DISSERTATION

Titel der Dissertation

Appraisal of Literacy Practices among Villagers in Rural Kenya: The Case of Murugi Location, Maara District

Verfasser

Wendo K. Nabea

angestrebter akademischer Grad

Dr. –Studium der Philosophie Sprachwissenschaft (Dr. of Philosophy.)

Wien, November 2009

Studienkennzahl:	A 092 327
Dissertationsgebiet:	Sprachwissenschaft (Linguistics)
Betreuer (Supervisor):	A. o. Univ. Prof. Dr. Helmut Gruber

DEDICATION

To the adorable threesome;

Faith,

Fiona

&

Jerry.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

vi

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF PLATES

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF APPENDICES

ABSTRACT

When Kenya attained self rule in 1963, it set out to make its people literate. It was held that this was the sure way to realise economic take-off in order to fight poverty and disease. According to statistics, literacy education has invariably been a success in Kenya. However, there are scholars who warn that the literacy acquired is at a risk because the literate are apt to relapse into literacy for failure to continue reading after schooling. Contending that this postulation is generalized and derives from a linear view of literacy, this study set out to investigate whether ex-students in the villages of Murugi Location, Maara district, Kenya; engaged in literacy practices. Based on the social theory of literacy as espoused in New Literacy Studies, an ethnographic exploration was carried out among 24 respondents in the villages. The study involved a triangulation of methods such as in-depth interviews, literacy diaries, field documents, field notes and participant observation, which was aided by picture-taking. Additionally, 6 careerists in the book industry were interviewed for comparative purposes. The results showed that contrary to the generalized claims that former students were bound to ossify into illiteracy, ex-students among the villagers were actively involved in multiple literacies. The literacies were also found to be practised in a number of ways, used as means to particular ends, and anchored on no specific domains. The study contends that the claims that Kenyans have poor reading habits are grossly generalized and based on a linear view of literacy, which fails to consider it as an array of social practices which are specific to various contexts. The study recommends that a reconceptualisation of literacy be done in Kenya in order to acknowledge and buttress multiple literacies in their different contexts, alongside conventional or school literacy in order to accrue benefits from both.

ABSTRACT IN DEUTSCHE

Als Kenia 1963 die Unabhängigkeit erlangte, begann das Land Bildungsprogramme durchzuführen. Man ging davon aus, dass dies eine sichere Methode wäre, wirtschaftlichen Aufschwung zu verwirklichen und Armut und Krankheit zu bekämpfen. Laut Statistiken haben aufgrund dieser Bildungsmaßnahmen die Lese- (und Schreib-)fähigkeit in Kenia bedeutend zugenommen. Es gibt jedoch Wissenschaftler, die davor warnen, dass die so erworbene Bildung in Gefahr sei, weil die Schulabsolventen nach Abschluss der Schule keine Motivation haben, mit dem Lesen fortzufahren. Unter der generellen Hypothese, dass diese Behauptung eine Übergeneralisierung darstellt, die von einer linearen Sicht von Bildung ausgeht, ging es in dieser Studie darum, zu erforschen, ob ehemalige Schüler in den Dörfern von Murugi (Bezirk Maara, Kenia) weiterhin in Lese- und Schreibaktivitäten engagiert sind. Ausgehend von der „social theory of literacy", die von den „New Literacy studies" gestützt wird, wurde eine ethnographische Forschung unter 24 Probanden in den oben erwähnten Dörfern durchgeführt. In der Studie wurde eine Triangulation der Methoden des ausführlichen Interviews, des Schreibtagebuchs, der Dokumentenanalyse, von Feldnotizen und teilnehmender Beobachtung, die durch Fotografieren unterstützt wurde, verwendet. Zusätzlich wurden 6 VertreterInnen der Buchindustrie zu Vergleichszwecken interviewt. Die Ergebnisse zeigten, dass im Gegensatz zu den generalisierten Annahmen, dass ehemalige Schüler in den Analphabetismus zurück fallen, die Schulabsolventen unter den Dorfbewohnern aktiv in verschiedenen Lese- und Schreibaktivitäten engagiert waren. Diese Aktivitäten wurden auf verschieden Arten ausgeübt, die als Instrument dienen, um bestimmte Ziele zu erreichen und mit keinen spezifischen Domänen verbunden sind. Die Studie folgert, dass die Behauptungen, dass Kenianer in wenige Schreib- und Leseaktivitäten engagiert sind, starke Übergeneralisierungen sind, die auf einer linearen Sicht von Schreib- und Lesefähigkeit beruhen, die es verabsäumt, Schreib- und Lesefähigkeiten als kontextspezifische soziale Praxis zu konzeptualisieren. Die Studie empfiehlt eine Neukonzeptualisierung von Bildungsmaßnahmen in Kenia um neben der herkömmlichen Schulbildung die vielfachen Schreib- und Lesefähigkeiten in ihren verschiedenen Kontexten anzuerkennen und zu unterstützen, um einen möglichst hohen Nutzen von beiden erreichen zu können.

