions, argues Giddens, make it possible to operationalise the concept 'class' just for the sake of the empirical study. Krieger (1997) also adds to the lists of class markers by identifying poverty, income, deprivation, wealth and education. However, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2011: 13), measuring of social class has never been easy. Variables used as class markers keep changing with time. It is difficult and often inappropriate to attempt to assign social class based on the occurrence of any one or a set of the markers in isolation.

In his case study of the American system of placement of students to either a special or a normal school, Mehan (1996) found out that the process of producing the student identity as normal or special was a socially constructed reality which sometimes had little to do with the true status of the learner. This process, as Collins (1981) observes, is generated in a sequence of organizationally predictable interactional events which include; classroom observation, referral, testing and finally a committee meeting where the decision is made to place a student to either general or special programme. This institutionally sanctioned sequence of events is a form of what Thompson (1997: 108) terms as legitimization of a socially constructed reality. This process, argues Thompson, is achieved through rationalization which involves the construction of a chain of reasoning based on the legality of rules and sanctity of traditions. In this sense, educational placement is seen as a discursive event.

The guidelines justifying the process of categorizing pupils in Kenya as either rich or poor based on the schools they study in, is a form of legitimization of a perception imposed by policy makers and which may have little reality on the ground.

### **Theoretical Framework and Methodology**

This study was guided by Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). According to van Dijk (1997), CDA is an interdisciplinary approach of analyzing text as the object of study primarily involved with how social power, abuse, dominance and inequality are enacted and reproduced. CDA is a theory concerned with revealing the hidden agendas, which is an ideological dimension (Cameron, 2001: 123). CDA aims to uncover by way of identification and description of recurring surface or stylistic features of the text(s) and is normally directed towards texts in

public arena (van Zyl, 2012). The surface features that the current study is interested in, are the social class indicators and linguistic strategies systematically employed by the participants. The study is built around Fairclough's model of CDA which looks at language as social practice. This study employed a case study design involving a detailed investigation of purposively sampled spoken texts from both private and public primary school actors. The research was done in Isiolo sub-county within Isiolo County in Kenya and the target population was primary schools within Isiolo Township.

Isiolo Township was considered a suitable location because the outcry over the high number of pupils disadvantaged by the application of the new quota system was so pronounced since the number of private primary schools is far higher than the number of public primary schools. This situation triggered the production of the discourse of class differentiation that this study was interested in. Purposive sampling was used to select four schools; two private and two public primary schools before stratified purposive sampling was used to come up with thirty two pupils, eight teachers, four parents and two proprietors of private academies. Data was collected through audio recording of four Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) by the pupils and eight semi structured interviews comprising teachers, parents and proprietors. Data was collected after the inception of the new quota admission policy which sparked off a heated debate.

As part of the methodology, the following were used as data coding symbols:

1. Upper case alphabets 'A' to 'I' – identity of speakers from the four Focus Groups.
2. Figures 1 - first private school; 2 - second private school; 3 - first public school; and 4 - second public school.
3. T refers to Teacher; P refers to Parent; PR refers to Private School Proprietor.
4. Lower case alphabet indicates the gender of the speaker whether m (Male) or f (Female).

Based on the coding above, **B1m** can be analysed as follows: individual identity is 'B'; the speaker is a member of Focus Group one; he is from the first private school; and he is a male. The following symbols are also used in this paper:

1. R - Researcher
2. FG1 - first private school
3. FG2 - second private school
4. FG3 - first public school
5. FG4 - second public school
6. T1m - first private school teacher (male)
7. T2m - second private school teacher (male)
8. T3f - first public school teacher (female)
9. T4f - second public school teacher (female)
10. P1f - private school parent (female)
11. P2m - public school parent (male)
12. PR1m - first private school proprietor (male)
13. PR2f - second private school proprietor (female)

### **Identification and Description of Social Class Indicators**

Data for this study was collected in form of spoken discourse recorded in labelled memory cards which contained proceedings of FGDs and interviews. This data was transcribed, translated and subjected to thematic content analysis which generated frequency and distribution of class indicators and linguistic strategies. A careful CDA analysis of the data revealed two discursive activities that occur simultaneously. These activities involved making constant reference to certain social variables whose presence or absence appeared to suggest the social class one is



perceived to belong. Common indicators are tabulated (see table 1) in their order of frequency of occurrence in various data sets analyzed.

**Table 1: Frequency of Occurrence of Class Indicators in FGDs**

<i>Indicators</i>	<i>FG 1</i>	<i>FG 2</i>	<i>FG 3</i>	<i>FG4</i>	<i>Totals</i>
Amount of wealth	9	14	28	18	69
Quality of education	4	9	9	8	31
School facilities	6	2	13	3	24
Corruption and exam irregularity	1	-	8	12	21
Food depravity	2	-	10	5	17
Occupation	2	4	8	-	14
Mannerism	6	8	-	-	14
Ability to afford private school	-	4	4	5	13
Self esteem	1	-	8	2	11
Question of sponsorship	7	-	2	1	10
Participation of children in economic activities	-	2	3	1	6
Literacy level of parents	2	4	-	-	6
Family size	1	3	2	-	6
Area of residence	4	1	-	-	5
Appearance	2	1	-	-	3

Source: Focus Group Discussions

Frequencies of occurrence of various indicators were sorted in a descending order for easy comparison (see table 2). Wealth, access to quality education, school facilities and depravity are the most highly mentioned indicators by the pupils from private and public schools. Indicators such as illiteracy of parents, poor appearance, mannerism as well as residential estates featured as empty categories in public school groups (FG2 and FG3). Private school groups (FG1 and FG2) appeared to construct their public school counterparts negatively in the light of these indicators. They were characterized as being lazy, indisciplined, some being untidy, having uneducated parents and coming from estates or areas perceived to be for the poor. Vices such as corruption during form one admission and examination irregularity is mentioned at a higher frequency by the public school groups. They appear to associate this vice with the wealth of the private school parents/guardians. This finding appears to confirm the argument by van Dijk (1993) that derogation of the Other is achieved through concealing the negative attributes of the 'self' while foregrounding those of the other.

Wealth level, quality of education, question of sponsorship, occupation, availability or lack of facilities appear to be the most recurrent social class indicators among teachers, proprietors and parents. Other key indicators mentioned are; literacy level of parents, areas of residence, self esteem, involvement of children in economic activities, appearance and grooming, mannerisms and the ability to afford private school. The frequency of occurrence for certain indicators was useful in giving an account of the social class consciousness among the respondents. It also revealed some unique factors around which social class identity is conceptualized by the respondents in the context of Isiolo Township. Such unique indicators included factors like the family size, sponsorship, mannerisms, participation of pupils in their families' economic activities, ability to afford private academy fees as well as appearance and grooming. All these variables are mentioned in regard to their presence or absence among members of either public or private schools thus placing them on a perceptual class index. Occurrence of these indicators further confirms the assertions by Giddens (1978) that social class

indicators differ from place to place and from time to time. The issue of vagueness of the concept of social class in Kenya as raised by Orina (2004) and the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics- (KNBS 2010) can explain the uniqueness of certain indicators that emerged in this study. Kenya in general and Isiolo County in particular, portrays a unique socioeconomic context that provides the backdrop against which the uniqueness of emerging indicators can be understood.

**Table 2: Frequency of Occurrence of Class Indicators in the Interviews**

<i>Indicators</i>	<i>T1m</i>	<i>T2m</i>	<i>T3f</i>	<i>T4f</i>	<i>PR1m</i>	<i>PR2f</i>	<i>P1f</i>	<i>P2m</i>	<i>Totals</i>
Amount of wealth	13	8	7	19	22	06	19	10	104
Quality education	6	3	8	9	13	12	11	3	66
Question of sponsorship	9	-	-	2	15	6	5	2	39
Occupation	1	5	4	7	3	9	5	2	36
Literacy	2	3	-	11	9	1	-	-	26
Facilities	2	2	3	7	5	-	4	3	26
Mannerism	9	9	-	3	-	-	-	-	21
Residence	2	2	4	7	4	1	-	1	21
Corruption and exam irregularity	4	-	8	5	2	1	-	-	20
Participation of children in economic activities	1	-	3	9	-	-	-	-	13
Ability to afford private school	-	1	1	5	2	2	-	2	13
Appearance	-	-	3	9	-	-	-	-	12
Family size	-	-	-	-	4	-	2	3	9

Source: Semi structured interviews

Tables one and two give an account of the number of times each theme (indicator) is mentioned without regard as to whether it was deemed present or absent. At this level, the indicators are given as far as they are used to define the perceived social class of the 'self' or the 'other'. Some of these class indicators are discussed, supporting each with appropriate texts based on their relevance to this study.

The public school parents/guardians and pupils consistently attributed the absence of quality education, wealth, prestigious occupation and superb residence to themselves hence constructing themselves within the deficit discourses regarding the family size, depravity and physical appearance. Some pupils and parents of public schools attribute their inability to go to private schools to their large families, poverty and poorly paying jobs. Others cited lack of food and inability to replace their worn-out uniforms. Private school pupils construct their public school counterparts in deficit discourses. They see them as poor and lacking essential facilities at school, for example, a school bus. However, there were undertones of them characterizing themselves as being better than public school pupils. This may be a pointer that even the needy pupils in private schools acquire a sense of belonging to a higher social class by virtue of their being in private school.

### **Linguistic Strategies used in the Construction of Social Class**

To give a linguistic account of social class construction, the researchers adopted the principle of language as social action by Halliday (1985). One of the key findings is that the social class indicators identified above were discursively constructed using specific linguistic strategies that enhanced the overall construction of class difference between private and public primary schools

in Isiolo. Specific linguistic strategies found in this paper are identified and discussed in the next sections.

### ***Inclusive and Exclusive References***

Class difference was mainly signalled by use of inclusive versus exclusive discourse references. This was realized through use of pronouns and various deictic expressions that show the spatial difference aspect of referents. Pronouns such as: ‘we’, ‘us’, ‘our’ and deictic expressions such as ‘here’, ‘this’ and ‘these’ were frequently used in the construction of the in-group. Whereas pronouns of inclusivity were used to define members of the in-group, deictic words were used to reinforce the identity of such a group through locating the group away from the implied out-group. The construction of the in-group simultaneously means construction of the out-group (exclusive reference), either by implication or through direct use of pronouns such as ‘they’, ‘them’ and ‘their’ as well as the deictic reference expressions such as ‘there’, ‘that’ or ‘those’. This construction of different groups is what Derrida (1981) calls the process of ‘Othering’, which he argues is very essential in the construction of the Self. This establishes how social class ideologies or perceptions are embedded in the features of discourse.

Table three shows a summary of the frequency of occurrence and the distribution of occurrence of pronouns, the deictic expressions, modality and transitivity across the four Focus Group discussions and eight interviews both of which took a total of seven hours.

**Table 3: Frequency and distribution of pronouns, deictic words, modality and transitivity**

<b>Features</b>	<b>FG 1</b>	<b>F G2</b>	<b>FG 3</b>	<b>FG 4</b>	<b>T1 m</b>	<b>T2 m</b>	<b>T3 f</b>	<b>T4 f</b>	<b>PR 1</b>	<b>PR 2</b>	<b>P1 f</b>	<b>P2 m</b>	<b>Total</b>
We	32	19	27	35	11	5	12	6	8	24	10	9	198
Us	12	7	15	21	6	9	3	3	3	14	6	8	102
They	41	45	36	32	16	13	12	11	07	56	31	25	325
Them	9	11	20	10	10	7	5	7	5	10	4	3	101
Here	9	5	7	9	9	8	7	12	3	16	3	1	79
There	5	5	8	2	6	2	1	5	1	12	3	2	1
Modality	9	5	3	11	6	3	14	5	9	12	7	11	95
Transitivity	21	53	31	40	17	11	8	12	11	18	16	22	245
This/There	5	-	-	2	9	21	16	27	09	14	2	5	112
That/Those	4	-	2	7	17	7	2	14	4	9	4	4	84

Source: Respondents’ Data in Focus Group and Interviews

### ***Use of Pronouns We / Us versus They / Them***

According to Fairclough (2003), the choice of pronoun may be tied to relations of power and solidarity. Pronouns appear to be useful tools for positioning of subject in either the in-group or the out-group. Consider text 1 below.

#### **Text 1**

**R:** ... some of your counterparts in public school claim that your learning conditions are better than ...

**D1f:** passing depends on how someone spends his (1) or:: her time (.) for:: (.) for example (.) they are at home (2) while us we (.) we are: working hard (3) we advise them no:t to:: lose hope.... (FG1. P.4 line 10-15)

In text 1, the repetitive use of inclusive pronouns ‘we’ and ‘us’ by the respondent (private school pupil) constructs an in-group of private schools pupils as opposed to the out-group of public schools pupils. The defining characteristic here appears to be that the former spend their time well while the latter waste their time. This justifies the reason for the excellent performance by private schools and the cause of poor performance in public schools. Public school pupils also use inclusive pronouns to construct their own in-group which is defined by different characteristics as in text 2 below:

### **Text 2**

**R:** why do you support the new quota method?

**A3f:** I support this rule (.) this method (1) many of us (2) many are very helpless ... we are helpless (1) those even with problems would also get helped (FG3. P. 27 line 4-8)

In text 2, a public school pupil constructs an in-group of public school pupils using the pronouns ‘we’ and ‘us’. The shared characteristic here is that they (public school pupils) are helpless. The use of inclusive pronoun ‘we’ and the verb complement ‘helpless’ does two discursive activities simultaneously; that of forming an ideological category ‘we’ and that of characterizing this category as being helpless. This also serves as an example of a case where public school pupils foreground their self-perceived poverty. Such use of language as this has an overall impact of reinforcing the perception that public school parents are poor, which may not hold for all public school parents in Kenya and particularly in Isiolo Township.

### ***Choice of Modality***

Modality is another linguistic resource borrowed from Halliday’s (1985) Functional Grammar to illuminate the issue of class relations. Fairclough (2003: 166) defines modality as what people commit themselves to when making statements, asking questions and making demands or orders. Expressive modality has to do with speaker’s evaluation of the truth value or probability of a representation of a given reality. Here, the speaker may express doubt, certainty, possibility or impossibility in regard to a given proposition or reality. It is the expressive modality that this work is interested in, since this deals with expressing what one believes to be true with a certain degree of personal authority.

Modality is normally expressed by modal verbs and also by various other formal features including adverbs and tense (Fairclough, 2001:104). The researchers were particularly interested in the way modality of ability, or lack of it was expressed using modal verbs ‘can’, ‘would’ and their negative forms as well as direct lexical items such as ‘able to’ or ‘unable to’. Tallying of the frequency of occurrence of these modality forms totalled to 95 times across the four focus groups and eight interview transcripts that lasted for a total of seven hours.

One of the key findings was that public school pupils were constructed and also constructed themselves in the deficit discourse of inability in regard to affording private school fees, food, transport to school and even raising school fees. This may be an indication that some public school pupils come from families that live a life of deprivation. Private schools on the other hand were constructed in positive light as being capable of performing better, paying high private school fees, buying family vehicles and paying for school bus and transport, bribing their way to prestigious secondary schools, eating well and so on. Example of these modalities is evident in the texts that follow.

### Text 3

**R:** Why do you think the government would want to favour you?

**C3m:** Because **we** are (.) many of **us** in:: public school are:: poor some of our parents **Cannot** even afford taking **us** there ... Private schools they get remedial teaching (1) but us here we don't get (1) we Can't afford...Our books are not enough (.) we **cannot** even (hhh) (FG3 P.26 line 9-12 and P.28 Line 6-9)

The respondent, who is a boy in a public school, first uses pronouns 'we' and 'us' to construct an in-group of public school pupils and their parents. The respondent then goes on to use a modality of inability signified by the negative word 'cannot' to give a demeaning characteristic that binds together all the perceived members of the in-group.

### Text 4

**T4f:** ...This child does not even afford paraffin (.) to do the homework (1) **cannot** even afford revision books ... and also bear in mind that this poor child (.) **cannot** even afford a private school. (T4f. P.68, lines 6-10)

The respondent in text 4 above is a public school teacher expressing her view on the perception that public school pupils are poor. She supports this view by use of negative modality of inability (in bold font above) to foreground challenges that public school children live with. She appears to justify why public schools perform poorly. Throughout texts 3 and 4, the modal auxiliary verb 'can' is used in its negative form when public school respondents are talking about themselves to refer to their inability to afford essentials such as fees, books, paraffin and so on. This in effect foregrounds their own perceived poverty and helplessness, thus positioning them on a lower social class rank.

### *Selective Transitivity Analysis*

Analysis of transitivity system as an approach to text is based on Hallidayan linguistics and focuses on clauses in the text (Fowler 1987). Fowler further argues that the transitivity of the text can tell much about the discursive construction of implied positions, which is what the current study is about. The researcher concentrated on the SVC (Subject Verb Complement) structure of clauses, where the subject referred to the actors while the verb, 'to be' and linking verbs signalled a state of being. The complement stood for the social economic characteristics assigned to the subject. For example,

<u>We</u>	<u>are</u>	<u>Poor</u>
S	V	C
Actor/subject	Verb 'be'	attribute/complement.

The researcher also looked at the SVO structure where the main verb is a primary verb. For example,

<u>They</u>	<u>don't have</u>	<u>a bus</u>
S	verb	O

These two forms of transitivity were frequently used across the four focus groups and eight interviews transcript, with a frequency of 242 times in a total of seven hours of talk. The high frequency of occurrence of this type of transitivity shows that the discourse of the new quota system mainly involved assigning social economic characteristics to the 'self' and the 'other' as a way of foregrounding the social class difference. Text 5 demonstrates the way transitivity is employed in the underlined sections to characterize public school pupils.

### Text 5

C2f: Some even go to school late (1) they don't have bus.....  
 They can't even concentrate (2) when they are hungry.  
 D2m: They have books (3) they are given for free  
 H2m: some of us (.) in this school (1) are very poor...  
they are sponsored coz they don't have money to pay  
 their fees (.) yah (.) they are not rich (FG 2 p15)

All the respondents in text 5 above are from a private school. Speakers C2f and D2m are talking about public school pupils. Processes of 'being' and state of 'having' contained in the underlined clauses above appear to demean the subject (public school pupils) by use of complement 'hungry' and also the state of not having the 'bus'. Respondent H2m, unlike the first two respondents is talking about his fellow private school pupils who he characterizes as being very poor, being sponsored and also in state of poverty. This may be a confirmation that not all private primary schools going pupils come from rich families as widely perceived.

### *Use of Metaphors*

Janks (2010:74) defines metaphors as devices that are used for yoking ideas together and at the same time constructing new discursive ideas. Metaphors represent one aspect of experience in terms of another (Fairclough, 2003: 08). A total of ten metaphors were identified as being used by the respondents across all the focus groups and interview data to substantiate different ideological standpoints.

### Text 6

T1: We see them as (.) ehm:: (.) take the case of an eagle  
 that comes and takes away our (.) our or: their piece of  
 meat after we (.) after we have killed and we are about to  
 eat it... (T1m. P.47-48)

The respondent, who is a private school teacher, likens their public school counterparts to an eagle that snatches the piece of meat they (private schools) have worked hard to earn. The analogy of the eagle is used in relation to a person who freely enjoys the things that somebody else has laboured hard to earn. The metaphorical analogy relates to another one referring to those who reap where they never sowed. Public schools who are seen as being lazy and poor in academic performance are related to an eagle since the new quota policy is believed to give them undue advantage in admission at the expense of private school pupils who qualify but the slots they believe belong to them are given to the 'undeserving' public school pupils who are perceived to be lazy.

### Text 7

T2m: They should try and create level ground (.) for healthy competition...(1) **Huwezi funga timu moja mikono halafu ukawambia washindane kucheza** football (You cannot tie the hands of one team and then ask them to compete in playing football) (T2 P.54 Line 5-10)

The respondent is a private school teacher. The analogy drawn here appears to be that of unequal representation of public and private schools. Public school pupils may be seen as having their arm tied by their poverty, inadequacy of facilities in their school and may allude to what Sifuna and Otiende (2006) refer to as lopsided policies that lead to the deterioration of public schools' learning environment. The respondent appears to acknowledge the fact that the facilities in public schools are wanting. This further confirms the finding by Uwezo (2010) on lack of facilities in public schools and in situations where they were available, they were dilapidated; this is a problem that has led to congestion and consequential poor quality education.