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 ORIENTATION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of the dissertation. It starts by offering a background to the study, while explaining what inspired it. It also outlines the study objectives and research questions. The significance of the study in general parlance, and specifically to the nation of Kenya, is also elaborated. The section further spells out the scope and limitations of the study, while giving a vivid delineation of the concepts 'literacy' and 'literacies,' which are some of the keywords in the dissertation. It is clarified that the study was guided by the social theory of literacy whose precepts are vividly explained, while a rationale for its choice is made. In a nutshell, the chapter summarises the motivation of the research, the methodology used and the results.

1.2 Background to the Study

Since independence in 1963, the Kenyan government has invested a lot of resources and manpower to make Kenyans literate. The goals of this campaign were articulated in the Kenya Session Paper No. 10, 1965. The paper spelt out its objectives as to eradicate three vital enemies: Illiteracy, poverty and disease. Prior to this, there was indigenous learning, just like in many other African countries, which was mainly disseminated through participant observation from one generation to another (Metinhoue 1997). However, the advent of colonialism brought literacy education, which was taught guardedly as shown in chapter 2. Upon independence, a vivacious campaign was mounted in a bid to realise a high literacy turnover. Literacy promotion was certainly informed by the principle that literacy was a prerequisite for people's cognitive and social developments. It was also occasioned by the 1964 UNESCO's concern over the social, political, intellectual and economic problems stemming from illiteracy, necessitating measures to curb it (Verhoeven 1994).

According to Barton (1994a) and Street (1995), it has generally been held that developing countries must be brought to at least 40 percent literacy in their populations, if they are to realise social progress in form of modernization, industrialisation and in the participation of the world economic order. The literacy that was being promoted was functional in that it entailed learning to read and write as a preparation for vocational training and for self advancement (Verhoeven 1994). This is understandable putting into consideration that to date, levels of literacy are deemed as indices of social and economic development in most parts of the world. The Kenyan government efforts to promote literacy among its citizens have significantly paid off since statistics show that over 65 % of the population is literate (EFA Global Monitoring Report 2008). However, literacy acquisition occurred at a price. While formal literacy became the norm, indigenous forms of education gradually got stultified.

The goal of formal literacy which replaced the customary African education was not simply to make people know how to read. Salinas (1990:43) argues that "[...] the ability to read is in itself only a potential state. To know how to read is one thing, but to actually read is another." The literate were expected to continue reading all through their lives in order to acquire more knowledge and skills, and consequently become more productive as members of society. In spite of the apparent success of literacy campaigns in Kenya, scholars decry the dearth of the same when they claim that the literate stop to read immediately they are through with formal schooling (Chakava 1988, Altbach 1992, Mazrui & Mazrui 1995, Mbae 2004). They warn that if poor reading habits are not checked, the literate stand to relapse into illiteracy, yet they cannot recourse to indigenous education since it has been eliminated by formal schooling. Illiteracy is feared because it is purported to be an index of poverty and disease (Silvain 1990, Verhoeven 1994).