### Text 8

PR2f: I don't know even what to say (.) but (1) it is not fair (5) they often accuse us of taking the lion's share in national school but rarely do they acknowledge our lion's effort that make our pupils qualify.....(PR 2 P.87 Line 14 - 20)

The lion is believed to be the king of the jungle and is all powerful in relation to other animals. Invocation of this analogy positions private schools well above the public primary schools. In terms of power relations, their dominance is foregrounded and justified by the mention of the effort the private schools put forth. Before inception of the new quota system in the national school admission, private schools enjoyed most of the slots in national schools to the extent that their large number came to be metaphorically referred to as the 'lion's share'. The respondent (PR2f) in text 8 argues that private schools perceive themselves as all deserving in terms of the slots in national schools since they put forth more effort.

The rigours of Critical Discourse Analysis applied in this study reveal systematic ways of using language in the service of ideology to categorize and characterize participants. The resulting bi-polar relation seem to accommodate members believed to possess similar socioeconomic characteristics (in-group) and expurgate others believed to possess different socioeconomic characteristics (out-group) who are often seen as posing threats to the well being of the in-group members.

### Conclusion and Recommendations

Evidence cited in this paper points to the fact that language was utilized in the reproduction of unequal power relations which was manifested in this study as linguistic forms of positive self representation and derogation of the Other. What appears to be commonsensical every day talk by the social actors within education circles in the context of the new quota system debate may have been given an unwarranted prominence, thus increasing negative social class awareness and misperceptions which erroneously assimilate private and public school pupils in the already pre-existing ideological social class ranks. This made the learning environment polarized hence unfriendly for the achievement of one of the main goals of education in Kenya; to foster unity and national cohesion. The general categorization of all pupils in private schools as 'rich' and all

pupils in public schools as ‘poor’, was not in tandem with the reality on the ground especially within Isiolo Township. This may be the case in other marginalized areas in Kenya; a reality that may suggest a lacuna in the process of policy formulation.

From this study, it is recommended that situational analysis involving all stakeholders be carried out in order to govern future review of the form one admission policy. Figures of authority especially the educationists and also the general populace should restrain from language that propagates negative social class perceptions. Deliberate choice of neutral language in day to day communication may help to reverse negative social class perceptions. This study establishes that the general classification of schools into public schools perceived to be poor and private school perceived to be rich is inappropriate since some non formals schools such as those established in the slums and arid areas to help the needy access education may not fit the popular perception of all private schools as being rich

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## Women, Patriarchy and Power: Perspectives from Marjorie Oludhe Macgoye's Writings

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### Abstract

*Marjorie Oludhe Macgoye was a Kenyan writer whose writings focused on the country's postcolonial transformation and social development. In her works, she interrogated the failure of the postcolonial African state. The argument in this paper is that in her novels, Marjorie Oludhe Macgoye recounts the evolution of the Kenyan nation through her many painful experiences and the characteristic power struggle and political violence that has gripped the nation at specific stages of its growth. It is within this framework that this paper looks at one aspect of Macgoye's novels – her social consciousness. Using selected texts from her oeuvre, the paper demonstrates the significance of this exceptional writer in the context of Kenya's transition from a colony to a neo-colony and shows how an appreciation of Macgoye's social consciousness may lead to a better understanding of the critical role of the writer in nation-building. Situating her novels in the context of current debates about the relationship between literature and the nation, the paper shows how Macgoye's works may be read as implicit critiques of the developmentalist rhetoric espoused by Kenya's postcolonial political class. It illustrates how Macgoye's social vision may contribute to the forging of a new humane, just and equitable national identity.*

Keywords: Identity, Macgoye, neo-colony social consciousness, postcolonial state.

### Introduction

Eisenberg and Ruthsdotter (1998: 1) while quoting Margaret Mead rightly observed the following: 'never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has'. This statement is in tandem with a new belief in scholarship that women's writings play a significant role in the process of nation-building. This paper pays particular attention to the place of women in the construction and preservation of values that deconstruct the myths of the nation that gave birth to developmentalist rhetoric that permeated the discourses on the nation during the first decade after independence. The perjury of the myths that muted the role of women in nation-building is key to sustainable and more equitable national development.

Marjorie Oludhe Macgoye, a pioneer woman writer in Kenya, carries the burden of the Kenyan nation on her shoulders. Her social consciousness constructs a consciousness that has produced a type of nationalism within which the Kenyan nation can be imagined to realize true development. This assertion puts the writer at the centre of the nation. Indeed, Macgoye's novels show that the author lives up to an observation by Mkandawire (2005: 2) that writers should be critical and not subservient or sycophantic. Nor should they 'allow themselves to be yoked to power and accept an injunction 'silence we are developing'. This comes out particularly strongly in the way the author depicts women and their role in national development.

The role of women in life and in literature is undergoing gradual change even in traditional societies. Macgoye deconstructs the common images of women as just the mother or grandmother, wife, independent career woman, naive girl or prostitute. Macgoye situates her novels in the political terrain and shows that in spite of the disillusionment that characterizes the public sphere of postcolonial Kenya, women are strong and determined despite heavy odds. She deconstructs the common roles that have been heaved upon the Kenyan women and portrays a

womanhood that is agile, courageous, endowed with special gifts, and ready to take the lion's share of the work for their family and community. To puncture the myths that have been strongly engraved in the Kenyan patriarchal culture, Macgoye creates women characters that are ambitious, hard-working, 'but often frustrated individuals, who always try to find the way to protest against injustice or exert some power to improve their situation' (Kuria, 2001: 56). Through this, she creates a new social consciousness that aims to uphold positive ideals in the society.

Radical feminists contend that 'Man has been identified by his relationship to the outside world-to nature, to society [...] whereas woman has been defined in relationship to man' (Ferguson, 1977: 10). Macgoye does not concern herself with this kind of nexus, comparing men with women and portraying the woman as inessential Other. Her thinking seems to be that women and men should not fight one another but should work together to get a balanced society. A man is not an absolute subject and women should not work towards being such an absolute subject. This kind of consciousness is what makes Macgoye's works stand out.

Macgoye constructs a kind of feminism that does not understand patriarchy in terms of power relations but one that undermines the male phallocentricism without necessarily championing matriarchy. This is a significant departure from the feminism of writers like Margaret Ogola which envisions not the overthrow patriarchy but also aims to create a matriarchal society. In Ogola's *The River and the Source* (1994), the fact that Aoro Sigu is incapable of proposing to his long-time girlfriend, Wandia, and waits until she [Wandia] pities him and proposes is the height of male emasculation. In the same vein, Rabeca Njau's *Ripples in the Pool* (1975) does not only aim to overthrow patriarchy but also envisions a situation in which women can be sexually independent of men by fostering lesbian relations. Selina, who is Njau's heroine in the novel, is used to critique the oppressive nature of heterosexuality to women and to recommend lesbianism as potentially liberating.

### **Kenya as a Troubled Marriage: Macgoye and the Plight of Women in Postcolonial Kenya**

This paper focuses on two novels by Marjorie Oludhe Macgoye; *Coming to Birth* (1986) and *Chira* (1997). The choice is strategic since we are also interested to see whether Macgoye's vision is affected by time. The plots of the two novels take the reader in the post-colonial period from the late 1950s to *the present moment* (emphasis made deliberately to insinuate Macgoye's 1987 novel, *The Present Moment*). This was the historical time when the country's independence was gained and the main political and socio-cultural changes took place. Due to the dismantling of traditional social institutions, women were left in an even more vulnerable and ambiguous situation with new burdens and responsibilities. It was also a challenging time for the Kenyan writers who had two options; either to be praise singers for the political class or to be critical and risk being sacrificed at the political pyre.

In the novels, Macgoye conceptualizes the Kenyan nation as a woman. The travails that the Kenyan woman has gone through are reminiscent of what the Kenyan nation has gone through. This suffering is brought forth by unfeeling leadership that has been given the mandate of guarding the Kenyan dream. Ndi (2016) wrote a compelling article titled 'Kenya is a cruel marriage, it's time we talk divorce', in which he contends that nationalism in Kenya is dead and has been replaced by sub-nationalism. 'The tribe has eaten the nation', was his clarion call.

It will be recalled that the idea of the nation was construed by Benedict Anderson (1983). Anderson defined nations as social constructs – political communities that are bonded together by common interests. What therefore we are talking about here is that a nation is like a marriage union in which people are guided by the sense of connectedness with each other. The intellectual problem of the study of nationalism is trying to understand why and how people develop or fail

to develop this belonging. In Macgoye's *Coming to Birth*, Paulina is married off to Martin at the young age. The narrator reports:

She was sixteen and he [Martin] had taken her at the Easter holiday, his father allowing two cattle and one he had bought from his savings, together with a food-safe for his mother-in-law and a watch for Paulina's father. They had made no objection to his marrying her then, on the promise of five more cows to follow (Macgoye, 1986: 2).

The marriage union between Martin and Paulina took place in 1956 in colonial Kenya against the backdrop of the nationalist struggle for independence. Martin was allowed to take Paulina regardless of her age on condition that he had enough to pay bride price. Still flat chested, Paulina's *twenty three year old husband* [our emphasis] even laughed at her when she asked him for a brassiere. Even Rachael, Martin's neighbour in Nairobi, was surprised to see Paulina because in her opinion, Paulina was too young to be married. She sarcastically comments: 'they are in a hurry to get you settled these days. And pregnant?' (Macgoye, 1986: 8). These questions voice the concern from a fellow woman that a girl so young could be married off by her parents. The woman, according to the parents of Paulina's patriarchal mindset, was the man's property and lacked the capability to make personal decisions. The man was culturally allowed to beat his wife whenever he thought he should. This beating was a show of love and care from Martin as we learn later from the text. Ahoya says: 'Well, he [Martin] does love you. I could see it in his face as he caught sight of you. But I thought also he would beat you...'. Ahoya continues to explain to Paulina how important it was to be beaten by her husband:

Every wife who comes to Nairobi from the country has problems. Do not think it is the end of the world. Every young man has problems too. Probably all his friends and workmates have been telling him he is too young to marry and now he begins to wonder how he will manage (Macgoye, 1986: 24).

Macgoye does not demonize Martin's actions and does not praise them too. She seems to understand that 'every young man has problems too'. Hooks (1984) argues that in the Third World, men are socialized to accept their exploitation and abuse in the public sphere. For such men, dominance in the domestic environment restores to them their sense of power and provides the space for relieving tensions. This often leads to violence against women. Women are easy targets because there are no consequences for men in a cultural environment that equates coercive power at home to masculinity (Hooks, 1984: 121). A few days after arriving in Nairobi, Paulina experienced a miscarriage and was taken to the Pumwani, the nearest hospital. As soon as she showed signs of improvement, she was discharged. Paulina could not wait for Martin at the gate like the other women. A curfew was in place and she had to hurry to reach home. Unfortunately, being new in the capital city, she got lost and was even arrested for knocking on people's doors asking if they knew her husband's place. This prompted Martin to beat her mercilessly.

Martin's violence against his wife is however not ill-intentioned. It is just cultural and he is in fact a caring husband as we see when he consoles her over the miscarriage (Marjorie, 1986: 26). Thus even though the young couple later separate, the sense of freedom that Paulina gets after separating with Martin is not celebrated in the novel. The freedom seems very hollow, a false totalizing narrative. Indeed, Macgoye depicts marriage as an institution where both parties should strive to stick together and weather all storm. This can be attributed to her Christian roots. It will be recalled that Macgoye came to her adopted country, Kenya, as a Christian missionary.

At a more symbolic level, 'freedom' is portrayed as a contested concept, both in the family and at the national level. As Amina, Paulina's long term friend, tells her [Paulina]; 'with

freedom or without freedom, with a job or without a job...you are not going to get a baby that way' (Marjorie, 1986: 60). This emphasizes the necessity of a man in Paulina's life even as she had gained personal independence. Later Paulina gets a child, Okeyo, with a married man, Simon. This act is not different from the many amorous acts that Martin Were is involved in. But the death of Okeyo is an indication that Macgoye does not approve of adultery. This strongly points to Macgoye's moral consciousness: she does not approve of adultery, whether by men or women; whether it is being committed for pleasure, sexual frustrations or even out of revenge. Martin Were and Paulina face the same castigation from Macgoye.

What is happening in Paulina and Martin's family is a replica of the state of affairs in Kenya some more than fifty years after independence. Branch (2011) lucidly shows that Kenya is between hope and despair. During the struggle for independence and in the years immediately following its successful outcome, it was widely believed that after the exit of the colonial powers, Kenya would forge ahead to realise her aspirations of political sovereignty as well as social, economic and cultural prosperity. The first independent KANU government was expected to put an end to poverty, illiteracy and disease and thus open the gates to all-round development. However, this was a vision whose realisation has been problematic and to date remains largely incomplete. The main reason given is that the political leaders who took over power were only concerned with their personal selfish interests.

In Kenya, the politics of the state must be understood in the light of the shifting social formations along ethnic lines. This is true for most of African countries, where ethnicity is seen as an important phenomenon around which individuals, households and communities aggregate for common action (Thomas-Slayter, 1991: 303). Macgoye understands the Kenyan state not as an entity 'holding' or 'exercising' power but as forming a meeting point for the coordination of power relations. This argument is expanded upon by Ferguson (1977: 273-274) who argues that the state is 'not an actor but a way of tying together, multiplying and coordinating power relations, a kind of knotting and concealing power'. Thus statehood becomes 'multiple parallel spaces in which power is encountered and negotiated' (Newman, 2005: 2). This reads into the conceptualisation of a Kenyan state as marriage we have made above.

In Macgoye's writings, especially *Coming to Birth* and *Chira*, the woman character is not in competition with men. Macgoye's representation of gender creates spaces which can only be filled in by the other gender. Her social consciousness gives space for both the heroine and her husband to try out their own ways in searching for identity and self-definition in a tenuous social and political context. Martin's and Paulina's gender identities are fundamentally defined by the internalised Luo traditions. This becomes problematic when they meet new experiences. Their relationship is full of constraints, contradictions and dilemmas owing to the changing circumstances, unaccustomed life situations and novel influences. The tensions in their marriage prefigure the predicament in independent Kenya in the hands of Kenyans themselves. Paulina felt the 'death' of her marriage, but could not rescue it due to her inability to bear Martin a child. In the novel, Kenya is symbolically also about to face the 'death' of the unity of her people which existed when they all fought against the colonialism. In post-independence Kenya, this unity proves difficult to sustain owing to the politicians' self-aggrandizement and greed for power.

The train journey that Paulina takes from Kisumu to Nairobi is long, tiring and troubled. Although it is a journey that Macgoye uses to detach her protagonist from the patriarchal village life, it also serves as a voyage that ushers Paulina not only to the political landscape of her country but also to modernity. Nairobi, being the nerve centre of the nation offers Paulina the political experience that was only accessible to men. Martin Were, Paulina's husband, is fixated to the past; the past that Paulina leaves back in Kisumu. Their good marriage soon gravitates to

oppressive union full of mistrust and violence. But as Macgoye shows in *Coming to Birth*, both Paulina and Martin are hopeful to be the beacon of change in an exceedingly patriarchal society. Macgoye's social consciousness echoes Awua-Boateng formulation that there is an impending change 'in attitude for both men and women as they evaluate and re-evaluate their social roles' (Awua-Boateng, 2010: 90). This means that although Macgoye condemns patriarchy in the society, she does not demonize men in the process but encapsulate a world where the two genders coexist in harmony.

Paulina is a woman determined to overcome all the forms of oppression women face in the patriarchal Kenyan society. Her struggle for self-reliance and identity as a woman is expressed in her hopes for motherhood. As she tells Martin: '...though I hardly dare to hope, I must give you also this hope, after giving you disappointments so many years' (Macgoye, 1986: 147). This hope by extension is a hope for a better Kenya both politically and for the Kenyan woman in the patriarchal world.

### **Locating Corruption in Postcolonial Kenya in *Chira***

In *Chira*, Macgoye (1997) detailed the scourge of HIV/Aids in Kenya. Ignorant of the facts about *chira* (the Luo term for a 'wasting disease', also applied to Aids), people run the risk of being wiped out. Macgoye still finds a place to narrate the story of the Kenyan nation. She is a writer who is very sensitive to issues of the day in her country Kenya, and who promptly responds to social and historical events in the country through her works. In the novel, 'chira' also refers to the moral affliction threatening Kenyan society: in Marjorie's view, there is hope of overcoming both. This prompts Wasamba (1997: 127) to contend that *Chira*, is a novel in which Macgoye addresses the AIDS pandemic; its causes, symptoms, misconceptions about it and how it can be contained, and as such, one of the earliest creative attempts of its magnitude to respond to the AIDS pandemic, as the disease is a landmark in the history of the nation.

On the role of tradition in the spread of HIV/AIDS, Wasamba observes that Macgoye (1997) feels that the dreaded disease is spread by traditional beliefs that misrepresent the pathology of AIDS as a common wasting disease known among the Luo known as 'Chira' which is caused by 'sinful nature' (Macgoye, 1997: 127). According to him, Macgoye is suggesting that these beliefs mystify HIV/AIDS and hinder its prevention. In *Chira* for example, the fact that the symptoms of the disease include much more than the mere wasting of the body, which is the main symptom of 'chira', and also that cleansing does not work for Samuel, we would expect the villagers to be jolted to reality and accept that they have a new catastrophe in their midst which requires their serious attention.

Far from that, they continue to hold on to far-fetched and ignorant explanations of the disease. Samuel's mother continues to blame Josefina's father for refusing to conduct the cleansing ceremony, which is ironical because she conducted one for Samuel and he never recovered. Josefina's father on his part still believes his daughter died of 'chira' and blames Samuel for misleading her to commit incest with him. Macgoye here suggests that by downplaying the disease as a mere curse, it denies the villagers an opportunity of addressing the disease effectively and this enhances its spread. This denial is also escapist. It indicates the dilemma of people being faced with a tragedy that is beyond their control. Further, Macgoye indicates that denial is a typical way of dealing with overwhelming challenges in this community. This can be seen in the villagers' failure to accept in public that Josefina and Samuel's infection originated from their incestuous relationship. Samuel confesses to Gabriel that though the villagers know he had had a sexual relationship with Josefina, they maintain in public that he did not (Macgoye, 1997: 50).

As the omniscient narrator in *Chira* points out, ‘the best defence against the unthinkable is to deny it’ (Macgoye, 1997: 45). In *Chira*, this escapist denial of the existence of HIV/AIDS is not only restricted to the uneducated rural masses. Relatively well-educated city dwellers like Obura and Gabriel who have heard of HIV/AIDS from the ‘radio and posters’ (Macgoye, 1997: 45) participate in this denial. They do not want to speak of HIV/AIDS openly. From the conversation between Obura and Gabriel, it is clear that they know Samuel is infected by HIV/AIDS. This can be seen in the way he describes the HIV/AIDS symptoms as manifested in Samuel. Obura tells Gabriel that Samuel is ‘thin like a person who is eaten by TB ... there are spots on his face...and a beaten path behind his house’ (Macgoye, 1997: 45-46). From this description, we notice that he is just evading mentioning what he thinks about Samuel’s sickness. He would rather go by the old peoples’ explanations that it is ‘chira’.

Samuel, though initially ignorant, behaves no different from Obura and Gabriel, after he realizes the truth of his sickness. He continues to hold on to ‘chira’ as the explanation for his ailment. From his conversation with Gabriel on the day Gabriel answers his mother’s summon to visit the sick Samuel, it is evident that he has finally become aware of HIV/AIDS. He warns Gabriel to be careful of the girls in Nairobi, as he does not know where they come from (Macgoye, 1997: 49), and to run away from an injection because there is no way of knowing if it had been sterilized or not (Macgoye, 1997: 48). He also knows that ‘even cutting your finger...’ (Macgoye, 1997: 48) these days can lead to infection. Apart from depicting factors that enhance the spread of the disease, this excerpt shows that he is aware of HIV/AIDS and how it is spread. However, he chooses to deny this even to himself and decides to go by the villagers’ explanation that it is ‘chira’ he is suffering from because this is more familiar and psychologically reassuring and edifying to him as ‘chira’ is a common condition in this community.

In this paper, we argue that *Chira* is an allegory of the loss of ideals in a neo-colony. Here, we contend that ethnicity and corruption are the ‘chira’ that Macgoye points out in this text. She is a writer who is concerned with the restoration of the people’s ideals. Corruption has bedevilled the Kenyan nation since 1963. The persistence of the debate on corruption in Kenya validates the claim that while power in the West is essentially transformative (Laswell, 1948; Mbembe, 1992), power in Africa and specifically in Kenya has more to do with ‘eating’ than with transformation. From this debate, it can be rightly argued that virtually everything in Africa concentrates on the capacity and the power to eat. Thus, when someone gets political power it means that they have obtained power to eat, and likewise when one loses a position in the state, the usual expression is ‘he/she has lost the right to eat’ (Bayart, 1989: 10). What this means is that the Kenyan politician, whether in Government or the Opposition, is only interested with the politics of eating and nothing else.

Eating in Kenya elicits such a discussion that lulls us back to days following independence when the old guards were celebrating *matunda ya uhuru*. Eating has of late acquired new meanings in Kenya. But the question of who the owner of the meat is has not been addressed. The owner has always been sidelined in all discourses of eating. Achebe in his 1966 novel, *A Man of the People*, alludes to this owner when he repeatedly avers that some characters like Josiah and chief Nanga are cursed because of eating too much that the owner notices. This owner according to Achebe is the populace; the haggard voter. Indeed in *Chira*, when full-blown AIDS finally sets in, the heart rending symptoms as evident in Julia, Cecilia, Josefina and Samuel are talked about in a language that evokes malnutrition. Mama Fibi describes Josefina to Mama Gabriel as follows:

You should have seen the child’s face, mama Gabriel; or rather no, it is better you did not see. So thin, the skin drawn tightly over the bone and rough with sores... and her body

and legs also ... it is good he took her for surely no man would have brought dowry on her (Macgoye, 1997: 55).

Julia's picture is even more touching. We are told:

Gabriel saw a tiny figure wrapped in a shuka and tugged gently to uncover the face. Spotty emaciated ...the stench was terrible. She had been too weak to part her clothes when diarrhoea struck and even the wrapper was wet. She trembled with cold, her legs were a mass of sores and Gabriel senses, though he could not see, that her protruding bones scrapped ... (Macgoye, 1997: 163).

The image of Cecilia and Samuel is no different. These descriptions vividly depict the embarrassing and painful nature of this disease. Corruption is bad and its devastating effects are similar to those of *Chira*.

The corrupt leaders are compared to healthy carriers of the disease because they spread poverty to the masses in the same way healthy looking HIV carriers spread the virus to their unsuspecting victims. This is by misappropriating funds meant for schemes to benefit the poor. The effect of corruption to the society is compared to eruption of the once 'smooth and tender skin into blotches and black heads which draws offensive matter' (Macgoye, 1997: 153) in HIV/AIDS victims. Similarly, corruption ruins the schemes and organizations that are supposed to bring development and therefore alleviate poverty, leaving people frustrated, increasing crime rates and the numbers of street children among other social problems. Through this image, the destructive nature of corruption is made concrete using a familiar figure of one of the HIV/AIDS symptom.

Macgoye also likens those who execute the evil schemes of the corrupt leaders to opportunistic diseases which are responsible for the increase in 'death statistics' and high demand for doctor's attention in hospitals (Macgoye, 1997: 154) among HIV/AIDS victims. Just like the opportunistic infections add to the number of deaths among HIV/AIDS sufferers, in the same way the criminals increase the society's social economic problems by executing the evil plans of the well placed corrupt leaders. In addition, like the AIDS virus, which is only manifested through opportunistic infections, the actual people who are responsible for corruption 'seldom put in an appearance' (Macgoye, 1997: 154). It is the small people who they use as pawns who face the wrath of the society in the place of the big fish who use them to enhance their greed. Macgoye points out that:

Just as the opportunistic diseases detract from the credit of Ukimwi, spreading the death statistics, demanding the doctor's attention, so does the opportunist hug the limelight in the public body. The hit man who is found with the weapon, the auctioneer disposing the disputed plot, and the shareholder who has the audacity to complain to the clerk who failed to locate the missing file (Macgoye, 1997: 154).

Since concentrating on the management of the opportunistic infections does not rid the body of the virus, so too the society will get nowhere in the management of corruption by dealing only with the economic opportunists. Due to difficult economic conditions, the economic opportunists are always available and easily replaceable. Through this comparison, the author vivifies corruption and captures why it has continued to be such a thorn in the flesh of our society. The real culprits are never brought to book as the society only sees the puppets they use to carry out their evil schemes. Macgoye is suggesting that unless the society identifies these actual culprits and deal with the big picture, corruption will continue to grow just like HIV virus continues to spread through the healthy carriers. It follows that its economic effects will continue



to be felt, thus perpetuating poverty, which we have identified as a major cause of HIV/AIDS spread.

The comparison between HIV/ AIDS and corruption thus helps us to perceive the gravity of corruption and its effects. Since the effects of the scourge on the body are visible to us, by using HIV/AIDS as a metaphor, the author concretizes corruption, which is abstract. Consequently, we perceive its destructive effects on the economy, which contributes to the spread of the pandemic. By using the image of HIV/AIDS to vivify corruption and its effects, the author is in a way asserting that even in the face of HIV/AIDS, there are other societal ills that are as serious as AIDS and they should be dealt with from their roots. This is because the high spread of HIV/AIDS is just but a manifestation of their effects.

### **Feminism and Development**

Macgoye's social consciousness involves a construction of a feminism that is political in nature; the one whose opposition is not men or patriarchy but the social political evils that chokes the Kenyan society. Mama (2005: 96) argues that:

The attainment of nation-statehood has made it incumbent on women to pursue their integration into public life, and much energy has been devoted to lobbying for legal and policy reforms, and demanding women's equal representation in the hierarchies of power and fairer access to resources.

In other words, feminism can be understood in terms of the energy that women have put towards global development. Women intellectuals like Macgoye have used their writings as a route out of the debilitating deprivations of the social evils that affect the post-colonial Kenyan state.

Kuria (2001) compellingly argues that to be Kenyan is a psychological construct. It involves the play of two important elements; geopolitics and nationalist consciousness. Kuria seems to suggest that African women were imbibing western values and that they were in opposition to marriage, motherhood, homemaking and other traditionally constructed feminine roles, but Macgoye shows that the women's major concerns were much broader and are essentially developmental in nature. Central to their agenda is the fact that they should have equal opportunities to education, job markets, national resources, health and other related issues.

The two novels, *Coming to Birth* and *Chira* carry the personal view of the interaction between the individual and the nation. The writer interweaves the historical details in her narration so skilfully that it does not disrupt the main thread of the plot at all. Real political events and political leaders appear in the fiction, creating the illusion of reality and signifying that she is as concerned with the fate of the new nation as her fictional characters' plights. For instance, the arrival of the body of Tom Mboya (a popular Luo party leader murdered in Nairobi) in his homeland for burial is a good opportunity to give a detailed account of the burial, which is one of the greatest ceremonies in Luo society. At the same time, in the Macgoye's novel, Tom Mboya's funeral is the scene of the death of Paulina's son (Macgoye, 1986: 79–84).

There is ability and power in Paulina's world, which makes her more successful than her husband. In this respect, the novel has a feminist inclination. Although Paulina declares her independence and her right to choose, she still wants to maintain the relationship with her husband who is her child's father. Her courage and determination is woven into her complex character so subtly that it supplements rather than supplants her inherent humanity and never provokes any suspicion in the reader that she is an enemy of her husband. In this sense, the writer conveys the holistic view of the feminism highlighted by African women, which is manifested in alliance with males rather than against them.

As Nzomo (1997: 242) points out, despite their constraints, women make a significant contribution to the economy as farmers, crafts-persons, traders, and educated professionals. In

contrast, white feminists are reluctant to bring motherhood into focus because it is often regarded as a hindrance to mobility in the public work sphere and career building. Macgoye's attitude to women in relation to their husbands is in compliance with Nzomo's (1997) opinion that women should build alliances with men rather than generate hostility. It is a non-violent but effective way of counterbalancing male domination. This ideology matches the holistic views of feminism, implying that women should preserve their womanliness and not turn against males, as Nzomo (1997) argues.

The African woman is made hopeful for a better future both for herself and her country: Paulina is hopeful for a child. To add on her efforts of fighting for the freedom of the Kenyan Woman in postcolonial patriarchal Africa, Macgoye has also incorporated the support of the males towards this course. Martin, Paulina's husband, started off as a violent husband to Paulina, but as the novel progressed, he learnt to respect Paulina and even moved into Paulina's house a changed man and also provided her with a shoulder to lean on after a long day. As a result of this reunion, their marriage was restored and Paulina conceived his child after more than twenty years of marriage without a child of their own. The novel ends on a hopeful note. In our view, the strategic inclusion of male characters in the life of the major female character's life by Macgoye serves as a challenge to the males in postcolonial patriarchal Kenya and Africa to support both the Kenyan and African woman in her efforts to establish her identity in the society instead of objectifying her. By working together, the African society will be able to forge ahead into a better society, for the African woman will be able to explore her full potential in the world outside the cocoon of domesticity in which the patriarchal society has in the past and currently placed her.

## Conclusion

We conclude this paper by returning to the role of the writer in a society like ours, Kenya. Writers seek signs, structures and styles appropriate for the fictional reconstruction of their experiences, impressions and sense of consciousness enriched by their particular artistic visions. They have the ability to observe, evaluate and express the social phenomena in a way that goes beyond a mere description. In this regard, Macgoye focuses on the country's postcolonial transformation and social development. In *Coming to Birth* and *Chira*, Macgoye, as the paper has shown, interrogates the failure of the Kenyan postcolonial state to live up to the aspirations that energised the anti-colonial movements that delivered independence.

It is within this framework that this paper looked at one aspect of Marjorie's novels: her social consciousness. Macgoye's works follow an uneven terrain of political betrayal and gives a wake-up call to the reader on the erosion of ideals that heroes of the past had stood for, and thus, appeals for a re-examination of the people's conscience. In her two novels, Macgoye loudly rebukes corrupt leaders, adulterers and unfeeling patriarchal demagogues, likening them to disease carriers.

Interrogating these two texts has shown that Macgoye is not happy with the state of affairs in Kenya. In particular, she has denounced bad leadership that has been displayed by successive leaderships. In her art, she has blamed the leaders who are morally bankrupt. In *Chira*, these leaders are full of evil desires which are shaped by personal ambitions for power before all else. The leaders never try to overcome this desire but instead focus their energy and attention on concealing their ambition-deformed personalities behind the masks of the positive self-identities they construct. In the resultant hide-and-seek game with their peoples, the opportunity for genuine leadership and genuine service to the people is largely lost.

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## A Critical Analysis of the Female Husbands' (FH) Language Use in Woman to Woman Marriages (*Maweto*) Among the Akamba in Yatta Sub-County, Kenya

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### Abstract

*This paper explores language use by Female Husbands (FHs) in woman to woman marriages (Maweto). The overall aim of the study from which this paper draws was to establish the effect of the socio-cultural male role assumed by the female husband on her language use since little research has been done on the discourse of Maweto couples. The objectives of the study were; to establish the linguistic behaviour of female husbands and their wives in the discourse of Maweto couples; to establish the discourse strategies used by the female husbands and their wives as they socially interact; and to analyze the power relations in the couples discourse. The study was motivated by research findings that have shown that men and women use language differently. The study was undertaken in three sub-locations of Yatta Sub-County. The locations were selected through purposive sampling technique because it is an area that was identified by the researchers as practising these Maweto marriages. The study used Focus Group Discussions (FGDS) and Participant Observation methods of data collection. Data from the FGDs was tape recorded, transcribed and translated for analysis. The observed data was also recorded in a field note book and thereafter analysed. Fairclough's CDA approach was used to analyse power relations in the discourse. The analysis revealed that modality is used in the Maweto discourse by Maweto couples to give a message of obligation, responsibility and commitment in a strategic attempt to interact. The findings also showed that FHs use modality in their speech as a way of imposing their will on their wives.*

Keywords: Female husband (FH), language use, socio-cultural male role, modality, woman to woman marriages (*maweto*).

### Introduction and Background to the Study

Woman to woman marriages among the Akamba is referred to as *Maweto* marriages. Although a lot of research has been done on woman to woman marriages, this has mainly been handled from a sociological point of view. On the contrary, very little research has been done on how these women couples use language to socially interact. This paper therefore embarked on an analysis of language used by *Maweto* couples even as they assumed different gender roles in their marriages. The female husband (FH) socially assumes a male role as the husband to the wife. The wife is also referred to as *Iweto* (plural is *Maweto*). Since studies on gendered speech conclude that different gender use language differently, this paper set out to explore the differences in language use in as far as the *Maweto* couples is concerned. It discusses the background of woman to woman marriages, showing how woman to woman marriages are viewed by different communities, especially the Akamba community and the roles that the women play in the marriage set-up as well as how these roles influence the way the couples use language.

A distinction is also made between these marriages and the lesbianism types of marriages or relationships which also involve a woman getting attracted and married to another woman although in it there are sexual desires and romance involved (Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary). This lesbianism form of marriage is distinguished from the traditional woman to woman marriages where the relationship is purely social with no sexual relationships (Oboler,

1980). The female husband is in a more powerful position than the wife. This leads to power relations as the FH tends to impose her will on the wife who on the other hand is forced to remain submissive as she is under the command of the FH. Language is thus seen to be used by the FH as a tool of control. This is critically analysed through the choice of words, especially the modals that the couples use as they socially interact.

When the term ‘marriage’ is mentioned, the dominant perception that often comes to mind is of a union between a man and one or more women. However, the focus of this study is on same sex marriages referred to as woman to woman marriages (*Maweto*). Many countries are already passing laws that make it legal for people of the same sex to marry each other. South Africa is presently the only country in Africa where same-sex marriage is legal. The prevailing perception is that the concept of same sex marriage is foreign to Africa. However, woman to woman marriages have been practised in Africa even before the advent of colonialism. This form of marriage is common among the Akamba community in Kenya.

The Akamba people are part of Eastern Bantu ethnic group who eventually settled in Chyulu hills, Mbooni, Kitui and Machakos between 16<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup> century. They live in the semi-arid region formerly known as Eastern Province of Kenya and make up about 11 percent of Kenya’s population. Originally, Kambas were hunters and gatherers, then they became long distance traders although today many are often found engaged in different professions and have taken up formal jobs (Kapiyo, Kiruthu & Muma, 2003). The Akamba practise various forms of marriages involving polygamous, monogamous, child, *Maweto* marriages among others (Kyalo, 2011).

Kevane (2004) estimated that approximately 5 to 10 percent of married women in Africa are involved in woman to woman marriages. The FH assumes a male gender as the husband to the wife and the father to the children begotten in the marriage. This research sought to establish if the FHs language is similar to, or different from other women’s linguistic behaviour, through contrasting it with that of the wife. This is further analysed from the sociolinguistic standpoint that language indexes power. Traditionally, the woman who married an *Iweto* (the female husband’s wife) was herself a married woman who was either barren or had given birth to daughters only (Kyalo, 2011).

In order to understand woman to woman marriages and the discourse involved, it is important to understand first the persons involved in this kind of marriage. The parties include: the FH herself; if the FH is already married, her own husband (the female husband’s husband); the woman who is married to the FH- the wife (*Iweto*); and the lover (s) of the wife who may father her children (genitor). According to Cadigan (1998), woman to woman marriage, which involves a FH is an institution whereby a certain woman marries another and assumes control over her and her off springs.

Globally and regionally, woman to woman marriages have been practised. The Lovedu of South Africa are known to be the only African society that still has a female monarch often referred to as the rain queen. The queen herself has been known to be a FH to many wives (Amadiume, 1987). Another example is Ifenyenwa Olinke, an Igbo woman who lived in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and was a famously enterprising woman who socially over shadowed her less prosperous male husband by marrying many wives (Amadiume, 1987). As a symbol of her prosperity and social standing, she married nine wives. A study by Oboler (1980) found that the Nandi FH is considered culturally male and thus allowed to take on male roles. For instance, the FH may be allowed to take on political roles that women are physically not allowed to adopt. Nyanungo (2014) observes that among the Abagusii people of Western Kenya, there is a slightly different form of woman to woman marriage where a mother with only female children marries a woman for a fictitious son. In a strict patriarchal society, daughters or their offspring cannot

carry on the family line (that is the preserve of sons).

Njambi (2000) observes that woman to woman marriages among the Gikuyu gives a complex reason for women marrying other women, suggesting that woman to woman marriage is a flexible option within which women may pursue a range of social, economic, political and personal interests. The systems of patriarchy are further maintained to the extent that the FHs may only marry female wives and not male wives. Njambi (2000) thus suggests that there are unequal power dynamics between husbands and wives in marriages arranged in strict patriarchal societies and that these dynamics are mirrored in woman to woman marriages. The current study builds on this literature to show how these unequal power relations are mirrored in the FH's language.

Ngila (2011) states that *Maweto* marriage is one of the preferred options for women without sons though it contravenes Christian teaching that allows marriage between only one man and one woman. Within other social cultural domains like the Kalenjin of Western Kenya, the assertion that the FH is a man masks the fact that the role adopted by the FHs is sexually ambiguous and occupies an intermediate position. The benefit to the FH is obvious in all these variations; namely, advancement of her social status, prestige, economic and social security. This study makes an analysis how these female husbands' benefits contribute to her linguistic behaviour as lot of research on language and gender has shown that men and women portray contrasting linguistic behaviours. The available studies on women's linguistic behaviour have not given attention to the discourse in the context of *Maweto* couples in Yatta sub-county, Kenya. This is the gap that this paper seeks to address.

### **Modality, Ideology and Power in Social Interaction**

Fairclough (2001) states that power in discourse is concerned with discourse as an avenue through which relations of power are enacted. The focus of the current study was to discuss power in discourse especially the exercise of power in 'face-to-face' discourse. Fairclough (2001) illustrates the concept of power in discourse from an analysis of the discourse between a doctor and a student (an intern). He concludes the analysis by showing and stating that power in discourse has to do with powerful participants (in his case, the doctor) controlling and constraining the contributions of non-powerful performance in his case, the student. This constraint could be on content, on what is said or done, also on reactions, the social relations people enter into discourse or on subjects or on 'subject positions' people can occupy (Fairclough 2001: 36). This study considered this point of view relevant. It analysed how the participants in powerful social position (the female husband) use language as contrasted to the participants in a low social position, in this case, the wife. It also explores how the use of modality by *Maweto* couples brings out their power relations as the couples socially interact.

Fairclough (2003) defines modality as what people commit themselves to, when making statements, asking questions and making demands or orders. Through modality, one is able to infer the relationship that exists between two speakers. In addition, modality enables us to refer not to facts, but to possibility of something happening, its necessity, certainty, and whether the action is permitted. Barasa, Ndambuki and Khasandi-Telewa (2016) points out that modality could either be epistemic or deontic modality. Epistemic modality refers to the speaker's certainty in the truth value of the proposition made. The use of deontic modality on the converse expresses the speaker's level of interpersonal power in relation to other participants.

Janks (2010) states that modality is created by modals (may, might, will, shall, have, must, would, ought to, can, could), adverbs (possibility, certainly, hopefully), intonation and tag questions. This study analysed modality by looking at the frequency at which the participants in the study used modals as they socially interacted. According to Gathumbi et al. (2010), attitudes

and opinions of a writer or a speaker are realized through modality. Modality is expressed by use of modal auxiliary verbs as well as by various other formal features including adverbs and tense. These are types of modality through which writers and speakers negotiate information. Modality has to do with speaker or writer's authority.

There are two dimensions of modality, depending on what direction authority is oriented in. First, is the relational modality which is a matter of the authority of the participant in relation to others, and then there is the expressive modality which is a matter of the speaker or writer's authority with respect to the truth or probability of a representation of reality. For example, 'Your library books are overdue and your library cards *may not* be used until they are returned. If the books are not returned within a fortnight, you *must* pay the cost of replacing them before you borrow more books.' There are two modal auxiliaries used in this text, *may not* and *must*. *May* on its own as a rational modal can signal permission. *Must* on the other hand signals obligation. The authority and power relations on the basis of which the production of this text withhold permission from, or impose obligation on the people it is sent to, are not made explicit. It is precisely implicit authority, which make relational modality a matter of ideological interest (Fairclough, 2001). Other modal auxiliaries that express obligation are *have to*, *have*, *got to*, and *should*. *Must* conveys a personal authority of the speaker, *have (got) to* convey obligation based upon some external compulsions, which may for instance be the rules of an institution. *Can't* or *can* gives an impression of self-effacement which is in marked contrast with the predominantly authoritative modality. This was the focus of the current study as it analysed modality as used by *Maweto* couples.

Barasa et al. (2016) argues that the degree of strength of opinions is evident from the modals used. For example, 'must' and 'should' are considered high modality while 'may' and 'could' are considered low modality. On the converse, the presence of deontic modality reflects the speaker's level of interpersonal power in relation to other participants (Halliday, 1994). This is what Fairclough (2001) refers to as relational modality. The strength in positions is in turn related to the force of the ideologies communicated in each text. In this study, analysis of modality was aimed at revealing the dynamics of the power relations between the female husband and the *Iweto* (*Iweto* here refers to the woman that is married to the female husband), thereby highlighting the strength of the FH's position and her character. According to Barasa et al. (2016), modality indicates the degree of obligation (positive or negative) involved in a given statement. The current study relates to the one by Barasa et al. but it is uniquely different from it since their study is on political discourse but this study shows how modality reveals ideological underpinnings in the *Maweto* discourses.