Nonetheless, Barton and Hamilton (2000) aptly demonstrate that concerns about poor reading habits in the world appear to ignore a crucial matter: that reading habits are only one literacy type among an array of literacies. Furthermore, the critics of poor reading habits appear to have fallen prey to the dominant school literacy to the point of ignoring,

if not being oblivious to, other literacy practices that could be in existence, and which are in concordance with the lives of the people concerned. In the case of Kenya for example, having a reading culture is revered as the quintessential literacy practice, while practices of other types of literacy tend to be spurned.

It is no wonder that whenever the phrase 'reading habits' is used in the Kenyan media or in academic documents, it is voiced more as a concern amid prevailing dire circumstances, which occasion fears that the literate could ossify into illiterates. It has been mentioned that this premise stems from the standpoint that there is a strong causative link between literacy and psychosocial development. This theory has been backed by scholars, agents and strong institutions like UNESCO since the 1950s, justifying literacy as a panacea for illiteracy, disease and poverty. It is in line with this thinking that Lankshear and Knobel (2006) reveal that in the 1960s, literacy was a precondition for poor nations to realise economic 'take off.' In fact, literacy was envisaged as being capable of impacting positively on the Gross National Product (GDP) in regard to economic self sufficiency and reduced foreign aid.

While the tendency to correlate literacy with psychosocial development is addressed on the debate in chapter 3, it would be prudent to reflect on the validity of the statement that Kenyan ex-students stop to use their literacy skills once they are through with official education. This is particularly important because while scholars like Chakava (1982, 1988) and Mbae (2004) catalogue several factors that militate against good reading habits, it has not been very clear whether their findings obtain from empirical investigations or academic theorizations.

There is also a flipside to such contentions though. Unlike the scholars who hold that literacy skills are rendered into disuse after former schooling for failure to continue reading, there are other scholars who assert that such postulations are hollow. The latter assert that literacy is not a single entity as is normally articulated in school circles, but a range of practices which are carried out even out-of-school (Street 1988, 1995; Barton 1991, 1994a; Camitta 1993, Cope and Kalantizis 2000 and Collins and Blot 2003). They

argue that scholars who treat literacy as a single variable either ignore or are oblivious to the existence of multiple literacies, whose practices may be different from those of the school literacy.

It is mainly as a result of the foregoing arguments that this study set out to investigate the literacy practices of former students among villagers in Murugi location, Maara district in Kenya,[1] whose outline appears in Plate 1.

Plate 1: An outline of a village in Murugi Location.

The study was an ethnographic exploration involving a triangulation of methods such as in-depth interviews, literacy diaries, field documents, field notes and participant observation; all which receive a full account in chapter 4. The location was chosen as a result of several demographic factors, among them linguistic, cultural, geographical and historical. Linguistically, it was found viable for research as a result of its multilingualism status in which Meru (Mwimbi dialect), Kikuyu, Kiswahili and English, had been identified as negotiating in the daily linguistic operations of the people. This

---

[1] See chapter 4 for the full description of the location.

provided prospects on the practice of literacies, going by the concept's definition from the linguistic plane, as delineated in the subsequent subtopic. Culturally, the people had also been found to be inclined to Kikuyu arts such as music, provoking interest about the status of their own mores. Geographically and historically also, there were projections that the area was appropriate in regard to the type of respondents who were earmarked for study, a subject which is sufficiently addressed in chapter 4.

The study was further inspired by the fact that the location was in rural Kenya, yet national and international literacy campaigns have been documented as willingly or inadvertently failing to recognize that local people, to whom they take literacy, already have some form of literacy practices (Barton 1991, Street 1994a). In this case, such campaigns fail to build upon what people have already, while approaching them as if they are in a literacy vacuum. It is for this reason that Street (1988) argues that the national or international literacy practice tends to be in tension with local literacy practices. This especially happens when international or national literacy education is taken to the people, whose identity is already expressed in local languages and literacies. A case in point is when international cooperation normally spreads a limited number of international languages and literacies at the expense of local ones. It is noteworthy that concern on local languages and literacies does not arise simply as a result of the need to preserve them, but because there is conviction that they have a constructive value not only as far as the identity of the people is concerned, but also in regard to contribution to desirable changes in different situations.

1.3 Delineating Literacy and Literacies

1.3.1 Literacy

Defining the concept of literacy is not an easy task. This is because it can be defined from linguistic, sociological, anthropological, psychological and historical perspectives, just to mention a few, evincing that to treat the concept as if it carries a unitary meaning is tenuous. Barton (1994a) correctly states that though dictionary definitions attempt to reconcile the meaning of literacy, such senses do not always tally with people's usage of

the term in their every day speech. It is for this reason that the scholar delves into a historical investigation of the term 'literacy' only to reveal that it finds place in the dictionary in 1924, unlike it associates like 'reading,' 'writing,' 'literate,' 'illiterate' and 'illiteracy,' which were catalogued some centuries earlier. Barton's diachronic study of the term 'literacy' shows that the word has assumed various meanings over time. These meanings have been complicated by the fact that terms like 'read' and 'write,' which have semantic affiliation with 'literacy' have also had divergent meanings at different times. In contradistinction however, it has already been mentioned that various scholars have also invoked the concept of 'literacies.' It would therefore pay off to offer an insight into these terms right at the outset. According to Carter (1995:98), there are two definitions of the term literacy of which the first;

> embraces literacy as a set of skills, consisting almost exclusively of the ability to read and write in a 'basic,' mechanical sense of these words. The skills are treated as essentially autonomous, asocial and cognitive and, in many practices, are evaluated accordingly by means of decontextualised tests such as reading single words in isolation from other words or inserting single words or phrases into gaps left in the sets of individual and unrelated sentences. The orientation of such skills and skills testing is essentially towards the learner as a private individual rather than to the learner as engaged, as part of literacy practices, in any interaction with other individuals.

The second definition of literacy, in view of Carter (1995), tallies with that of literacies, which is addressed later in this subsection. Meanwhile, Kwesiga (1994:57) defines literacy as "the ability to read, write, count and participate functionally in debates, decisions and activities within the context of the particular country." This definition is similar to Ivanic's (1998:57-58) argument that in everyday use, 'literacy' implies "the ability to use written language," while its second meaning is less invoked.

Emerging from the foregoing definitions of 'literacy' is the notion that it is ability or a skill that enables one to effectively function in one's society, especially for

developmental good. The skills are treated as universal and applicable to every society, consequently presenting literacy as a unitary entity that is a necessity for everybody. The definitions also construe literacy as existing independently of specific contexts of social practice, as free from material enactments of language in such practices, and as producing effects that are devoid of social factors. Accordingly, literacy is seen as independent and apolitical towards occurrences and struggles in everyday life.

In the light of this, it becomes clear that the definitions point out to literacy as a psychosocial attribute. It is acquired cognitively through reading, writing or counting practices, and when used, it is an agent of societal development. It is this understanding of literacy that has characterised theoretical, pedagogical and research for a long time in the realm of education. This meaning derives from psychological paradigms with the objective of appreciating reading, writing, spelling and comprehension as cognitive and behavioural processes in order to improve both learning and teaching of written texts. For this reason, literacy is viewed as a psychological variable that can be measured and assessed.

The foregoing is definitely the understanding of literacy which is dominant, and which has informed literacy programmes in most of the world. The meaning is preponderant, powerful, evocative of formal schooling, and has a strong bearing on many sectors in various countries. It is the one that was also adopted by the post independent government of Kenya with the objective of sparking quick development in the country. However, as the next subsection will show, there is a shift from seeing literacy as a single and universal variable, to seeing it in multiplicity as per various contexts.

1.3.2 Literacies

The term 'literacies' is based on New Literacy Studies, which is part of the paradigm shift from the focus of literacy as individual behaviour. Gee (1994) asserts that the departure has occurred from behaviourism of the first half of the twentieth century as exemplified in cognitivism, to a focus on social and cultural interaction. It would however, be prudent to mention at the outset that conventional or school literacy and

new literacies are not simply opposed, but bear some complementation as chapter 5 vividly demonstrates. New Literacy Studies obtains from the idea that literacy is situated on particular social practices and within specific discourses.