Ideology and discourse intersect and interact in a complex manner. Fowlers (1985) argues that ideology is a system of beliefs which has come to be constructed as a way of comprehending the world. Language plays a central role in acting as a primary medium responsible for transmitting different ideologies in the social community (van Dijk, 1997). Fairclough (2001) argues that the effectiveness of ideology depends to a considerable degree on it being merged with common sense background to discourse and other forms of social actions. On the basis of this ideological framework, this study analyzed the function of language both as a tool of social interaction as well as an instrument of control and power.

Fairclough (2001) states that power in discourse is concerned with discourse as an avenue through which relations of power are enacted. Similarly, the focus of this study is to discuss power in discourse especially the exercise of power by FHs. It seeks to analyse how participants in high social position (FH) use language as contravened to the participants in a low social position, in this case, the wife. Hudson (1980) states that the dominance approach on gender and language focuses on power and inequality. Gender variation in language behaviour is seen as

expressing and reinforcing power differentials. FHs marry wives and obtain rights over the children produced. They also gain prestige and wealth in the same way men do so through polygamy. This advanced social status gives the FH a higher status and thus she becomes more 'dominant' and 'powerful' than the wife (Nyanungo, 2014). This study focused on how these unequal power dynamics is manifested in the language used by *Maweto* couples.

### **Discourse and the Construction of Gender**

Research on language and gender has grown alongside the broad field of Discourse Analysis. Those who study language and gender consider the analysis of language practices as a central task in the study of human relationship (van Dijk, 1997). For van Dijk (2008), power relations get articulated through language. Language does not merely reflect a pre-existing sexist world; instead, it actively constructs gender asymmetries within specific social historical context. A lot of researchers have shown that women exhibit different linguistic behaviours from men and from other women in the same speech community as they socially interact. Various linguists have given various explanations to try and explain women's linguistic behaviour and speech patterns. Holmes (2001) observes that linguistic forms used by women and men contrast to different degrees in all speech communities. It is claimed that women are linguistically more polite than men and also that women and men emphasize different speech patterns. Tannen (1974) states that many empirical studies in the 1970s showed that men interrupt women significantly more often as a discourse strategy to dominate them. Tannen however, argues that the overlapping talk is characteristic of what she calls 'high involvement'. Many linguists explain women's linguistic behaviour in relation to women as a subordinate group, women's role in society, women's socio-status, women's socio-networks, men's dominance approach, and women as guardians of societal values among other factors. This study builds on this literature to explain the FHs speech patterns.

There are speech differences between men and women. In the area of morphology and vocabulary, Lakoff (1995) argues that women use colour words like mauve, beige, lavender, but most men do not. Women are said to have their own vocabulary for emphasizing certain effects on theme, words and expressions such as so good, such fun, darling, fantastic, passionate, romantic and the like. Lakoff also states that women answer questions with statements that have a rising intonation usually associated with firm statements. Women do this because they are less sure about their opinions than men. On the same note, she says that women add question tags to their statements much more than men.

Coulmas (2005) states that women and men may have different paralinguistic systems and move and gesture differently. The suggestions have been made that these often require women to be more submissive to men. Does the same apply to the *Maweto* couples context? The current study sought to investigate such linguistic behaviours between the FH who occupies a male position and the wife who occupies the female role.

### **Theoretical Framework**

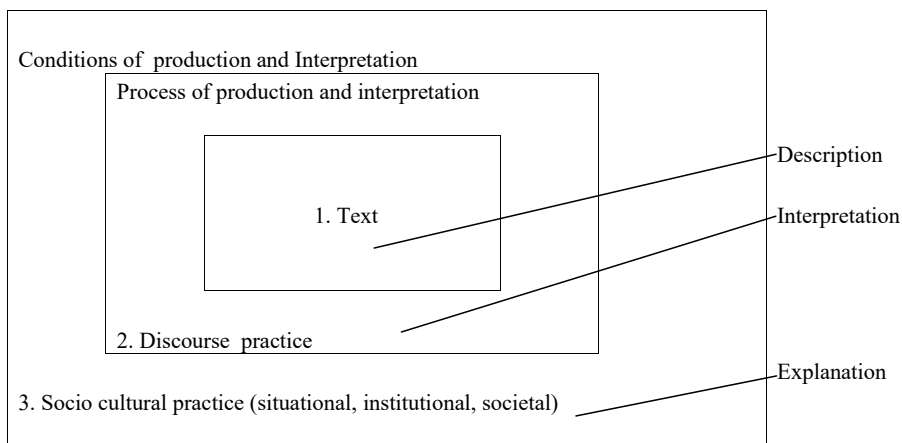
Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) by Fairclough (2001) was used in this study. According to Fairclough (1989), CDA has a main concern to examine the role of social institutions in shaping discourse practices. His theoretical position is that all forms of discourse are determined by sets of institutional conventions which are in turn shaped by wider social relations of power. In CDA, approaching the role of power in discourse tends to be a question of examining how those members of society who possess it, reflect, reinforce and reproduce it through the language they use and their discourse practices (Thornborrow, 2002). According to Wodak (1997), CDA is built on three pillars; power, ideology and criticality. These pillars were also considered in



analyzing the *Maweto* discourse on how language indexes power.

Fairclough (2001) argues that analysis of any discourse involves three stages which are; description, interpretation and the explanation levels of analysis. The object of analysis is the ‘text’ which Fairclough refers as a product rather than a process; a product of the process of text production. He uses ‘text’ to refer to both written texts and ‘spoken text’. Fairclough adds that the process of data analysis includes in addition to text, the process of production, and the process of interpretation of which the text is a resource. He states that people have a members’ resource (MR) in their heads and draws upon it when they produce or interpret text, including their knowledge of their language, representation of the natural and social worlds they inhabit, values, beliefs, and assumptions, and so on. No account of the process of production and interpretation can be complete which ignores the way in which they are socially determined, which brings us to the third implication of seeing language as social practice that is conditioned by other non-linguistic parts of the society.

MR are cognitive in the sense that they are in people’s head but social in the sense that they have social origins. This approach to discourse is appropriate for the current study which analyses *Maweto* couples’ language use and the social and contextual aspects surrounding it. Fairclough’s CDA approach that analysis the text and the context as well as illustrates the stages was thus used for this study as summarized in figure that follows.



**Fig 1: Discourse as text, interaction and context**

Adopted from Fairclough (1995: 59)

The analysis of the text (box 1) (description stage), covers what is traditionally known as linguistic analysis which may involve the analysis of vocabulary, grammar of the clauses and the text organization (Fairclough, 1995: 57). In analysis of the text on *Maweto* couples discourse, the researcher attempts a description of the modality and modes of sentences as used distinctively in social interaction by the *Maweto* couples. The second dimension (box 2) (Interpretation stage) covers various aspects of processes of text production and text consumption. It is the dimension that provides a link between the text (linguistic features) and the social-cultural conditions that shape it. The focus of this dimension in this research is on how different discourse patterns are mixed in normative or creative ways and get articulated together in ways that portray the distinctive social class between female husbands and their wives. At the third dimension (box 3) (explanation stage) of this model, the focus is on the more immediate situational, institutional

and societal contexts as they also shape discourse practices (Fairclough, 2001).

### Research Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive research design where the findings were described to investigate the use of language and the speech patterns of the *Maweto* couples as they socially interact. The study was carried out in three sub-locations (Katangi, Ikombe and Kyua) in Yatta sub-county in Machakos County, Kenya. The locations were selected using purposive sampling technique because it was identified by the researcher to be among the places where many *Maweto* marriages have been witnessed in recent times.

The researcher tape recorded six Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) for the *Maweto* couples and also kept field notes for the observed data. FGDs were used since they are more open ended and the researcher has limited chances of manipulating the participants contribution as may be witnessed in a one to one interview (Ndambuki, 2014). The data was coded into various themes so as to generate the required qualitative data. CDA approach by Fairclough was used to analyse the data qualitatively where the 'text' was applied to the three discourse processes as already discussed. Descriptive statistics was used where percentages and frequencies were determined.

The target population of the study consisted of *Maweto* couples. Participants were selected using the purposive sampling technique. This method was useful because the researcher was able to identify the *Maweto* couples who were the participants of this study. There were six focus groups; three for the FHs and three for the wives. Seven FHs and seven wives from each of the three sampled locations were put in different FGDs. All the participants thus totalled 42. The participants were aged between 18 to 100 years. Notes taken to capture this data included exact quotes where possible, records of what was observed and journal notes that the researcher kept on a daily basis (Barbara, 2005).

In the description stage, the researcher analysed the vocabulary, modality and modes of sentences in *Maweto* couples' discourse. Emphasis was on what expressive and relational values they have. Focus was on the modality in the texts. This level also dealt with the presentation of content on 'how it was said'; that is, the language used and how it represented the relationship between the couples. In this stage, focus was on modals that are epistemic (expressive) and those that are deontic (relational).

In the Interpretation stage, the analysis covers various aspects of processes of text production and text consumption. It is the dimension that provides a link between the text (linguistic features) and the social cultural conditions that shape it. The focus of this dimension in this research is on how different discourse patterns are mixed in the normative or creative ways and get articulated together in ways that portray the distinctive social class between female husbands and their wives.

Lastly, in the explanation stage of this model, the focus is on the more immediate situational, institutional and societal contexts. These contexts shape the discourse practices which in turn influence the text. Fairclough (2001) argues that the text influences the socio-cultural practice by sustaining or changing them. This view is important for this study whose core objective was on how social contexts (female husband's male role) influence the way she uses language. This is the gap this study tried to fill that has not been covered by the available studies on language use. The social cultural conditions of *Maweto* marriages are outlined in the background of the study which provided the situational and the inter-textual context in which the analysis was done. The female husband's male role was analysed as part of the social context which influences the way she uses language as she socially interacts with the wife.

The FGDs were analysed at collective level where shared undertakings and common

views are shared (Flick, 2011). The recorded data from the FGDs and the field notes were first transcribed and translated for analysis. It was then grouped into various themes as per the set objectives. A textual analysis and the CDA tenets were then applied to the data for a critical analysis of the data. Finally, the research used descriptions and percentages to quantify the data for presentation.

## Results and Discussion

The research first categorized the participants in relation with their age, as age has been analysed by some linguists (Holmes, 2001) as a factor that determines language use.

### *Coding of FGDS*

In the discussion of findings, numbers ‘1’ to ‘7’ refer to individual speakers in each focus group discussion in the following order:

**K-** Katangi location

**I-**Ikombe location

**KY-** Kyua location

Number + Figure + FH/W

Speaker + Location + Gender, for example;

1 + K + FH

The following is an illustration based on the coding above that takes care of locating a respondent in the study in the course of analysis and discussion.

**IKFH:** This is a respondent who is a member of Focus Group Discussion one, comes from Katangi sub- location (K) and is a female husband (FH).

The discussion starts by an analysis of the biographic features of the participants for this study. From table one, the findings show that most female husbands are elderly (between 80 and 100 years), while their wives are younger (below 50 years). Some of these female husbands are still married to their husbands, some are widowed while others have divorced and have large tracts of land but are either barren or have given birth to daughters only. Traditionally, in strict patriarchal societies, daughters do not continue the family lineage and therefore these female husbands marry wives (*Maweto*) who can get a son for their family lineage.

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

Total	percentages	Total	Years	Participants
	85.71%	18	80-100	Female Husbands
	9.53%	2	60-79	
100%	4.76%	1	50-59	
	80.95%	17	40-49	<i>Maweto</i> (Wives)
	4.76%	1	30-39	
	4.76%	1	20-29	
100%	9.53%	2	15-19	

Source: Focus Groups Discussions and Authors’ Field Notes (2017)

The analysis of the observed data showed that economic factors contribute to women engaging in *Maweto* marriages for financial security. Most of the *Maweto* stated that they got into such marriage arrangements because the FH had a large tract of land thus they were assured that they would not starve. Farming is an economic activity among the Akamba, thus most *Maweto* accepted to settle for such marriages. The FHs on the other hand marry the *Iweto* because they themselves are either barren or had given birth to daughters only who got married

and could not inherit the family lineage. They thus married to have male children for continuation of the family lineage.

The study also found out that the women who were main candidates for *Maweto* are single mothers, *mwinzyoka* (divorcees) and those from extremely poor backgrounds and with forms of deformity and handicap. The analysis focused much on how these couples use language to socially interact. The findings showed that the *Iweto* could not interrupt the FH as she spoke since interruption was treated as disrespect. This is because she considered the FH as her *Mwaitu* (mother), *muume* (husband) and *susu* (grandmother) to her children. These are respected positions among the Akamba. The FH refers to her wife as her *mukaa mwana* (daughter-in-law) and thus equates her to her child. The *Iweto* on the other hand treats the FH with much respect, the way many wives do to their husbands in a monogamous marriage among the Akamba of Yatta.

Owing to her position, the FH is not supposed to cook, graze, fetch water or firewood or even milk the cows as these are duties designated for the 'women' among the Akamba. The FH acts as a 'man' as she socio-culturally occupied a man's role. The findings showed that this male role influence her choice of words in that she widely uses modal auxiliaries that express an obligation and modes of sentences that command and impose her will on her wife.

### ***Use of Modes of Sentences and Social Positioning of Interlocutors***

The findings revealed that most FHs use commands, a mode of sentence that positions the female husband and the wife differently. Fairclough (2001) states that modes of sentences used normally position the subjects differently; subject position of a speaker is that of the giver (of information) and the addressee's position is that of the receiver. In imperatives, the speaker or the writer is in a position of asking something of the addressee (action on the latter's part) while the addressee is ideally a complement actor. The findings of the study showed that most female husbands use commands on the wife as opposed to a declarative mode of a sentence. This is done strategically to coerce the wife into performing an act.

From the findings, it also shows that there are systematic asymmetries in the distribution of modes between these participants in terms of participant relations such that the FH husband is in a position to command and ask. Generally, this is the position of power (Fairclough, 2001). The wife on the other hand occupies the position of receiving the instructions and commands from her husband. Coulthard (1985) gives the features of the mode of sentence that can be called a command. He states that such a sentence must contain one of the modal verbs '*can, could, will or would*'. The subject of the clause is also the addressee and the predicate describes an action which is physically possible at the time of utterance. For instance, in the texts below (excerpt one), the utterances are commands as uttered by various female husbands and are analysed as follows.

#### **Excerpt 1**

3KYFH: Nutonya kuetea mueni uu kivila vaa,na kikombe kya kyai.

2IFH: Amba kutwaa ngombe isu sya mwene syi ngulu.

1KFH: Mbithe, nutonya kungenga Leah kivila vau nyumba.

#### **Translations**

3KYFH: Can you bring a chair and a cup of tea for this visitor, Mary.

2IFH: First take those bulls to the owner. They are very aggressive.

IKFH: Mbithe, can you give Leah (researcher) seat from that house?

These are texts derived from various female husbands in different Focus Groups. These excerpts can be analysed as commands by female husbands directed to the wives as they have qualities of commands.

The first respondent, 3KYFH, uses a command, ‘*Can you bring a chair and a cup of tea for this visitor, Mary.*’ First, there is use of modal verb ‘can’. Also, the subject of the sentence ‘you’ and the addressee ‘Mary’ are one and the same person. Lastly, the action in the sentence is possible as the ‘chairs’ were in the house and the visitor (the researcher) was in the compound. The wife who receives this command is Mbithe. She had to obey and offer the researcher a seat. The same can also be said of speaker 2IFH who commands the wife to take the bulls to the owner. The findings therefore showed that although not in all cases, commands were used by female husband mostly and only rarely by the wives. This could possibly be explained by the different social positions that the couples occupy in their marriage set up.

### ***Differential Use of Modality by Maweto Couples***

*Maweto* couples employ the use of modality as the couples socially interact. This use of modality is however contrasted in that while the FHs richly use modals of obligation, the wives use modals of permission and desirability and rarely do they use modals of obligation.

Table two gives a summary of modality as used by *Maweto* couples. It is observed that modal auxiliaries were frequently used by *Maweto* couples as they socially interact.

**Table 2: Deontic Modals by Sub-categories**

<b>Modal</b>	<b>FHs</b>	<b><i>Maweto(wives)</i></b>
Desirability ( <i>sya ngenda</i> )	96	18
Obligation ( <i>sya lasima</i> )	124	12
Permission ( <i>sya kwitikilya</i> )	36	48
<b>Total</b>	<b>256</b>	<b>78</b>

Source: Focus Groups Discussions and Authors’ Field Notes (2017)

The frequency rates for all modals used were determined and then broadly divided into three major divisions; modals of desirability, modals of obligation, and modals of permission as shown above. These are analysed in the next sections.

### ***Modals of Desirability***

Desirability is associated with modals ‘should’ and ‘would’. The texts were derived from the guide question; How does the FH address her wife when she requires her to do her chores?

**Table 3: Frequency Counts of Modals of Desirability**

<b>Modals of desirability</b>	<b>FH</b>	<b><i>Maweto(wives)</i></b>
Should ( <i>No muvaka</i> )	72	12
Would ( <i>niwailite</i> )	24	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>18</b>

Source: Focus Group Discussions and Authors’ Field Notes (2017)

Table three shows that although both couples employ the use of modal verbs ‘should’ and

'would', FHs use these modal auxiliaries more commonly than their wives used them. This shows that desirability is expressed more widely by the FHs than the wives as seen for instance in excerpt two.

### Excerpt 2

1KFH: Nnimwiia ni eke undu ula namutavya na ona ethiwa  
ndekwenda no ukuwika.  
2IFH: No movaka akeka undu namwia.  
3KYFH: Niawilite kumiw'a nundu ninyie inyia.

### Translations

1KFH: I would tell her what to do and even if she doesn't  
want, I insist until she does it.  
2IFH: she should always do what I tell her to do.  
3KYFH: She should listen to me because I am her mother.

The texts in this excerpt is a response that was given by one of the female husbands in Focus Group Discussion one. The response has two parts as can be seen as it is separated by a comma, where the first part is more of a request '*I would*' but the second part brings the idea that though it was meant to be a request, the female husband has some authority to insist until the wife has no option but to oblige. The wife would then act as per the demands of her husband. From the excerpt, we can also see that it is the FH who instructs the wife on what to do and not vice versa. It can be argued that the FH is in a more dominating position and has the 'right' to make demands on the wife. Janks (2010) argues that power is oppressive; social relations invest members of dominant groups with power over others whom they subordinate, thus constructing a world of 'Top dogs' who in this case is the FH whereas the wife belongs to the 'underdogs'.

### Modals of Obligation

From the data, the modals of obligation that were mostly used by the FHs are '*must*' and '*have*'. The female husbands employ use of strong modality as their assumed socio-cultural male roles raises their social status and places them in a powerful position as compared to their wives. Baker (2006: 160) argues that a strong presence or absence of certain modal verbs is an indication of power relations and status; relatively powerful groups seem to be paired with modal verbs that give them more freedom and choice, whereas more controlling modal verbs are used with less powerful groups. Table 4 summarizes the modals of obligation.

**Table 4: Frequency Count of Modals of Obligation in the Texts**

Modal	FH	Maweto(Wives)
Must ( <i>lasima</i> )	100	5
Have ( <i>niwailite</i> )	24	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>12</b>

Source: Focus Group Discussion and Authors' Analysis (2017)

If the figures for the FHs and for the wives are compared, it clearly shows that there are different overall frequencies for the modals used. From the findings, it is clear that FH use modal verbs 'have' and 'must' more frequently than the wives. These two modals; 'have' and 'must' are more commonly used by the FHs than by their wives. The use of strong modality conveys a force of authority and toughness of the speaker. The FHs speaks in bare statements which

express modality of obligation. However, it can be observed (from table 4 above) that the FHs employ heavy use of ‘must’ more than the wives. Toughness on the part of the FH is to construct herself as being personally committed to the family. This is attributed to the fact that she heads the family since socioculturally, she occupies the role of a male in the family.

‘Must’ is also used frequently by the female husband to reflect on her attitude as her male role elevates her to a more powerful position than the wife. The female husband thus uses ‘must’ to show her authority over her wife. The wife, however, seldom uses the modals of obligation as she socio-culturally has psychologically accepted her role and position as a subordinate group. Excerpt 3 supports this argument.

**Excerpt 3**

1KFH: No lasima ngatumia ndeto syina ukumu yila ngumwiyaiya  
 2IFH: Ndaiya no ginya anenge oundu musyai unengawe ni mwana

**Translations**

1KFH: It is a must I use authoritative words on her’  
 2IFH: As for respect, she has to give me just the same way a child does to her parents.