Street (1994:11) argues that "[…] we can no longer talk about Literacy as though it were a single thing - with a big 'L' and a single 'y' - as though 'Literacy' means the same in all contexts and societies." He adds that researchers and practitioners no longer talk of a single type of literacy, but of 'multiple literacies.' In view of this, literacy is not a unitary skill universally, but it is different in each context and society, where it is practised. Accordingly, the new literacy approach is a shift from the traditional standpoint of literacy researchers who approached the subject from grandiose generalisations about its impact on cognitive skills and development, culminating in the divide between the literate and the non-literate, as is explained in chapter 3.

Street (1995) argues that even in the school where literacy tends to be treated as technical and neutral, it is still characterised by social-political relations. For instance, he argues that in school, space is designated by authority, varieties of colours and letters as per class, rules and regulations, organization, as well as the procedure to be followed by both teachers and pupils. He also argues that literacy is social because it encapsulates ideas of identity and value, sets clear the purpose of the education, and promulgates what kind of a nation people want to belong to. According to the author, the 'ideological' position of literacy has its basis in the missionaries and colonialists education, which was used more for political, rather than for 'logical' or 'rational' purposes.

Contrary to the traditional prism of conceiving literacy also, the conception of 'literacies' is broad as the social theory of literacy underpins. Barton and Hamilton (2000), state that many studies of literacy practices have print literacy and written texts as their starting point, but it is clear that in literacy events, people use written language in an integrated way as part of a range of semiotic systems. These include mathematical systems, musical notations, maps and other non-text based images. A good example is the cookery text, which has arithmetic mixed with print literacy, while the recipes come

from books, newspapers, magazines, television and radio, and orally from people's associates.

Lankshear and Knobel (2006:23) state that 'new literacy' has both paradigmatic and ontological meanings. Paradigmatically, it means that the concept of literacy is being looked into and understood anew. This is a departure from the traditional position of viewing it from a psycholinguistics plane. In this case, 'new' suggests a new approach to literacy. Paradigmatically also 'new' literacies implies changes in the understanding of literacy practices. While school literacy occurs in a classroom situation in the teacher-student relationships, it was found out for example, that the villagers literacies have no formal setting, are not tailored to any examinations and are group practices with no remarkable hierarchical ranks as is demonstrated in chapter 5.

Ontologically, Lankshear and Knobel (2006) reveal that 'new literacies' implies the nature and material that is used in them. In other words, literacies comprise of new modes of dissemination in contradistinction with conventional literacy. Though the 'new stuff' in view of Lankshear and Knobel has to do with technology, especially in the post-typographic era such as the construction of hyperlinks between documents and images, in this study, 'new stuff' also depicts modes of literacies that are practised by the villagers in Murugi. These include their unique ways of oralising written texts, writing, reading, arithmetic and participant observation that appropriate or are different from the school literacy, and which are normally ignored by adherents of the latter. Examples include oralisation of texts like Biblical scriptures, 'incorrect' spelling in writing, collaborative reading and writing as was found in meetings or in the church; or participant observation on farms where knowledge is disseminated through seeing and practising in the same scenario.[2]

Such practices corroborate Street's (1994a) definition of 'literacies' as practices which use different languages and writings vis-à-vis the national literacy, the types of literacies

---

[2] A full account of these findings is provided in chapter 5

that are invented by the local people amid the national or international literacy, and local literacies which have a bearing on the dominant literacy, but are practised differently at the local level. For example, different languages can have different types of orthography. A good example would be the texts of Nigeria's Josiah Oshitelu which were written from right to left, and which contained numbered seals and drawings.[3] This meaning is associated with the fact that learning literacy entails more than acquiring technical skills in that it occasions learning cultural mores. In view of this, different languages may typify different literacies as is evinced in chapters 2 and 5. There are also invented literacies, often connected with the dominant writing system, but offering users a different identity. This happens when there are differences in language, script and the writing system of the people.

The foregoing definition is in line with the delineations of Ivanic (1998) and Camitta (2003), which focus on vernacular or community literacies, which are not elite or institutional, but are etched on the culture of the people. According to Ivanic (1998), the sub-rosa writings among high schools students are an example of vernacular literacy in the sense that they are not elite. Chapters 2 and 5 also demonstrate such literacies as used by youth in urban, and by villagers in rural, Kenya. In these literacies, English and Kiswahili are appropriated and used as per the interests of the youth or villagers, nonetheless usage that sticklers to the standard languages scorn as 'incorrect.' In a nutshell, literacies comprise of different linguistic terms, registers, dialects, creoles and other variations.