The respondents in excerpt 3 are FHs who also serve as the heads of their families. They use modals of obligation ‘must’ in their discourse. **1KFH** explained in detail that she had married her wife under all the requirements and customary demands of *Maweto* marriage. The female husband feels that her male role is justified by the customs and so she has a right to be authoritative to ‘her’ wife. This authority is seen in the choice of words like *must* and *has to* that she chooses to use. In these texts, **1KFH** uses modal auxiliary *must* when addressing the wife and continues to insist that she has an obligation to use authoritative words on the wife. Here, the image given to the wife by the FH is that of submission to her husband. Going against the wish and demands of the FH on the part of wives is treated as disrespect.

**Modals of Permission**

The findings indicate that *Maweto* couples also use modals that express permission any time, especially when either of them requires a favour or to make a request to the other.

**Table 5: Frequency Counts of Modals of Permission**

Modals	FHs	Wives ( <i>Maweto</i> )
Can ( <i>nivatonyeka</i> )	20	40
Could ( <i>ninitonya</i> )	16	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>48</b>

Source: Focus Group Discussions and Authors’ Field Notes (2017)

Unlike the wide use of modal verbs of obligation and desirability by the FHs, the statistics on table 5 point out to an interesting discovery that modal verbs that express permission; ‘can’ and ‘could’ are widely used by the wives in *Maweto* marriages. The wife is placed as a less powerful participant who is under the control of the FH. This explains why she uses such modals which can be said to be controlling and weaker modality that are mostly used by less powerful groups (Baker, 2006). It is the wives who mostly employ modals of permission *can* and *could* and only too rarely from the FH. This is as illustrated in extract four that follows. She is from focus group five which comprised of *Maweto* from Ikombe sub-location. She is

speaker number one (5I1).

#### Excerpt 4

- 5I1: Namukulitye kana niinitonya kuthukuma na anbitikilya nitesae maiu.'
- 2IFH: Anangulitye kana no athi kumantha wia nakwa nalea nundu ndesa kundia vaa na syana isu ni nini.
- 6KYI: Yila twakwatwa ni thina tusuaniaa kana ve kaundu twika

#### Translations

- 5I1: I requested her if she can allow me to work and she agreed that I can begin a grocery business where I could sell bananas.'
- 2IFH: She had requested me if she can go to look for some job but I declined to permit her because she cannot leave me here with those children-they are still very young.
- 6KYI: When we have an issue, we consult each other to see if we can sell a goat and help ourselves out.

The first respondent (5I1) in the above text is wife (an *Iweto*) from Ikombe location. She had requested her husband to allow her engage in any activity that could earn the family money in order to be able to keep their children in school. By then, her female husband was elderly and always sickly so the wife took the responsibility of being the bread winner. The excerpt points out on how she requested for such permission from her husband. It can be seen from the excerpt that she uses modal auxiliary 'can' twice and 'could' is used once. Her request was granted and true to her wish, the female husband allowed her to start a green grocer's kiosk where she could sell fruits like bananas. This strategy of using polite words and employing the use of modals 'can' and 'could' was seen to be more common among the wives than the FHs at a frequency rate of 48 and 36 respectively.

#### Conclusion

From the findings of the current study, it was concluded that FHs use modal verbs and modes of grammatical constructions to impose their will on their wives. They occupy a higher social status than their wives and are much respected by these wives. The wives do not interrupt the FHs when they speak. FHs give orders, instructions and commands to their wives and the wives' obligation is to comply. Further, modals are deployed in the *Maweto* marriage discourse to indicate persuasion, possibility and personal commitment and one's submissiveness. FHs often use modals to reinforce their individual socio-cultural male roles, position and the quest to be respected. A critical discourse analysis of the current study shows asymmetrical relationships of dominance and subordination where the FH uses language to impose her will on the wife, has the right to command, give orders and instructions to the wife who has the obligation to comply.

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## **No Thank You: How and Why Street Families Sometimes Decline Offers - the Case of Isiolo Township, Kenya**

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### **Abstract**

*The problem of street families is a perennial one in urban centres globally. Street persons, such as those in Isiolo Township in Kenya, request for offers expecting donors to comply or not to comply; in return, donors expect street persons to accept the offers when given. However, street persons sometimes decline offers. This constitutes refusal of offers. Refusals are complex and finely organised conversational interactions and are not appropriately summarised by the advice to 'just say no'. Many donors take this for granted. This paper interrogates reasons for street persons in Kenya sometimes rejecting offers. The Discourse-Historical Approach by Ruth Wodak and Pollyanna Principle by Geoffrey Leech provided the theoretical framework for the study. The data collection instruments were four fold; audio-recording of naturally-occurring speech, participant observation, ethnographic interviews, and note-taking. The study used twelve respondents that were sampled through non-probability purposive homogenous sampling. The analytical dimensions of Discourse-Historical Approach were used in the data analysis. According to the study, both the society, and the street persons contribute to the rejection of offers by street persons.*

Keywords: Discourse historical approach, offers, pollyanna principle, rejection, street persons.

### **Introduction**

This paper is part of a wider research that was carried out in Isiolo Township of Kenya from September to December, 2012. The researchers sampled twelve respondents. Typically, street persons request for and accept what they are offered using utterances that are too polite, even 'appallingly saccharine' (Thomas 1995: 166). However, they occasionally decline what they are offered, yet it is expected that being desperate, they will not reject such offers. In this paper, the linguistic strategies used by street persons to reject offers, as well as the reasons for doing so were described and interrogated.

This paper used the Discourse Historical Approach (DHA) by Ruth Wodak (Wodak & Meyer, 2001) that was augmented by the Pollyanna Principle (Leech, 1983) which is one of the Politeness Principles. According to DHA, each speech event has a historical, ideological, as well as a power dimension. Speech events in this study were analysed from the perspective of these three content dimensions. The focal point of the approach is the field of politics. In this case, the focus is 'the politics of street persons' which includes reasons why street persons reject offers. DHA facilitates a 'multi-theoretical and multi-methodical, critical and self-reflective' approach. However, since DHA could not suffice in describing the discourse patterns of rejecting offers amongst street persons, the Pollyanna principle was used to complement it, bearing in mind that typically, street persons use polite utterances when soliciting offers.

Thomas (1995) posits that Pollyanna was the eponymous heroine of Eleanor H. Porters 1913 novel, an appallingly saccharine (unpleasantly over polite) child, who always looked on the bright side of life. The Pollyanna Principle is premised on felicitous optimism within the language used by speakers. There are two levels of the principle; there is the 'genuine' and the merely surface-level observation of it (Thomas, 1995:181). This study expected to identify both although it focused on the genuine level.

In this study, those who actually gave offers to street persons were referred to as ‘Oprahs’. In the United States of America, Oprah Winfrey is an American media proprietor, talk show host, actress, producer and philanthropist. Despite all these, she is considered as one of the most philanthropic Americans. In the study, she was used as the epitome of philanthropy. There have been isolated cases of street persons flouting the Pollyanna Principle by requesting for much more than that which ‘Oprahs’ were prepared to give (Thomas, 1995:167). Thomas observes that the principle has been rarely applied. She terms it as ‘somewhat idiosyncratic’ (Thomas, 1995:160). She further asserts ‘...although since it has taken me so many years to find these few examples, we must assume that the Pollyanna Principle is not widely observed by individual speakers’ (Thomas, 1995: 166). This was a matter of concern for this study, which found no work from Kenya that tried to approach street persons from either a sociolinguistic perspective or from a discourse analysis point of view. This study may thus be a forerunner in this direction in the Kenyan context where ‘special’ respondents, among them street persons in Isiolo Township of Kenya were investigated

### **A Biography of the ‘Special’ Respondents in Isiolo Township**

Twelve respondents were used in this study. Pseudonyms have been used to identify each one of them. They included **Abu** and his wife **Dabu**, as well as **Subira**, **Mzee**, **M’Murume**, **Sulubu**, **Ekidor**, **Shume**, **Kari**, **Intal**, **Sura** and **Gurba**. The respondents represented both genders as well as the four age brackets; namely, children, youth, the middle-aged and the old. **M’Murume** was the gate-keeper. He served as the direct link between the researcher and each of the other street persons. **M’Murume** no longer slept in the streets. He had rented a house in the neighbourhood although he maintained contact with the street persons. Apart from these twelve respondents, there was also **Volunteer**. **Volunteer** was not a resident of Isiolo Township, but lived in Nanyuki Township where he was a volunteer teacher among street persons. **Volunteer** spent his childhood in Nanyuki Township. He operated an ‘open air’ school for street persons. He provided most of the background information to this research. The sample of respondents revealed that street persons were from only three speech communities; namely, Borana, Meru and Turkana with those from the Turkana speech community being the majority. According to one of the respondents, the Turkana were the majority because their socio-cultural organisation encouraged soliciting offers.

The sub culture of street persons is a universal phenomenon (Rogers, 1990: 23). In Asia, for instance, there are six hundred thousand street persons in the streets of Calcutta in India; in Europe, there are over a hundred thousand homeless people in the United Kingdom and they are also found in the slums of such cities as Paris (van Genugten & Perez Bustillo, 2001: 53), as well as streets of German cities; in South America, street persons are found in cities like Mexico and in Rosinha, the largest slum in Rio de Janeiro, as well as under the bridges in Sao Paulo, Brazil. The United States of America has a million homeless people (Rogers, 1990: 23). Street persons are also found in other parts of Africa. For example, in Cairo in Egypt, one million people live in cemeteries (Rogers, 1990).

Mbogua and Ngari (1995: 1) explain that in Kenya, the phenomenon dates to the late colonial period. However, the begging culture was institutionalised in 1992. Street persons, who number about 300,000, are found in almost all urban centres in Kenya. These include Nairobi and Isiolo Township in Isiolo County, where the study was conducted. In Nairobi, street persons were first found in the 1950s.

## **Discourse as a Social Action**

In looking at discourse as social action, this paper looks at three issues: doing refusals, declining offers and reasons for declining offers. In urban centres in Kenya, street persons range from newborn babies to the aged, who are both female and male (Savirimuthu, 1996). One of the discourses used by street persons during 'begging' is that of rejecting offers. Blommaert (2005) points out that language is always produced by someone else at a particular time and place with a purpose. Cameron (2001: 7) observes that this may involve linguistic as well as non-linguistic forms. Titscher, Meyer, Wodak & Vetter (2000: 27) further say that 'socio-culturally acquired values and norms, as well as psychic predispositions, are in a changing relationship with the process-governed social production of discourse'. This is noted by Baker (2006: 4) who observes that discourses are constantly changing. Wardhaugh (1986: 374) notes that 'Each language encapsulates the world view of its speaker - how they think, what they value, what they believe in, how they classify the world around them, how they order their lives'. In the rest of this paper, we will look at how street persons do refusals, the patterns they use in declining offers as well as their reasons for declining offers.

## **Street persons Doing Refusals**

It is common for people to experience difficulty in declining offers, at whatever age, and across a wide variety of situations (Thomas, 1995:170). The culturally normative ways of doing refusals constitute 'refusal skills' (Thomas, 1995:167) which include saying 'no'. Saying no 'nicely' has always been a key question of etiquette (Thomas, 1995: 170). However, there are other ways of doing refusals apart from using the word 'no'. These are in both verbal and non-verbal forms. With regard to the verbal form, for instance, people raise excuses and justifications to explain their refusals (Thomas, 1995: 171). Refusals are difficult and embarrassing. They include contradictions and ambiguities. This is because talk involves more than a transparent report of experience (Thomas, 1995: 167,169). It is doing interactive business among interlocutors (Thomas, 1995: 168).

Thomas (1995: 172) explains that the verbal refusal skills in declining offers comprise micro-level and macro-level features. The discussants rely upon 'careful attention to small details of talk' such as short pauses, hesitations, false-starts, and self-corrections. Silence could be used in some cases. There are also prefaces or 'pragmatic particles' (Holmes, 2001: 399). These are forms which typically occur in informal speech such as 'uh, well, you see, you know, anyway, of course, I think' (Holmes, 2001: 399). Their exact function is difficult to define since they vary with context. They have been described by some as 'fillers' since they give the speaker planning time in speech; 'hedges' when they soften the force of a statement; and 'boosters' when they have an emphatic function.

There are other refusal skills. Thomas (1995: 172) states that these include palliatives and use of accounts. Palliatives take three forms; namely, appreciations, apologies, and token agreements which serve to alleviate the pain caused by the refusal; compliments; refusal accompaniments. The accompaniments could be a delayed acceptance or the offer of an alternative. At other times, refusals could be done through giving accounts in the form of explanations, justifications or excuses for why the offer is not being accepted. It is common for people to present accounts which suggest that the person declining the offer is unable rather than unwilling. The advantage of this account is that it has a 'no blame' quality, which avoids the implication that the offer is unattractive or unwanted. It is also common for refusals to be qualified or mitigated (Thomas, 1995).

### Discourse Patterns of Declining Offers

Some street persons sometimes reject offers. They use indirect forms. According to Thomas (1995:119), indirectness is a linguistic strategy. The ability to get one's demands met without expressing them directly can be a sign of power rather than of the lack of it. For example, a respondent, Mzee in the study, requested for 'five shillings'; the donor gave him the five shillings. Surprisingly, Mzee had initially indirectly rejected the offer as indicated in the following example.

#### Example 1

**Mzee:** Sir, may I have five shillings with which to buy tea?  
**Researcher** {He extends his palm to Mzee; on the palm, he had a five shillings coin}  
 That is all I can afford.  
**Mzee:** Sir, assist me with ten shillings with which to buy a glass of tea...

In this speech event in example one, Mzee declines the offer very indirectly. He introduces the request through the use of the word 'sir', a form of honorific meant to cajole the donor. However, when dissatisfied, he cushions the decline through the same skill. Superficially, his second utterance is a counter-request. However, this is a weak or 'token agreement', a polite expression of dissatisfaction; saying 'yes' but meaning no. He then goes further to use an account explaining the 'good use' he expected to put the extra five shillings to. Apparently, he was politely admonishing the donor for his ignorance: five shillings was inadequate to buy tea.

There are also non-verbal skills of declining offers. These are in the form of paralinguistic features and the use of silence. In this case, the street person declines the offer while maintaining eye contact and using a firm tone. Thomas (1995: 179) argues that one of the most potent indicators of refusal is a delay in responding; 'silence offered immediately after an offer may be taken as displaying that it is possibly going to be rejected'. When people issue offers and are met with brief silences, they reformulate or elaborate on the original offer so as to make an acceptance more likely. The very fact that these subsequent versions are produced demonstrates that the initial silence was heard as heralding a refusal.

### Reasons for Street Persons Sometimes Rejecting Offers

As already discussed, sometimes street persons reject offers. The society, to a great extent, blames street persons for their 'survivor-hood'. However, this should not be the case. Millner (1999: 26) warns, 'what is got by begging costs dear'. Giving is not an end in itself. The attitude of the recipient and that of the donor matters. In most cases, reasons for the rejection of offers by donors are attitudinal. In this study, both actual and probable reasons for sometimes rejecting offers amongst street persons were analysed and interpreted. **M'Murume** attests to this in the following example.

#### Example 2

**M'Murume:** But there are situations that can make you turn down an offer...

**Volunteer** concurs with **M'Murume** as illustrated in example three.

**Example 3**

- Researcher:** Is it possible for the street child to reject something pleasant offered to them?
- Volunteer:** I think it is possible...
- Volunteer:** It is possible...I am telling you ...It is possible...

The reasons for the rejection of offers, which are discussed in the next sections are; donor apathy, donor prejudice, donor ignorance, recipient prejudice, recipient paradox, stigmatisation of the recipient, and misunderstandings between the recipient and the donor.

***Donor Apathy***

Donor apathy towards the plight of street persons contributes much towards the prejudice of donors against street persons. Ideologically, a materially well-endowed donor is unlikely to be apathetic towards street persons. However, this was not the case. The background to **Volunteer's** paths towards empathy for street persons attests to this. He '...developed an urge to touch needy lives' though not well-to-do materially. In this way, he demonstrated that what the world requires for a paradigm shift in the lives of street persons is a genuine philanthropist. Most donors are ignorant and dismissive of the real needs of street persons. Some even exploit the plight of street persons.

**Example 4**

- Volunteer:** I have realised that one cannot beat love.
- Researcher:** What of clothing? Is it not a primary need among street persons?
- Volunteer:** Clothes are nothing to these children.
- Volunteer:** The street person has nowhere to keep extra clothes. They will throw away the clothes they have been wearing, in order to put on the new attire. In this way, they will be littering their immediate environment.
- Researcher:** What of the money that they are offered?
- Volunteer:** Anyone can be corrupted by money.
- Volunteer:** Therefore, offering them money is no solution.

According to **Volunteer** (see example 4), giving street persons hand-outs is not a solution. The same position was adopted by the Isiolo County stakeholders during the Vision 2030 Mid-term Plan (MTP) consultative forum held on 6<sup>th</sup> December, 2012. There are some donors who believe that mere physical relocation of street persons, especially street children to institutions such as homes would be appreciated by the recipients. The institutions end up being 'groups of homes for the 'relocatees'; the relocatees are merely housed and are rarely 'homed'. The worst case scenario involves the 'housing' of the street evictees in special schools. As much as possible, these evictees should be integrated into the society. This is the position taken by **Volunteer** in example five below.

**Example 5**

- Volunteer:** This is the reason-nobody really empathises with the street child. The child is neither in need of food, clothing nor shelter, primarily.

**Volunteer:** The child requires what we mentioned earlier: love, hope and faith.

In example six, **Volunteer** is even more explicit with regard to donor apathy.

### Example 6

**Volunteer:** Even street families need empathy recognition acceptance yet donors are unwilling to give them these. Donors sideline them in matters related to the society.

**Volunteer:** They can tell donors not to regard them as normal people. Consequently, they prefer secluding themselves and moving far away from 'the society'. No wonder, many street families live within the sewage plant.

Donors show street persons that they do not belong to the society; the street persons react by staying away from the so-said 'society'. This condition could be arrested if the society embraces phatic conversation as it interacts with street persons. Donors should mind the language they use whenever they interact with street persons. Maybe, had this language of love been used more, there would have been much more success in the empowerment of street persons. In example seven below, **Sulubu** further explains the importance of phatic conversation in speech events involving the requesting of offers by street persons. The use of phatic conversation in soliciting offers among street persons is important. Street persons approach strangers whom they expect to be donors. They need to establish rapport with them before they request for offers. Phatic conversation facilitates this.

### Example 7

**Sulubu:** Is there not anything little for us to eat?

Few donors live to realise and appreciate the full potential of street persons since they are scared of them, leaving little room for empathy. Donors are not fully to blame for their mistrust of street persons. This is because, not all street persons are genuine. There are 'professional beggars' in urban centres in Kenya including Isiolo Township. According to a former chief of Isiolo Central Location, the man named Professional is a 'professional beggar'. The former chief was one of the 'gate-keepers' as the researcher was 'getting into the field'.

The issue of 'professional beggars' notwithstanding, there are donors who, not only despise but actually hate street persons. The man named **Drunk** is one of them. His being inebriated might have contributed to his condescending attitude towards the street couple. However, he over-stepped his limits. **Dabu** was disgusted by **Drunk** and would hesitate to accept an offer from him. As far as some donors are concerned, street persons do not deserve any quality 'product', inanimate or animate. Concerning love-making, for instance, some donors feel street persons are incapable of either loving or being loved.

### *Donor Prejudice*

According to **Volunteer**, due to the condescending attitude some donors have towards street persons, street persons mistrust them. This is unfortunate bearing in mind that some donors mean well for street persons.



**Example 8**

**Researcher:** Are there possibilities of donors exploiting street persons to benefit and enrich themselves?

**Volunteer:** It has been happening; it is happening; it will be happening. There are donors who know that dealing with street persons would provide an avenue for their self-aggrandisement.

Some of the 'briefcase philanthropists' are responsible for the love-hate relationship between the street persons and the society. Whereas they regard street persons as a nuisance, they still cannot do without them. Some have been supportive, directly or indirectly, of efforts to rid streets of the street persons. Street persons would shun offers from donors who support their evictions from urban streets if they could identify them. This love-hate relationship is illustrated in example nine.

**Example 9**

**Researcher:** That street persons should be cleared from all streets. They should then be arrested.

**Volunteer:** After clearing them from the streets, where do you take them?

**Volunteer:** To start with, it is immoral and illegal. You would be depriving them their right to live in urban centres.

**Volunteer:** They have a constitutional right to dwell in urban areas.

**Volunteer:** Chasing them from urban areas and dumping them in a secluded area, far away from the Central Business District (CBD), is an exercise in futility. They are bound to return.