According to Lankshear and Knobel (2006), the second understanding of 'new literacies' from the ontological level has to do with how the literacies are run. Unlike in the formal class situation, they are more participatory, dispersing, distributed, less individuated and less author-centric. They are also less policed in comparison with formal schooling, whereby teachers ensure that students conform to a laid down standard, both in the classroom and in the compound. The traditional literacy view has been somewhat that

---

[3] Probst (2003:205-210) gives an account of Nigeria's Josiah Oshitelu who founded the Church of the Lord, and who saw visions which led him to come up with a new type of writing based on the Arabic script.

expertise is classified and uncommon, and that it is a reserve of the initiated few like teachers. Contrary to this school of thought, 'new' literacy is dispersed, common, communal and non-expert, as the results of the research reveal in chapter 5.

Lankshear and Knobel (2006:60) affirm that:

> […] the more a literacy practice privileges participation over publishing, distributed expertise over centralized expertise, collective intelligence over individual possessive intelligence, collaboration over individuated authorship, dispersion over scarcity, sharing over ownership, experiment over 'normalization', innovation and evolution over stability and fixity, […] relationship over information broadcast, and so on, the more we should regard it as 'new' literacy.

Going by the above exposition, it is apparent that literacy is not simply reading, writing or arithmetic, but what people in a community do with these skills, when and for what purposes. The semantic meaning of 'literacy' has broadened from the confines of reading and writing to mean having knowledge and information in a particular field. Barton (1994a) and Lankshear and Knobel (2006) stress that 'literacies' means being knowledgeable and competent in particular areas as seen in computer literacy, visual literacy, political literacy, film literacy, economic literacy, musical literacy, cultural literacy, information literacy, media literacy, emotional literacy or digital literacy. Barton (1994a) proposes that 'multiple literacy' be captured using the metaphor of the ecology of literacy, which will incorporate diversity in the concept as is evident in all literacy manifestations.

The meaning is also broad enough to embrace orality, which is also considered as part of multiple literacies occasionally. This occurs especially in the interactive nature of literacy. Chapter 5 provides an instance of the church whereby the pastor or an assistant can read the Bible, but render the sermon orally to the congregation. In this case, the written word is oralised for the benefit of the whole church, whether one is literate or not. Such findings are in tandem with Jones (1994:71) standpoint about 'talk around

texts' in New Literacy Studies, which shows how reading, writing and orality are inextricably linked. In this thesis, the term 'literacy' is used to signify both the school type of literacy as well as multiple literacies. However, for purposes of distinction, 'literacy' is used more to imply school-based learning, while 'multiple literacy' or 'literacies,' are used to depict all practices that surround text-related components not only in reading and writing, but also in the confluence operation of arithmetic, oralisation, appropriation, abrogation, participation and observation, and all other factors integral to it. In view of this, even school-based literacy is perceived as falling under the rubric of 'literacies.'

1. 4 Statement of the Problem

Since independence, efforts have been stepped up to promote literacy in Kenya. This move was necessary as it was envisaged to introduce a new mode of learning to help Kenyans keep abreast, and be as competitive as other people of the world, who had embraced formal education. Statistics show that literacy efforts have largely been successful because about two thirds of the Kenyan population is now literate (EFA Global Monitoring Report 2008). Besides making people know how to read, the other goal of literacy education is to offer them skills to enable them to continue learning throughout their lives in order to be productive in knowledge.

However, as earlier mentioned, it is documented that the literate in Kenya stop reading after formal schooling essentially as a result of socioeconomic reasons. It is postulated that the literate could relapse into illiteracy for poor reading habits, and to complicate the matter, they cannot go back to customary education, which is currently somewhat moribund. However, this supposition is questionable putting into consideration that reading is only one form of literacy in an array of literacies. It is evident that the postulation is borne of the psychological view of literacy, which is rather linear in perspective and which generalizes the consequences of literacy world over. Taking stock of this, critics who sound alarm over the state of reading culture in Kenya do not acknowledge multiple literacies that are practised by people who are through with

formal schooling in both varied and specific contexts. Additionally, the same critics do not recognize how such ex-students use the literacies in these contexts or the benefits they accrue from them.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

This study was guided by the following objectives:

1. To investigate whether ex-students among Murugi villagers practised multiple literacies. To this end, it would be possible to support or contest the argument that all former students were bound to relapse into illiteracy for failure to continue reading after formal schooling.

2. To explore the ways in which the literacies were practised. In view of the premise that there were multiple literacies, it followed that the ways of running them would be several, necessitating the need for investigation.

3. To find out on what gains the literacies were pegged. It is elsewhere reported that people do not engage in literacy for the sake of it, but for particular gainful purposes. Accordingly, it became essential to look into the benefits on which literacies were used as means to.

4. To investigate the domains in which the literacies were practised. Putting into consideration that literacies were projected as diversified, it followed that they also had designated domains in which they were practised. For this reason, it became vital to probe these domains to acquire a broad understanding of the literacy practices under inquiry.

1.6 Research Questions

Deriving from the objectives of the study, were the following research questions:

1. Do ex-student villagers in Murugi practise multiple literacies?
2. In what ways do they practise the literacies?
3. Are the literacies pegged on gains?
4. What are the domains for practising the literacies?

1.7 Significance of the Study

The study is foremost significant considering that several scholars were documented as arguing that the literate in Kenyan have poor reading habits, which could make them reverse into illiteracy. If true, this observation would be of great concern putting into account that huge resources are expended to teach literacy. It was mentioned that this study set out to investigate whether ex-students were involved in any literacy practices after formal schooling among villagers in a section of rural Kenya. The findings revealed that the villagers were involved in multiple literacies, of which reading was only one type. In this regard, the study contributes to knowledge as far as the existence of multiple literacies is concerned. It brings to fore the fact that in spite of the tendency to treat literacy as a single variable, it would best be viewed in multiple senses. Singularity of literacy is mainly attributed to schooling, but the study vividly showed that this is a misconception since even in the school itself; there are practices of multiple literacies.

While the findings from Murugi villagers cannot be extrapolated for other rural areas in Kenya, a generalized claim that all former students in Kenya stop reading immediately they are through with formal education could be proven baseless. After all, it has already been mentioned that such postulations obtain from a narrow understanding of literacy, which ignores multiple literacies. It was established that villagers who were through with formal schooling exhibited involvement in many literacies, adapted from formal schooling, but appropriated to the people's needs and circumstances. In this case, if the case of Murugi villagers was taken as representative of some rural areas with similar demographics in regard to geography, socioeconomics and religion, especially in the Mt. Kenya region; there might be evidence that the situation of ex-students regarding literacy might not be as dire as some scholars are wont to persuade us. However, for a binding conclusion to be made regarding this argument, more research specific to various zones is incumbent, because literacies are specific to different contexts. In this regard, the study makes an important contribution to knowledge, as far as the case of literacy practices among ex-students in Murugi villages is concerned.

The study is also invaluable because it brings to the attention of various institutions and people on the existence of multiple literacies. These are the government of Kenya, local and international agencies involved in literacy, as well scholars such as teachers and students. With this awareness, all these players could refocus their energies to the appropriate literacies in every circumstance, rather than approach literacy from platitudes that tend to universalise one type of literacy. Chapter 6 makes recommendations with regard to what measures can be put in place to recoup multiple literacies, which have hitherto been marginalised in the country. The study demonstrates that a boost to multiple literacies is a boon to the people who practise them in regard to identity, creativity, socioeconomics, and as a knowledge resource.