**Volunteer:** Yes! Their livelihood depends on the urban setting.

In Isiolo Township, street persons are attracted to the township due to a number of factors that include pull factors which are in the form of the opportunities that were created by the Vision 2030 flagship projects in Isiolo Township. In Isiolo County, the possibility of pull factors thus exists however remote this is. Once this happens, it would be difficult to reverse. However, even with this possibility, the use of such 'hard-power' approaches like forceful physical evictions are unjustified. In Isiolo Township, street persons have been arrested while their guardians and parents have been bonded. Street persons can tell the motives of the donor. Moreover, they have unique concrete criteria in selecting the donors to approach to request offers from. Contrary to conventional thinking, according to street persons, the mode of dressing of the donor is not directly proportional to the power of the donor to give; the best dressed donor need not always be the most empathetic. Volunteer explains this in example ten.

**Example 10**

**Volunteer:** Street persons can tell whether a donor is genuine or not. Due to the cruelty they have been

subjected to as they interact with a variety of donors, they almost stoned a white philanthropist and chased him away despite the fact that he used to buy them food even take them for trips. They realised he was ill-motivated. Even the very young street persons can tell a donor who has ill motives.

**Researcher:** They told me that they do it by assessing the demeanour and disposition of a donor.

**Researcher:** They do not even consider their mode of dressing.

**Researcher:** They use instinct and apply the Law of the Jungle. Those who are not street persons cannot do this.

Some donors take for granted the vulnerability of street persons and the background to the same. Volunteer captures this in example 11.

#### **Example 11**

**Volunteer:** Most grew up in Children's homes; others engaged in criminal activities, were arrested and jailed.

**Volunteer:** Some were released after attaining the age of thirty years and above. By then, they would have lost all contacts with their relatives.

Some donors condemn street persons for alleged laziness. **Sulubu** illustrates this in example 12.

#### **Example 12**

**Sulubu:** They remind you that if only you would be diligent, you would not need to solicit offers.

In addition to this, some donors assume that street persons are happy about their status as street persons. **Volunteer** captures this in example 13.

#### **Example 13**

**Volunteer:** The percentage of those who like their plight is negligible.

This ignorance is not just limited to donors. The majority of social workers among street persons are ignorant of 'the street jungle'. **Volunteer** explains this in example 14.

#### **Example 14**

**Volunteer:** I am telling you the truth. There is a lot of ground that is not covered. Those who are officially responsible for the street persons are ignorant of a lot concerning the latter. These social workers are not street-wise. Their street credibility is inadequate. For instance, few children's officers have first-hand experiences

with the street persons: few can dare visit their dwellings, such as the sewage sites; few care to learn their treasured traditions and mannerisms such as use of the clenched-fist greetings.

Street persons are unlikely to accept offers from such detached social workers that **Volunteer** describes in example fourteen. The attitude of donors towards street persons determines the speech events involving the two. This is from a power variable perspective. **Mzee** illustrates this in example 15.

#### Example 15

**Researcher:** Have you ever rejected an offer?  
**Mzee:** How can I steal others' property?  
**Researcher:** I mean, is there anybody who has ever given you something so spitefully that you rejected the offer?  
**Mzee** You see anything done spitefully is dishonourable.

Volunteer concurs with Mzee in example 16.

#### Example 16

**Volunteer:** The donor's attitude towards the street person matters. The street person can tell this attitude.  
**Volunteer:** That is the case...Street persons can tell the donor's attitude towards them. They can tell they are regarded as castaways; as non-existent things; the way lepers were regarded during Biblical times.  
**Volunteer:** We should not come into contact with them only when we need to use them for our selfish interests.  
**Volunteer:** This should not be the case. They would benefit more from our empathy than they would do from our giving them monetary offers.

Donors are ignorant of the fact that some street persons are able to raise as much as three hundred shillings a month to pay rent. **M'Murume** is such a street person; he had rented a house near 'Soko ya Mbuzi' (an open-air market for livestock sale) in Isiolo Township. This case illustrates that street persons are not necessarily lazy. Laziness is not synonymous with idling. The society has not empowered the street person enough in order for them to have something. Donors are ignorant of the utility value of street persons. Some of the items they collect could be useful. There are cases of donors displaying overt spite towards recipients. A recipient might find it difficult to co-operate with such donors. **Ekidor** clarifies this in example 17.

**Example 17**

**Ekidor:** We have cases where the donor demonstrates overt spite for the 'survivors'. For example, hoteliers might even give dirty food remains to street persons who 'hotel-lay' (way-lay donors just by the door of the hotels. In this way, the 'survivors' interfere with the accessibility of the hotels by the customers. Despite this, street persons take whatever food they are offered, go to their bases, and warm it.

**Volunteer** concurs with **Ekidor** in example 18.

**Example 18**

**Researcher:** We ignore street persons ...We disregard their existence...

***Donor Ignorance***

Some donors are ignorant of the economic potential, as well as the socio-cultural mettle and organisation of 'survivors'. Consequently, they make assumptions concerning street persons. For instance, the majority of donors will expect any street person to readily accept offers. Yet, this is not the case. In example 19, **Ekidor** provides an insider's portrayal of how the survivors are organised.

**Example 19**

**Researcher:** How are these groups run?

**Ekidor:** Starting with the bases, we have different bases for the different age-groups... We have adults and children among 'survivors'...We have drunkards and drug addicts as opposed to those who do not abuse drugs. There are some who roam at night. Some operate during day-time unlike the others who do not do so at night. Although they're still street persons' some have rented houses and are married unlike me.

***Recipient Prejudice***

The perception the majority of recipients have towards certain professions may lead to their rejecting offers given by members of the respective professions. A case in point relates to donors who belong to the disciplined forces as illustrated by **Shume** in example 20.

**Example 20**

**Researcher:** Why keep your distance from security agents?

**Shume:** They can arrest you especially when you solicit offers from them. Most of these are police officers.

Such a skewed attitude towards security agents is the odd not the norm amongst street persons; it is a matter of the ideology prevalent within a section of this speech community.

### ***Recipient Paradox***

Whereas donors are faced with the donor paradox whereby they are torn between giving since they are duty-bound, and not giving lest they spoil the recipients, or the recipient reject the offer, street persons also find themselves in a dilemma. Sometimes, recipients are offered that which they are not in need of at the time, yet are unable to request for substitutes. **Dabu** points this out in example 21.

#### **Example 21**

**Dabu:** They prefer buying us bread to giving us cash lest we buy glue to sniff.

In this example (21), the recipient initiates the speech event by requesting for the offer. However, the offer is undesirable to them.

There is a different kind of recipient paradox whereby the offer is unsolicited. In one speech event, an African lecturer had hosted a European for a month. At the end of this stay, the visitor 'collected the left over coins' and his clothing and gave them to the host as a way of expressing gratitude. The host was embarrassed. He advised his wife to politely decline the offer. It was clear that stereotyping was involved here; the European had the misconception that Africans were needy. There have been cases of African elites being embarrassed while travelling abroad when some Europeans offer them that which they have not solicited. Within the streets of Kenya, this is replicated. Some street persons request for offers from those they perceive to be 'able', yet there are other 'more desperate street persons who would solicit offers from them. The hosting lecturer however confessed that had the visitor offered 'a thousand US dollars and the best suit on earth', he would have accepted this. Therefore, the quality and quantity of the offer could explain why sometimes street persons reject offers.

### ***Stigmatisation of Street Persons***

'Survivors', at a certain point of their street life, feel alienated. They wish to have minimal interaction with some parameters of street life. These include soliciting offers. 'Survivors' start being ashamed of such practices as requesting for offers. In such a state, the street persons are likely to reject offers. This is illustrated by **M'Murume** in example 22.

#### **Example 22**

**Researcher:** At what age do they start being ashamed of requesting for offers? At what age do they start desiring to abandon 'survivor hood'?

**M' Murume:** You start shunning 'survivor hood' when you are about thirty or thirty five...At this age, when you solicit offers, donors challenge you thus 'Why do you not do something to earn a living? Why do you desire hand-outs?' Often, you reason with donors 'What am I expected to do when I am poor?...I have no one else to look up to, except you...you have assisted me with money...'

Moreover, according to **M'Murume**, street persons belonging to Group One are expected to graduate from the streets to establish their own families and/or seek wage-employment. Such a

street person would be uncomfortable to accept offers. As earlier indicated, street persons belong to different groups. Group One comprises those expected to graduate from the streets to establish their own families and/or seek wage-employment. Group One members would be uncomfortable to accept offers.

### ***Misunderstandings between Recipients and Donors***

Misunderstandings between donors and recipients can prevent the latter from accepting offers. This is according to the **Volunteer** as explained in example 23.

#### **Example 23**

**Volunteer:** But there are situations that can make you turn down an offer...

**Volunteer:** Definitely...if somebody with whom you have a misunderstanding offers you food, you cannot accept such food...

### **Conclusion**

From this study, it is noted that street persons sometimes decline offers using indirect means, which are both verbal and non-verbal. Concerning reasons street persons sometimes reject offers, they do this due to donor apathy, donor prejudice, donor ignorance, recipient prejudice, recipient paradox, stigmatization of street persons, and misunderstanding between the recipient and the donor. Thus, the recipient and the donor are responsible for street persons occasionally declining offers. The declining of offers by street persons, which in most cases is indirect in form, is a rare phenomenon although it exists. It is suggested that the society should take more interest in street persons. Although they appear 'faceless', the language they use in soliciting offers form discourse patterns which have linguistic significance.

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## Code Alternation in the News Media: Motivations for Its Use in Classic 105 Radio Station Morning Show Debate

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### Abstract

*Code Alternation was found to be a common practice among the morning show callers of classic 105 radio station in Kenya. The study sought to identify and describe the perceived personal motivations that prompted the callers of classic 105 to alternate codes despite it being a national radio. The study targeted classic 105 hosts and the listeners in Nakuru County, Kenya, which was chosen through convenience sampling because it is cosmopolitan. Classic 105 radio station was the focus because code alternation was found to be commonly used by callers to the station. The Markedness Model by Carol Myers Scotton was used as theory. The study used recorded data of the classic 105 morning show debate which took place for one month to produce 20 clips. Purposive sampling was done on all the recorded clips to sieve out those that did not bring out code switching from those that did. This finally resulted in the selection of five clips. Telephone interviews were conducted with the two hosts of the station. Six individual interviews were also conducted with the classic 105 listeners who were selected purposively from colleges in Nakuru County. Being a qualitative study which utilised the case study design, the data was analysed qualitatively using descriptions. The findings of the study indicated that the majority of the callers were bilingual hence they tended to switch from English to Kiswahili and also their mother tongue. It is hoped that this study will make significant contribution to the study of Applied Linguistics especially in the field of sociolinguistics by analyzing the aspects of society that lead to code alternation, as well as making a contribution to media discourse and studies.*

Keywords: Code alternation, markedness model, media discourse, talk show.

### Introduction

Sociolinguistics first adopted code switching as an object of study in the seminal work of Blom and Gumperz (1972) and Gumperz (1982). Studies have been done which indicate that the need for communication and companionship may be a strong reason for listening to talk shows in radios. According to Avery, Ellis and Glover (1978), individuals view talk radio as a source of information and as a channel to express themselves. Kenya is a multi-ethnic country with about forty four ethnic communities and most citizens have the command of at least two languages with quite a sizeable number also having knowledge of a third language. Due to this linguistic landscape, code alternation is therefore a very common practice in Kenya. In this paper, code alternation refers to both code switching and code mixing in this paper.

Talk radio has become very popular as individuals see it as both a source of information and a channel to express themselves. Radio is still considered to be the most prominent source of information in Africa (Myers-Scotton, 2008) reaching all parts of the population, with the largest audience, from the illiterate to academics. Morning talk shows are some of the most popular radio programmes in Kenya according to a study done in 2013 by Kenya Audience Research Foundation. Some of the topics of discussions in those radio stations arouse immense interest among their audiences hence their popularity and the reason why the study sought to look at the morning talk show in classic 105. Talk radio broadcasting, as an avenue for participation is a two-way stream in which audiences are active receivers of the messages; this study however focused on listeners who are college students and the hosts of the show.



According to Omollo (2015), Classic 105 FM's 'Maina and King'ang'i Morning Show Debate' has steadily gained popularity over the years. It is aired between six o'clock and ten o'clock on weekday mornings. Its two hosts Maina Kageni and Joseph King'ang'i alias Mwalimu provide entertainment to the audience who are mostly commuters stuck in morning traffic especially in Nairobi, by not only playing music but also providing a forum for participation in discussions on varying social issues. The topics for discussion are selected by the main host Maina Kageni, either from recent news headlines or issues he claims to have been proposed by friends or fans via short text messages, telephone calls or the social media such as Facebook and Twitter.

The study dealt with code alternation in Classic 105 radio station morning show callers by interviewing the two hosts and listeners of the show in Nakuru County. Code alternation is a common phenomenon experienced in the daily lives of people because most people command more than one language. Little had been done on code alternation with respect to talk shows yet this genre of media has in recent years gained popularity and prominence both on television and radio in Kenya and beyond. Code alternation has however become a source of concern especially when used on a national radio like Classic 105. This is because the station broadcasts in English and so when there is code alternation, some listeners may end up feeling isolated when the alternation is done in a language that they seemingly do not understand. It therefore becomes an issue of limiting communication when the hosts and callers of Classic 105 alternate codes hence sidelining members of the public who do not understand the code switched to. The study therefore sought to explore the use of alternated codes by the callers of classic 105 FM as well as interview the hosts of the programme to find out why they alternate codes despite it being a national radio.

### **The Code Switching and Code Mixing Phenomenon**

Code switching and code mixing are the two linguistic phenomena claimed to be the most prevalent and common modes of interaction among bilingual speakers. In a bilingual community, people often switch from one language to another in their daily conversations and the use of code switching often reflects the social or cultural identities of the speakers (Myers-Scotton, 1993). Code switching can be defined as, 'the use of two or more linguistic varieties in the same conversation or interaction' (Myers-Scotton & Ury, 1977). Gumperz (2008) defines code switching as juxtaposition within the same speech exchange of passages of speech belonging to two different grammar systems or sub systems.

In recent literature, there has been some variation in defining code switching in comparison to code mixing. Muysken refers to code switching as 'the rapid succession of several languages in a single speech event', however, code mixing refers to all cases where lexical items and grammatical features from two languages appear in one sentence (Muysken, 2000). Code mixing is the process of mixing of elements from two languages at the level of words or idiomatic expressions in one utterance, and code switching is the product of this mix. Scholars such as Gumperz (1982) and Poplack (1980) use different names for various types of code switching, as enumerated in the following examples which are from the classic 105 morning show debate, whereby it was evident that code switching is a common thing in radio stations especially the talk shows.

i **Inter sentential switching.** This occurs outside the sentence or the clause level (for instance, at sentence or clause boundaries). It is sometimes called 'extra sentential' switching.

For example, in kikuyu-English switching, one could say;

1a *Maina kãĩ wĩna ngõma?* How dare you support women on that?

1b Maina are you possessed? How dare you support women on that?

ii **Intra- sentential switching.** This occurs within a sentence or a clause. Example in kikuyu-English switching, one could say;

2a *Maina, dakwīra women are devils.*

2b Maina I am telling you women are devils.

iii. **Tag- switching.** This is the switching of either a tag phrase or a word or both from one language to another and is common in intra sentential switches. Example in kikuyu-English switching, one could say;

3a *Oció kurīngana na urīa arīa re, nongīnya nīwa Nyīrī, you know.*

3b From how that person has spoken, it's for sure, she is from Nyeri, you know.

iv. **Intra- word switching.** This occurs within a word itself, such as at morpheme boundary. Example in English- Kiswahili, one could say;

4a *I was disappointed to see his ka-house.*

4b (I was disappointed to see his small house.)

The above morpheme (ka) has a negative connotation to mean small.

Linguists across the globe have investigated the causes, functions, characteristics and effects of code-switching and code-mixing. This paper however investigates what prompts callers to alternate codes in a national radio. Myers-Scotton (1993) investigated what motivated Nairobi people to switch codes by interviewing mainly conductors in Public Service Vehicles (PSVs) and people in various domains. She found out that in Kenya, most speakers strive to use the language mostly associated with education and authority while speaking to their superiors. Karia (2014) investigated code switching in the Pentecostal sermon by interviewing the pastor and the congregation. Such investigations on the causes of the phenomena, according to Ansre (1971) and Bamgbose (1971) for instance, have revealed sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic factors. Such factors are bilingualism or language contact that results in lexical borrowings and mixture of English and vernacular expression in the speech of West African bilinguals.

Radio is one of the most effective media of communication especially in developing countries mainly because of its wide reach, its relative affordability and also due to the fact that information can be broad-cast quickly in many languages that the audience can understand (Mwakawago, 1986). In Kenya, there are many English, Swahili and local language stations. This means that almost all Kenyans can benefit from existing stations due to the diversity of languages offered. The change in patterns of contemporary radio programmes in Kenya is revealed in the advent of talk shows in Kenya, which opened up the space for Kenyan citizens to air their views and opinions about matters that concerned them as a nation. Radio has therefore become more interactive and is a community based media. In its efforts to find out the perceived motivations for code alternation in Classic 105 morning show debate, this study utilized the Markedness Model by Myers-Scotton (1993) which accounts for the social indexical motivation for code switching.

The Markedness Model is one of the more complete theories of code switching motivations. It posits that language users are rational and choose to speak a language that clearly marks their rights and obligations, relative to other speakers in the conversation and its setting (Myers-Scotton, 1993). When there is no clear, unmarked language choice, speakers practise code switching to explore possible language choices. The model holds that speakers use language choices to Index Rights and Obligations (RO) sets, and the abstract social codes in operation between participants in a given interaction. This study therefore additionally used the

Markedness Model because the callers and the host in the morning show alternated codes to mark their rights and obligations and to explore the possible language choices since they are bilingual.

### **Research Methodology**

The study which is qualitative in approach is a case study. This research design enabled the researcher to analyze the recorded data and give explanations on the same. The target population was college student listeners from Nakuru County and the two hosts of the Classic 105 morning breakfast show. Nakuru town in Nakuru County was chosen due to its cosmopolitan nature and ethnic diversity which reflects the multi-ethnic nature of Kenya. Classic 105 radio station was chosen using convenience sampling procedures (Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999) because it has a wide coverage in the country due to the controversial and contemporary topics it holds. The hosts were chosen because they are the ones that set the pace by alternating codes.

Twenty clips were recorded for one month (every day of the week from Monday to Friday). Purposive sampling was done on all the recorded clips to sieve out those that did not bring out code switching clearly from those that did. Five recorded clips were therefore selected, transcribed, translated and data which was subjected to thematic content analysis was further analysed with close reference to Myers Scotton's Markedness Model. Moreover, data was obtained by presenting the recorded radio clips to the college students who were thereafter interviewed to find out what motivations were there for code alternation. The transcription conventions used during the analysis of this work was adopted from Gail Jefferson works (Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson, 1974).

### **Results and Discussions**

The data revealed three types of code switching; namely, intra word, inter sentential and intra sentential code switching. In the process of expressing themselves in the classic 105 talk shows, code switching appeared to be a common practice. Code alternation was perceived positively because its advantages far outweighed the disadvantages. It made the debates lively and interesting and in the process, it made communication easier. The markedness model emphasizes that the speaker is a creative actor and that linguistic choices accomplish more than just the conveyance of referential meaning (Myers-Scotton, 1993). Myers-Scotton (1998) states that within the markedness model, code choices are intentional in that they are made to achieve specific social ends. In the rest of the paper, reasons for code alternation among classic 105 morning show debate callers are discussed.

The study found out the reasons for code alternation to be numerous. The reasons were divided into four themes which were then divided into various subcategories as follows: that code alternation acted as a communication strategy; that it signalled social and political capital; that it signalled feelings of the interlocutor; and that it was also used for quoting.

#### ***Code Alternation as a Communication Strategy***

Code switching was used to emphasize a certain word or a particular point in the conversation, by repeating it in a different code. Callers used code alternation as a communicative strategy to get their ideas across more effectively. From this reason, other subthemes which are discussed became evident; emphasis, substitution, introduction and concealment of certain topics, lack of equivalence, to ease tension and create humour and slips of tongue.

In order to make the contents understandable or clear, a switch was done, repeating the previous utterance in the other language.

**Text 1**

- M** So he widened his eyes and then?  
**Fc** Sorry  
**M** He *kondoad* (widened) his *machos* at you and then?

Maina Kageni (the radio host) in text one has repeated the word 'widen' with *kondoad* because the caller did not hear what the host had said. In that conversation, there is repetition for emphasis because after the word 'sorry', he switched to Kiswahili to repeat what he had said earlier. Gal (1979) also noted that code switching served to emphasize a point. She gave several examples how a switch at the end of an argument not only helped to end the interaction but also served to emphasize a point.

Callers often used code alternation to substitute a word in a language which was not known to the bilingual in the other language. Switches of this kind were used to fill in a lexical gap that arose due to momentary loss of words. The callers were sometimes not conversant with the English language and so they opted to alternate codes to avoid embarrassment if they tried to use English. The topic for discussion in text two was 'Why women cling and nag men when they get attracted to a man'.

**Text 2**

- Mc** And...I had noticed there was an issue with *eeh matatu*.  
(Public Service Vehicles)  
**M** *Eeh* (yes)  
**Mc** And she was *eeh* escorting her daughter to school  
**M** Yes

The caller in text two has actually used 'eeh' in an attempt to look for the substitution of the word '*matatu*'. When he could not recall, he just substituted the public vehicles with '*matatu*' to avoid time wastage in an ongoing discussion in radio. Trying to look for the word would have created time wastage and that is not allowed in a radio debate because your call can end up being disconnected by the host. Zentella (1985) also observed the same reason for code alternation. He claimed that people used code switching to hide fluency or memory problems in the second language (but this accounts for about only 10 percent of code switchers).

Lack of equivalence in a language also led to substitution which made the callers to alternate codes. Words, phrases and concepts are not always expressed in the same way or do not have their equivalents in the other language. Therefore, in order to convey the meaning of one's thought, code alternation was used. The callers did this in any language they felt would aid in their message delivery concerning the topic of discussion on why men did not like being questioned by their women.

**Text 3**

- Fc** *Hiyo ni dictatorship kabisa na anaishi maisha ya stone age. Huyo anafaa kuachanwa nayeye kabisa.* (That is dictatorship and he is Stone Age. Such a man deserves to be left alone.)  
**K** *Kusema ukweli ni kuwa dictator?* (Speaking the truth is being a dictator?)

**Fc** *Huyo ni dictator kabisa. Ebu uliza King'ang'i kama ako na bibi kuongea ukweli.* (That is a real dictator. You ask King'ang'i if he has a wife honestly speaking).

In the text three above, the caller seems to have been speaking in Kiswahili but shifted to English in some words due to lack of equivalent names for the words. Words like 'dictatorship' and 'Stone Age', lacked their equivalents in Kiswahili at that particular time and so the speaker had to alternate the code. Malik (1994) calls this phenomenon lack of equivalence; lack of facility. He claims that bilinguals and multilinguals often switch codes when they cannot find an appropriate expression or vocabulary item or when the language of conversation does not have the particular word needed to carry on the conversation smoothly. In the current study however, Kiswahili had equivalent words but due to constraints of radio talk shows, the speaker could not find the appropriate term.

Code alternation was commonly used to conceal messages in some topics. Classic 105 had been associated with controversy for a long time because of the topics they held. Most times, the show held debates on topics on current issues affecting families like infidelity. In such cases, matters on sex definitely arose and so the hosts and the callers alternated codes to conceal the taboo words since these would not augur well when used in a national radio. In text four, the topic for discussion was trust in marriages.

#### Text 4

**Mc** I was like, call that lady *na umuite Malaya* (and call her a prostitute). Call her *na umuite Malaya* (and call her a prostitute). *Akichukua tu simu umuite Malaya* (immediately she picks the call, call her a prostitute). And to her surprise, it was my mum. *Maina hawa wanawake hawaeleweki* (Maina these women are difficult to understand). Maina if I was to ask God anything, *ningemwambia anipatie* (I would request for a) user manual.

**M** *Ya wanawake?* (For women?)

**Mc** *Ya hii kitu aliniletea kwa nyumba inaitwa mwanamke* (for this thing he brought in my house called a woman). Because I don't understand these women. *Maina mwanamke ata afadhali ata ukiwa pale pale, umwambie niko pale pale, hatawai kubali lakini ukimwambia "niko hospitali niko mgonjwa", anakwambia "ata si ukufe".* (Maina this women it is better even when you are cheating on them and having sex, you say exactly that because they will never believe, but if you say you are in hospital, they will tell you to die!) So Maina, I don't know how much they pay you *na unasimama tu nao* (for you to be on their side).

Words like *pale pale* mean sex in this context. They are Swahili words meaning 'there there', but when used in this context, they serve as euphemisms to conceal the message. Instead of the caller openly talking about having sex, he conceals the message with less vulgar ones like *pale pale*. The preference of Kiswahili words *pale pale* in this particular topic was because the words in the

language were less vulgar and euphemistic. Mentioning sex on national radio would not have augured well with the public especially because it is culturally not acceptable in Kenya.

Code alternation served an important function in hedging (for instance, taboo suppression, de-intensification, or a vague ‘sort of’ expression). This aspect of language mixing or language switching is often deliberate and is by and large a conscious process (Bhatia & Ritchie, 2004). In this study, callers and hosts alternated codes to avoid words deemed unfit to be used in the public domain. Code alternation was therefore used for concealing of messages in the show.

Humour was a communication strategy employed mostly by the host Mwalimu King’ang’i to ease tension and attract a large audience in listening and participating in the debate. The hosts used code-switching to make the listeners relax, for instance, by using non English words that would inject humour in the debate. In text five, the topic for discussion was ‘how pregnancy news is received in marriages’. The caller could not figure out why her husband left her on learning that she was finally pregnant after spending a lot of money seeing gynaecologists trying to get a child. To inject humour, Mwalimu King’ang’i came in by insinuating that the man’s reaction was justified because the woman could not have said about dreams coming true as if it is a plot they had won in some posh place.

### Text 5

**Fc** He took off and his phone was off so I couldn’t find him. \*@@@

**K** *Ati* (that) your dreams have come true *nikama ameshinda* plot *Kisaju* (it is like he has won a plot in Kisaju)! \*@@@

**M** \*@@@ Okay, thank you.

\*@@@ signifies laughter.

In text five, Mwalimu King’ang’i injected humour by saying, ‘...*nikama ameshinda* plot *Kisaju*’. This statement was put lightly to inject humour in the discussion. Transcript extracts showed they made a deliberate effort to accommodate the sensibilities of the listeners by trying to ensure that the callers and listeners not only understood the message but also enjoyed the topic.

Slip of tongue as a result of memory lapses was a communication strategy to hide the areas in the show where participants had weaknesses. The caller would be speaking in English but end up saying a word or a couple of words in Kiswahili or mother tongue. These words said in a language other than English would be spoken almost accidentally since they were not required. It was understandable that lapses occurred in the callers’ speech since they were used to speaking Kiswahili and mother tongue in their daily lives and when they spoke English during the morning show debate, they would slip a Kiswahili word sometimes.

Malik (1994) referred to lapses as switches due to habitual experience. He stresses the fact that code switching often occurs in fixed phrases of greeting and parting, commands and requests, invitations, expressions of gratitude and discourse markers because they are normally said in a specific code. In text six, code alternation has been used due to a habitual experience of greetings. Despite the male caller saying ‘good morning’ to the host Maina, he still went ahead to say ‘*sasa Maina*’ because he had been accustomed to such greetings. Maina Kageni responded by saying ‘*poa sana*’ because that is the common response for the greeting.

**Text 6**

- Mc** Good morning?  
**M** Yes.  
**Mc** *Mwalimu?* (Teacher)  
**M** *Mwalimu ako hapa.* (The teacher is here).  
**Mc** *Sasa Maina.* (How are you Maina?)  
**M** *Poa sana.* (Very fine)

***Social and Political Capital***

In the Kenyan context, English language is associated with social mobility or prestige due to high social and political capital. Code alternation makes it clear the social background of a conversation participant. The learned callers mostly used English since it is the language associated with political capital and prestige. Social and political capital as a theme explained the reasons for code alternation, which were identified as; signalling education level, signalling social distance, and signalling social groups.

In the Classic 105 morning show debate, some callers alternated codes to show their educational prowess or how modern they were. Text seven from a radio clip on the discussion of 'how pregnancy news is received in marriage' explains the same.

**Text 7**

- M** He *kondoad* (widened) his machos at you and then?  
**Fc** I was shocked because I expected he would hug me, tell me this is amazing, that finally it has happened! Ei! But the reaction I got was so negative.  
**M** So, did he sleep in your bed that night?  
**Fc** Yeah he slept but eeh, everybody faced the other side.  
**M** *Asubuhi akaamka* (in the morning he woke up), packed his clothes and took off?  
**Fc** He took off and his phone was off so I couldn't find him. @@@

The caller in text seven maintained her conversation in English despite Maina shifting to Kiswahili. This maybe happened because the caller wanted to signal her knowledge in English and maybe also prove that she was learned and conversant with the English language. The observation was similar to that of Myers-Scotton (1972) which indicated that code switching was used to signal education and other forms of modernity.

The notion of social distance was closely related to solidarity, common identity, elevating one's own status or creating a distance. According to Harding and Riley (2003), callers were skilful in switching language as a marker of solidarity with the hosts; that is, using the change of language to reinforce the 'closeness' of the relationship. This was also observed by Myers-Scotton (1998) who posited that a speaker alternates between Matrix Language (ML) and Embedded Language (EL). The ML is the more active and more frequently used language, which restricts the use of the EL.

**Text 8**

- Mc** King' ang' i?  
**K** Yes

- Mc** *Ebu nipigie kayamba kwanza.* (Play the jiggle for me first)
- K** Pass kayamba (does it). *Hapo sasa.* (There you go)
- Mc** *Na uambie Maina anyamaze.* (And tell Maina to shut up)
- K** Baas (affirmative)
- Mc** Women are pretenders and professional liars.

The code alternation in text eight took place to isolate Maina from the discussion. This was because Maina Kageni seemed to be supporting women who did not trust their husbands, hence attracting the wrath of the caller. The caller therefore wanted to talk to only Mwalimu King'ang'i who seemed to be on his side. He even went ahead to tell Mwalimu King'ang'i to tell Maina Kageni to keep quiet. This was to create a social distance between him and Maina Kageni.

Code alternation was also used to signal common identity among callers and the hosts in the show. Callers could sometimes switch to Kikuyu or Kikamba when they wanted to identify with Maina Kageni or Mwalimu King'ang'i respectively. The female caller in text nine switched to Kikuyu to speak to Maina alone and isolate Mwalimu King'ang'i whose mother tongue is Kikamba. This was because Mwalimu King'ang'i seemed to be supporting the previous male caller who was saying men should not be questioned; this angered the caller who thereafter wanted to talk to Maina Kageni alone since they shared the same ideas on the topic.

### Text 9

- Fc** Can you imagine living with such a man? *Hataki kuulizwa maswali, hataki kujibu maswali?* (He does not want to be questioned, he does not want to answer the questions) Such men *ndio wanapatianga mtu hata heart breaks kwa nyumba.* (Such men are the ones that give someone heart breaks in the house)
- M** Yes
- Fc** *Na mwanaume kama uyo anafaa kuachanwa nayeye kabisaa. Tamaka mundurume toshio niwe ungiruga thufu.* (A man like that needs to be left alone. A man like that, is the one I can cook soup)
- K** *Eeh?* (Yes?)
- Fc** *Ocio no umuruge thufu umugae na ikobe.* That is dictatorship *kuongea ukweli.* (That is a man you can make soup from and serve in cups. That is dictatorship honestly speaking).

The caller in text nine switched to Kikuyu, their mother tongue to signal common identity with Maina Kageni. The above discussion on alternating codes to communicate common identity was similar to what Gal (1988) observed that code-switching was a conversational strategy used to establish, cross or destroy group boundaries; to create, evoke or change interpersonal relations with their rights and obligations. Myers-Scotton (1993) also observed the same and she claimed that marked code switching was used as an ethnically based exclusion strategy. People generally feel closely related to those they can identify with as sharing the same language and ethnic background, and are often very aware of their own ethnic group membership. The callers when switching, would make the hosts know that they are from their ethnic community. In her study, Myers-Scotton went ahead to give an example of a conversation between a clerk and a customer at a bank in Nairobi for whom the unmarked code choice was Swahili to illustrate the



markedness model. The customer began speaking in the unmarked Swahili and later switched to Luo, their shared ethnic language, to index social solidarity with the clerk, trying to solicit extra help (Myers-Scotton, 1993).

### ***Signalling Feelings of the Speaker***

The third theme which aimed at signalling feelings of the participants into influencing the reasons why they alternated codes was divided into two major subthemes; namely, to show the mood of the speaker and to signal change in attitude.

Change of mood was signalled when bilinguals were tired or angry and in that case, code alternation took place with a new dimension. This meant that when the speaker was in the right state of mind, he/she could find the appropriate word or expression in the base language. In text ten, the caller was so mad at what men were saying such that during her contribution, her anger drove her into code switching. She said that if the men were near her, *angewachapa viboko kuongea ukweli* (she would have caned them, to be honest). She claims if she were to be near the men, she would actually cane them. Her switch to Kiswahili is prompted by the anger she has towards men at that particular time.

### **Text 10**

**Fc** Maina I can't believe men are talking like that

**M** Can you imagine?

**Fc** Imagine I can't believe it. I wish those men were near me, *ningewachapa viboko kusema ukweli* (I would honestly cane them). In the era we are living in, we are not supposed *kukuwa tunaabudu mtu* (to worship a person). That is like we are going down to them.

**M** Exactly that is what they want you to do, to bow down to them.

**Fc** No no no, according to *ile miaka tuko sahihi, hiyo iliisha* (in this day and age, that school of thought according to men, ended). *Iyo ilikuwa ni ile miaka ya zamani. Eeh* (that was done in the past years).

The observation made in text ten is similar to that of Malik (1994) who claimed that the mood of the speaker also led to code switching. According to Myers-Scotton (1993), marked code switching may be used for making marked choices, for example, a range of emotions from anger to affection, as well as to negotiate outcomes ranging from demonstrations of authority to assertion of ethnic identity. Her observation was similar to what this research observed. Another thing that led to code alternation was change of attitude. Attitude in this case was the instance where alternation happened due to change of direction in a certain talk. For example, during greetings, a person can use a certain code which changes when they move to the topic of the day. In text eleven, change of attitude has led to code alternation.

### **Text 11**

**M** Hallo classic 105

**Mc** Hallo Maina

**M** Good morning

**Mc** *Acha nikwambie* (let me tell you) my brother,

**M** *Eeh* (yes)

- Mc** *Mwanamke akikwambia ako na mimba* (when a woman tells you she is pregnant),  
**M** *Ehe* (then)  
**Mc** *Afadhali ungoje kwanza mtoto azaliwe* (you better wait for the baby to be born first)

The caller in text eleven greets the host in English language, the code for the show and the official language. He then switches to Kiswahili when he proceeds to the topic of the day. The reason for the switch could be because the topic dictated so. The male caller was subjective towards the women and was claiming that women could lie about the paternity of a baby and that is why men had to be vigilant and wait until the baby was born to confirm the paternity. The words used to drive his point home had to be strong and in this case, Kiswahili was the suitable language.

Myers-Scotton (1993) stated that making an unmarked code choice was an indication of a type of acceptance by speakers and writers of the role relationship which people from the same communities and same social identities had with one another. The participants in this case share a common national language, Kiswahili. Baker and Garcia (1993) also observed the same and stated that in order to indicate a change of attitude during a conversation, code switching may be used. For example, in greetings, the hosts would sometimes use Kiswahili or the minority language but when introducing the topic of the day, they could switch to English to show seriousness.

### ***Quoting as a Way of Code Alternation***

Quoting was identified as a reason for code alternation. When an individual was talking to someone about what a third person said, they could switch to the code used by the third party even if that was not the code of interaction at that moment. When relating to a conversation held previously, the callers and the hosts tended to report the conversation in the language used originally. This happened when the caller did not want to paraphrase the original words uttered and in the process alter the original meaning. Text twelve is from the radio clip between a male caller and Maina Kageni.

### **Text 12**

- Mc** One day,  
**M** Mmh?  
**Mc** *Tukakosana kidogo tu ile ya kawaida, unajua nini aliambia mama yake? "Ati mimi huwa nampiga, simpei chakula, simfanyii chochote."*(We had a small disagreement, and she told her mother, I beat her, I don't give her food, I don't do anything for her.) The mother believed her, *nikanyamaza* (I kept quiet), two months down the line, *nikampata na mwanamme* (I found her with a man).  
**M** ***haiya!*** (What!)

The male caller in text twelve has quoted exactly what the wife was telling her mother. For the conversation to have the touch of reality, the caller quoted exactly what the wife said. Kiswahili is the national language mostly used in Kenyan homes and because the wife was accusing her husband to her mother, she used Kiswahili to say that the husband beats her, does

not provide food and does not do anything for her. Code alternation came in handy during the quote; the caller then switched to English to continue with his grievances.

### Conclusions

This study explored the use of code alternation and interrogated the reasons for this alternation in Classic 105 FM radio station in Kenya. It concluded that the reasons for code alternation were various and included code alternation acting as a communication strategy, signalling social and political capital, signalling feelings of the interlocutor, and also being used for quoting. The callers and the radio hosts' use of code alternation during the morning show debate was found to be both conscious and spontaneous. The radio hosts through code alternation strove to ensure that the debates in the call in morning show were lively and pleasant to the listeners who were accommodated despite their ethnic and linguistic diversity. Code alternative, it was concluded, served to enhance communication instead of inhibiting it.

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## The National Language and the Question of Identity in Kenya

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### Abstract

*This paper critically examines the challenge the national language has in the mobilisation of national identity in Kenya. It is argued that the approach that was taken by high ranking Kenyan politicians to link the national language to nation in objective terms is not didactic. This is because Kenya, just like many other sub-Saharan African nations, is a conglomeration of diverse elements. It is proposed that for Kiswahili to be a meaningful instrument in the mobilisation of national identity, its functional role that essentially entails the use of language in government and administration, judiciary, education, local government, media, trade and industry and science and technology (power domains) needs to be enhanced. The enhanced instrumental function of the national language will in turn encourage the national population's sentimental attachment (identity) to it; that is, the symbolic function of the language. The identity function entails the ability to express solidarity and the pride of a nation. Currently, the identity function of the national language is low key in Kenya.*

Keywords: Domains, instrumental function, nation, national language, symbolic function (identity).

### Introduction

The discourse on national language and national identity is not a rarity; especially around the time of independence or when national sovereignty is threatened (the example of many African states and many Eastern European countries after the collapse of communism lends credence to this). The attempt to objectively link the national language to national identity has to a large part been modelled on the German romanticism of the 19<sup>th</sup> century that is largely traced from the work of Johann Gottfried Herder. Herder emphasised the ideology that one language equals one nation (Edwards, 1985: 21; Woolard as cited in Blackledge 2002: 198).

In Kenya, immediately after independence, the aspiration to objectively link Kiswahili, a Bantu language that is expansively spoken in East and Central Africa and is also the national language in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda as well as one of the national languages in Democratic Republic of Congo, to national identity was too apparent. Unlike in many other sub-Saharan African states where there was no indigenous language that was acceptable across the length and breadth of the nation, Kenya was endowed with Kiswahili that was acceptable to many. This was mainly because of two reasons. Kiswahili being associated with trade from the coast to the East and Central African hinterland, it was the most widespread indigenous language not only in Kenya but also in the whole of East and Central Africa. Secondly, Kiswahili is fairly a neutral language because it is not seriously attached to any big ethnic group and hence its broader acceptability. In Kenya, there is remarkable ethnic sentimentality attached to the big groups. Therefore if a language belonging to a big group had been selected, then acceptability would have been a big problem.

Although Kiswahili was all along an inter-ethnic language during the colonial period, the independence struggle provided a new high. Nationalist leaders such as Jomo Kenyatta, Tom Mboya and Odinga Oginga used Kiswahili in their nationalist speeches (Mazrui & Mazrui, 1995). The use of Kiswahili in nationalist speeches was seen not only in Kenya but also in

neighbouring Tanzania where Kiswahili even had a stronger foundation and was more eulogised by national leaders like Julius Nyerere.

At the time of independence, the aspect of authenticity came to fore. There was emphasis on return to what was considered as the glorious past (the period before colonialism) that according to the nationalists had been disrupted during the colonial period. In this logic therefore, what was indigenous was an ideal and what was foreign was alien or imperial. Such slogans as *Mwacha mila ni mtumwa* (she/he who is alienated from indigenous culture is a slave) came up.

Although the argument on English both as a symbol and a vehicle of foreign domination has been ably explicated in the writings of a prominent Kenyan writer, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, the undoing in the orientation of the undemocratic one party hegemony immediately after independence (Kenya African National Union, KANU) was the view of indigenous Kenyan structures as somewhat static and impervious to change. What was also apparent at the time of independence in Kenya was aspiration for unity. It was popular thinking that the triumph over the colonial master had been occasioned by some unity and that Kiswahili had played some role in that unity. This was the background to the argument that Kiswahili could come out as a remarkable symbol of national identity. In the subsequent years, however, this objective has remained elusive. Related to this are a number of questions that suffice: What is a nation? What is identity? What are the lines of relationship between the national language and national identity? What has aided in making it difficult for the national language to play a meaningful role in the mobilisation of national identity? The rest of this paper discusses these questions.

### **Nation: The Problem of Conceptualisation**

A plethora of literature on the concept of nation depicts it as a hydra headed phenomenon that cannot be defined with pinpoint precision (Kashoki, 1984; Edwards, 1985; Wodak, de Cillia, Reisigl & Liebhart, 1999; de Cillia, Reisigl & Wodak, 1999; Anderson, 1983). The orientation that was taken by many nationalists in Kenya after independence was one of tending towards homogeneity, which was more akin to the German concept of a *Kultur nation*. In Kenya this was seen in the unequivocal emphasis on the centralised system of government and disdain for the *majimbo* (federal) system of government. The popular argument related to this was that a centralised system of government was supposedly unitary, whereas the *majimbo* system of government was supposedly divisive. This is the reason why Kenya African National Union (KANU) that advocated for a centralised form of government overwhelmed Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU) that advocated for *majimboism* in the first national elections after independence.

But what is the reality of the homogeneity of an African nation? To begin with, Kenya just like a host of other African nations emerged from artificial circumstances occasioned by the arbitrary partition of Africa of 1884. So arbitrary was the partition that in some cases, we had a hitherto fairly homogenous group divided in different countries by the new national boundaries. For example, the Somali are in Kenya, Somalia, Ethiopia and Djibouti. We also have cases of Maasai and Kuria in Kenya and Tanzania; and Samia and Teso in Kenya and Uganda (Mbaabu, 1996). This problematic creation is therefore the denominator to the artificiality of a sub-Saharan African nation. Emanating from the partition, it is evident that numerous ethnic groups were put together in national boundaries. Throughout the colonial period in Kenya, distinct measures were undertaken to discourage collective consciousness by the colonial regime. It was commonplace for a punitive expedition to be discharged from one ethnic group to suppress a revolt from another group.

Alongside the overt divide and rule tactic that was employed by the British rulers just described, was the covert ingenious social engineering that nurtured deep-seated ethnocentrism that was evident in acrimonious ethnocentric labels that is placed at the doorstep of colonialism. In Kenya, the Luo were labelled genetically as lazy; the Kikuyu, cheeky; the Kamba, sex maniacs; the Maasai, trustworthy albeit savage natives; and so on (Ochieng, 1975: 259). Unfortunately, these derogatory ethnocentric labels persist to this day. With the systematic freezing of the zones of confluence seen as in the examples already mentioned, it is prudent to observe that a strong parochial primordial community sense preceded the establishment of wider reconciliatory inter ethnic structures that were advocated at the time of independence. Thus, the fervour for national unity that was advocated for by the politicians at the time of independence, through political parties (that had translucent ethnic and elite masks) was silhouetted in the impulse of an ideologue rather than that of a pragmatist. It is based on this that the aspiration for defining a homogenous Kenyan nation has remained elusive in the resultant years (Onyango, 1994).

The idea of defining a nation in homogenous terms is simply not tenable. Practically, the common elements of a sub-Saharan African nation are; common political boundaries, common political and administrative institutions, a common (often imported) legal system, territorial economic interdependence and interaction, and perhaps the collective effort that may have played part in the eventual triumph of the indigenous population over the foreign overlord (Kashoki, 1984: 95). This perception of a nation is relevant for Kenya as well.

Resultantly, if there is logic in conceptualising a European nation as an imagined community, then the Kenyan nation is more imagined because of its social and historical background that we have discussed above. On the idea of seeing nations as imagined communities, Anderson observes that nations are imagined:

because members of even the smallest nations will never know most of their fellow members, meet them, or even hear of them; yet in the mind of each lives the image of their communion...The nation is imagined as limited because even the largest of them, ...has finite, if elastic, boundaries, beyond which lie other nations. No nation imagines itself co-terminus with mankind ... It is imagined as sovereign because the concept was born in age in which Enlightenment and revolution were destroying the legitimacy of divinely-ordained, hierarchical dynastic realm ... The gage and emblem of this freedom is the sovereign state (Anderson, 1983 :15-16).

Thus, whereas the common symbol definition of the nation is ideal for the nationalists, as Anderson argues above, it is not tenable in practical terms. This has implications on the definition of identity as well.

### **The National Language and National Identity: The Problem of Linkage**

The popular conceptualisation of the national language as a marker of national identity is mainly seen from what the national language has to accomplish in an African nation. Mazrui (1981: 12) argues that a national language should ideally accomplish two roles; the functional role and the symbolic role. The functional role is concerned with interethnic communication and use in various domains. The symbolic role entails expressing solidarity and the pride of the nation. Ideally, the identity function is more akin to the latter, but it is out of the functional role that symbolic role is galvanised (cf. Kelman 1971). Along such lines, Whiteley says:

A common indigenous language in the modern states is a powerful factor for unity. Cutting across tribal and ethnic lines, it promotes a feeling of single community. Additionally, it makes possible the expression and development of social ideas, economic

targets and cultural identity easily perceived by citizens. It is in a word, a powerful factor in the mobilisation of a people and resources for nationhood (Whiteley, 1971: 40-41).

Immediately after independence, high-ranking Kenyan politicians spelt out the importance of the national language marking the nation's identity. On his very first address to the parliament of independent Kenya, President Jomo Kenyatta went against the Constitution of Kenya and addressed the House in Kiswahili (at that time, the Constitution and the Standing Orders of Parliament only recognised English for Parliamentary Business). His cardinal point in addressing the House in Kiswahili was that if he had left parliament without addressing it in the indigenous language, he would have felt humiliated (Kenya, Republic of, 1965). In the subsequent years, President Jomo Kenyatta was to spell out what Kiswahili stood for the Kenyan nation in the following statement:

The basis of any independent government worth its salt is a national language. We are an independent nation and can no longer continue aping our former colonial masters...I know that some people will start murmuring that time is not ripe for the decision... (Mbaabu, 1985: 183).

Let us critically analyse the statement of the President in terms of language and identity. It is telling that Jomo Kenyatta used Kiswahili in the first address to the parliament of independent Kenya, as it was a historical day. Parliament is an important state institution that has immense standing for a nation. Cooper (1989: 45) argues that what happens in parliament puts the image of a nation on display. In terms of the language of parliament, he argues that it has ramifications on representation since the represented can argue against legitimacy of representation in a foreign language (Cooper, 1989). For Jomo Kenyatta, speaking in Kiswahili, an indigenous language in a nation's independent parliament was a show of the difference between the past and the present, an attempt to mark uniqueness, and thus the nation's identity.

The second utterance, that was made when Jomo Kenyatta declared that Kiswahili was the national language *de jure* and sole language of debates in parliament, is an important point once again, on national identity. An ideal national language for an independent nation should never be a foreign language and particularly that of a former colonial master. This was echoed in the words of the mover of the first motion agitating for the use of Kiswahili in parliament, when he said: 'Having achieved sovereignty, we ought to know that language is one thing which can give integrity and identity to the nation ...' (Kenya, Republic of, 1965: col. 1460).

The national identity to be espoused through the national language like the one outlined above emphasised the following attributes. The first one was authenticity. An indigenous language was a link to the glorious past unlike English that supposedly mirrored foreign intrusion (cf. Tengan, 1994: 127). The underlying ideology was therefore indigenisation or venacularisation. Secondly, the link between the nation and the national language was supposedly objective: the echo of Herder's maxim (see introduction) of one nation equals one language. The national language was more than just a mere symbol. The succinct point is that the national language was linked to what would supposedly become a homogenous nation. It is on this matrix that Bakari (1979) asserts that national identity is a collective culture in which an entire community participates and which is articulated by a common national language (preferably an indigenous national language).

Taking cognisance that identity is enhanced through instrumental functions, a few steps were taken to enhance the position of Kiswahili in Kenya. First, Kiswahili was officially declared as the national language of Kenya, *de jure*, on July 4<sup>th</sup> 1974. Second, because parliament is an institution of immense standing in a nation, President Jomo Kenyatta decreed on



July 5<sup>th</sup> 1974 that Kiswahili shall be the sole language of debates. This was the case for five years, but fluctuated after his death in 1978. Kiswahili was equally recognised in some areas of the old Constitution. Section 34 (c) recognised Kiswahili alongside English for parliamentary debates. And section 92 of the Constitution of Kenya recognised Kiswahili as a prerequisite for citizenship in Kenya.

In education, the importance of Kiswahili for national unity has been an important objective of Kiswahili syllabi. With the advent of the 8.4.4 education system in 1985, which had eight years of primary education, four years of secondary education and four years of university education, Kiswahili became a compulsory examination subject up to form four and has been placed at par with English as a prerequisite for entry to university and middle level college courses.

It is apparent that the attempt to link the national language, objectively to the nation of Kenya, as was emotionally implied by the high ranking politicians is flawed. This presupposes homogenisation, an aspect that is difficult to actualise as demonstrated above. It is in this context that Wodak et al. (1999) have convincingly argued that the relationship between language and national identity is at best discussed in an emotionally detached manner. In didactic terms, language can just be an important instrument in the mobilisation of national identity. Taking cognisance of this orientation, it is apparent that Herder's maxim of one nation equals one language, though a truism in nationalist circles is nonetheless problematic in practical terms.

Having shown the problem of attempting to link the national language to nation, objectively, we now discuss the realistic problems of Kiswahili in connection with the mobilisation of national identity in Kenya. What is the role of Kiswahili in guaranteeing the communication cohesion of the nation? Secondly, what has been the role of Kiswahili in overarching the numerous sub-cultures articulated by the ethnic languages?

### **The Functional Role of Kiswahili in Kenya: The Problem**

Although Kiswahili is the most widely used language for interethnic communication in Kenya, it is mainly used in informal domains rather than in the formal domains. In education, although Kiswahili is a compulsory examination subject up to the fourth form, it is more of an isolated subject rather than a medium of instruction. In the universities, it is taught as a subject in Kiswahili departments.

Assessing the use of English and Kiswahili in the education system, it is very clear that English has an overwhelming edge over Kiswahili. It is the important medium of instruction of all the subjects, apart from the language ones like Swahili, French and German. It is also the important language of Science and Technology in Kenya. Due to the limited corpus development of Kiswahili in Kenya, areas like reading of the budget have never been done in Kiswahili.

In Science and Technology, Mazrui and Mazrui (1995: 28) point out that Kiswahili has been important in the following technologies:

- Technology of production- from a farm tractor to a factory in the city;
- Technology of reproduction- for example, nutritional child-care;
- Technology of destruction- military; and
- Technology of communication- radio, telephone, and television.

It is however important to note that the role of Kiswahili in these technologies has been more on the periphery than at the centre. For example, in the technology of communication, Kiswahili is used more in informal skills than in the formal skills. Similarly, in the technology of military science, Kiswahili is used more as a language of command. It is apparent that even Kiswahili

specialists cannot meaningfully discuss core aspects of information technology in Kiswahili because there have been no serious attempts to develop specialised terminologies in Kenya.

In government and administration, Kiswahili is mainly used as a means of informal communication. Thus, a principal secretary, a regional commissioner, a county commissioner, a deputy county commissioner and a chief may address what is popularly known as a *baraza* (public gathering) in Kiswahili. However, when it comes to written communication, it is overwhelmingly done in English. At the lower level of administration, the sub-chief or the headman may use Kiswahili, but evidently most of the communication at that level is also done in the mother tongue.

In parliament, although Kiswahili is recognised in the Constitution as one of the official languages for discourse, it is more of an officially tolerated language for parliamentary business than a language that is remarkably used. Thus, it is used in very few questions and not at all in drafting of bills and motions. Kiswahili is also not used in ministerial statements, technical papers, committee reports, standing orders and the financial statement (budget). It is also currently not used in oaths and used rarely in maiden speeches in parliament. In daily debates on motions and bills, the contributions made in Kiswahili are very few, as compared to the ones made in English.

In a study conducted by Onyango (2003), out of twenty contributions in a typical parliamentary sitting, the average number of Kiswahili contributions was three. In the mass media, Kiswahili has been remarkable in radio broadcasting. However, with the recent liberalisation of the airwaves, many new broadcasting stations that mainly use English have sprang up. In the area of newspapers, ever since the popular Kiswahili newspaper *Baraza*, wound up in the early 1970s, no remarkable Kiswahili newspaper has come up. *Kenya Leo* also recently wound up. Currently, there is only one Kiswahili language daily, *Taifa Leo* that has low levels of readership. It is also mainly read by low-level workers in towns and also by the rural folk (Kiganya, 1995). This is because Kiswahili is a subordinate lingua franca when compared to English in Kenya. By far, the leading dailies in Kenya are those that are written in English.

The scenario in the judiciary of Kenya is similar to the one that is described in the other power domains above. English is the predominant language of the Kenyan high courts, courts of appeal and the Supreme Court. Kiswahili is so excluded in the high courts of Kenya that it is true that most of the senior judges in Kenya may be completely illiterate in Kiswahili (Mazrui & Mazrui, 1995). Kiswahili has some presence in the low courts, but it is mainly used in translation and oral communication. Overall, English is the exclusive language of documentation in courts and also the exclusive language of laws.

In county government, although many members of county assembly may use Kiswahili in local council meetings, for documentation, English is mainly used. Moreover, the senior administrators of the county governments mainly use English. In cultural and sports activities, Kiswahili is remarkable but still some effort has to be done. At the time of independence, there were political pronouncements that recognised Kiswahili as an important language for culture. However, in the subsequent years, the showing of Kiswahili in cultural activities is remarkably a happening rather than something out of a conscious policy.

In the local markets, it is the ethnic language that is predominant. Many of the local markets are mainly located in the rural areas where the ethnic language is a very important medium of communication. This points out to the question of nationalisation of Kiswahili in Kenya. Whereas Kiswahili is predominantly used in its original cradle (the coast region), urban areas and in areas of mixed populations, it is nonetheless not as much used in rural areas that have fairly homogenous ethnicities.

As for the family and kinship domain, all languages are a possibility, depending on the circumstances. In the rural areas, the predominant language is the ethnic language. In the urban areas, if both the husband and the wife are from the same ethnic group, the tendency shall be that at the family level, the ethnic language may be used. In cases of cross-cultural marriages, then Kiswahili suffices. In elitist families, English may be used.

From the instrumental function of Kiswahili in the domains discussed, it suffices that Kiswahili is not a powerful instrument of communication in the power domains. It is English that dominates in such domains. This mainly emanates from the colonial legacy that entrenched English in power domains. In the private domains depending on the attendant circumstances, the ethnic languages may also challenge Kiswahili, in use. It is instructive to note that both English and the ethnic languages are not just instruments of communication, but also important symbols in the mobilisation of identities for certain segments of the Kenyan population. Thus the question of the elite enclosure perpetuated through English has been of concern to theorists on the pitfalls of Kiswahili in the mobilisation of the identity of the Kenyan nation (Spencer, 1974; Bakari, 1979; Harries, 1984; Onyango, 1990). On the ethnic languages, there is a very strong link between the ethnic languages and ethnic groups, the reason why many ethnic groups are referred to as ethnolinguistic groups.

The important reason to explain why Kiswahili has not made meaningful instrumental mileage is because the national language policy since independence has been problematic. There has never been a clear-cut national language policy. The national language overtures like those of 1970 were at best frivolous nationalist rhetoric (Onyango, 2003). The ruling Kenya African National Union party came up with a pronouncement that all Kenyans were to speak Kiswahili at all times whether officially or unofficially (Whiteley, 1973). The declaration of the national language as the sole language of debates in the parliament of Kenya was by a presidential decree. No goals were formulated. No implementation procedures were outlined and no outcomes were predicted. This partly explains why this attempt has been on a serious decline. Ideally, planning a language should be more remarkable in the education system rather than it being done so in parliament.

The place of Kiswahili in education has not been strong since independence. Kiswahili was not examined at the end of primary education until 1985. At the secondary school level, it was an optional examination subject for the same period of time. It was from 1985 that it became a compulsory examination subject up to form four. More significant, the government of Kenya has never had an organised structure for developing the national language. Thus, a step like that of making Kiswahili one of the official languages in the parliament has not been supported by corpus planning, especially in the area of terminology development. The capacity of Kiswahili to actualise its communicative potential in such circumstances has been seriously undermined.

The failure of Kiswahili to actualise its communication potential, particularly in the power domains, is the main background that explains the problem of the symbolic function of the national language. For it has been theorised that out of the instrumental function, the symbolic attachment is likely to follow (Kelman, 1971).

### **The Symbolic Problem of the National Language**

Although Kiswahili seemed to be on the path of an important tool for African personality identification, signs of disillusionment were starting to show up by 1966 (Kenya gained independence in 1963). Many ethnic groups were becoming interest groups because of the cut-throat competition for the scarce national resources. Comrades who had been united against a common enemy were now facing off with one another. In sum, cleavages were setting in and the fragile unity was being challenged (Mboya, 1982; Chimerah, 1998).

By around 1966, ethnic languages were finding resonance on the national level. More songs were emerging in the ethnic languages (Chimerah, 1998). The Kenyan nationalist ideology that was adopted after independence was more of a survivalist strategy. In contrast with for example Tanzania, the national language was outlined as an important tool of achieving an important objective; education for self-reliance, thus strengthening a language instrumentally as a path towards its symbolic status. Consequently, in practical terms, the crucial role that Kiswahili had played in nationalist agitation in Kenya was checked after independence.

The nationalisation of Kiswahili became problematic. For some groups, one's ethnic group and ethnic language became an important paragon. According to Heine and Möhlig (1980:64), the bigger a group is, the more unlikely it is Kiswahili speaking, save for the Bantu groups of the Coast. With the lack of a clear-cut national language policy, Kiswahili has not played a major role of overarching the other Kenyan sub cultures.

Vernacular languages are currently recognised as an important national heritage in the promotion of African culture (Abdulaziz, 1991: 204). Moreover, some ethnic languages are used as media for instruction from standard one to standard three in fairly homogenous areas. Languages like Gĩkũyũ and dholuo have witnessed modern literary novels as well as other reading materials. Religious materials and Bible translations are available in many Kenyan languages, although this does not stimulate wide readership, as compared first to English and then to Kiswahili. These developments in various ethnic languages are not in themselves negative since world over, assimilationist linguistic overtures like those that have been attempted in France have been vehemently criticised.

However, as it concerns Kiswahili in the multilingual environment of Kenya, the following questions suffice:

1. Which is the balance between Kiswahili and the other ethnic languages congruent to the nation's social, cultural and economic policies?
2. Which direction should the other ethnic languages take, keeping in mind that it is Kiswahili that is perceived by many as standing for national unity?
3. Is the government of Kenya committed to enhancing the position of Kiswahili through a precise policy backed up by resources?

Looking at the Tanzanian case, the answers to the above questions lie in a pragmatic language policy, backed by sound implementation procedures and based on a strong nationalist ideology. Indeed, Tanzania is a shining example in sub-Saharan Africa, where Kiswahili as an indigenous language has played a very important role in the mobilisation of national identity. The mobilisation of national identity has taken the path of Kiswahili being enhanced in power domains and also being made to overarch the other Tanzanian languages (like in translation of oral literature aspects of other Tanzanian languages in Kiswahili). This is different from the Kenyan approach where the trend seems to be that the Kenyan nation should be equal to Kiswahili with little functional enhancement input.

## **Conclusion**

From the foregoing, the homogenous approach to conceptualising a nation that has implications on the national language playing an assimilationist role in the identity of the nation is not tenable because of the diverse elements that constitute the Kenyan nation. Moreover, Kiswahili is also important in mobilisation of nationhood in countries such as Tanzania. Therefore, Kiswahili needs not be an objective marker of national identity as was advocated by many high ranking politicians after independence, but a national language to overarch the numerous ethnic languages in Kenya. For at its best, a sub-Saharan African nation is an imagined community.

Accruing from the discussions in this paper, we propose that a clear national language policy should be formulated that is backed up with implementation procedures that shall first enhance the communication potential of Kiswahili particularly in the power domains, that shall in turn enhance the sentimental attachment of the national population to the national language. For this to be a reality, it is our contention that status allocation of the national language in various power domains should be congruent to corpus planning.

For Kiswahili to meaningfully overarch the numerous subcultures in Kenya, which are about 45, an organised structure to enhance this is worthwhile. The common approach has been a language academy (for instance, Spanish, Italian, French, and Arabic have been enhanced by language academies). Neighbouring Tanzania has various bodies such as TUKI (*Taasisi ya Uchunguzi wa Kiswahili*), BAKITA (*Baraza la Kiswahili la Kitaifa*), *Taasisi ya Kiswahili na Lugha za Kigeni*, Zanzibar, amongst others. It is simply not didactic for Kenya to expect that Kiswahili shall be an important instrument in the mobilisation of national identity out of sheer good luck.

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