By proffering a new dimension to the understanding of literacy in Kenya, the study also stands to be invaluable. While multiple literacies have been a subject of study since the 1980s as the works of David Barton and Brian Street evince, such studies have not made significant impact in many nations, of which Kenya is not an exception. The study has interrogated the traditional monolithic view of literacy as a school phenomenon, and consequently uncovered multiple literacies, which could be the vogue in the out-of-school scenario in rural Kenya. This engenders a new mode of understanding literacy in a multiple sense. Chapter 6 recommends that the Kenyan government and policy makers reorient the current education system to incorporate multiple literacies and in so doing, provide a boon for lifelong learning. This is urgent especially now that Kenya is grooming itself as an industrialised nation in 2030.

This study is also significant considering that most of the research that has so far been conducted on reading habits in Kenya has mainly been based on psychological paradigms. Such research generally tests the conventions of the dominant class in a variety of contexts, with the obvious results that they are lacking, hence the need to inculcate them. Additionally, the research does not incorporate other pertinent theories such as the social literacy premise, which this investigation adopted. In view of this, the study offers insight on the practice of multiple literacies outside the school setting. Its focus is invaluable as an alternative approach to research, which has so far been

conducted in Kenya regarding reading habits such as that of Mikwa (2004) or Paulitzky (2005). Furthermore, deriving from the social approach, this research did not limit itself to the question of reading alone, but investigated literacy in general. It unearthed that researching on people's reading habits alone, while ignoring their other practices of literacy is an inadequate parameter for making a tenable and conclusive statement about their learning behaviour.

The research has also been a departure from New Literacy Studies research as espoused by Street (1988, 1995), Barton (1991), Camitta (1993), Shuman (1993), Gee (1994), Jones (1994), Barton and Hamilton (2000) or Collins and Blot (2003). Foremost, the research was conducted in rural Kenya, unlike similar research in other parts of the world. Additionally, the research did not create a dichotomy between the literate and non-literate as some similar investigations have done in the past, but concentrated on the literate who had completed formal education. It therefore attempted to reconcile the single-literacy and multiple literacies models, instead of zeroing in on the polarity that tends to occur between the proponents of either model, as outlined in chapter 3. Chapter 6 also recommends that efforts should be made to build up on the points of convergence of both models, rather than harp on the points of divergence. This is especially handy considering that the results of this study showed that school literacy is a launching pad for multiple literacies.

1.8 Scope and Limitations

This study focused on ex-student villagers in Murugi location, Maara district, Kenya. Villagers who were considered as respondents for the research had completed class 5 in the pre-independence education system, primary 7 in the immediate post-independence education system, and primary 8 in the current 8-4-4 education system.[4] It was the

---

[4] Kenya has had three major education systems since colonialism. According to the villagers who were investigated by this study, as well as Whiteley (1974), the colonial education system was organized in 8-4-2-3 yearly tiers. 8 years of primary education, 4 years of secondary education, 2 years of high school, and three years of university education. However, considering that many people did not have opportunities to learn up to higher levels, primary schooling was categorized in lower and top levels. Lower primary was up to class 5, while top primary comprised of the intermediate classes, from primary 6 to 8. Immediately after independence, there was inception of the 7-4-2-3 education system, implying 7 years of primary

interest of this study to focus on literate former students, and primary graduates were used as a benchmark for this requirement. In the pre-independence education system, there were major examinations in primary 5 and 8; while in the immediate post-independence and the current education system, there has been only one national examination in classes 7 and 8 respectively. Upon completion of these classes, substantial numbers of pupils have been taking to village life for various reasons, paramount among them being lack of school fees and failure to secure places in the competitive higher institutions of learning.

In a similar vein, literacy and arithmetic are mainly taught in the lower primary in Kenya, yet the focus of this research was literate ex-students. In view of the fact that the study targeted those who were through with schooling, there was certainty that the respondents would be literate, and this was validated by the research. Additionally, primary 3 is the yardstick used by UNESCO to identify a literate person, especially in the mother tongue, yet the respondents had all surpassed this class, pointing out to their eligibility as informants for the research.

Going by the above, it follows that particular age brackets were found viable for research, unlike others. Putting into account that in the three Kenyan education systems, primary schooling has mainly been limited to early and utmost late teenage, some substantial exceptions notwithstanding, especially after the country endorsed the free primary education, the age limit of the respondents was put above teen. Accordingly, the respondents ages were above 20. The choice of this age category partly helped in eliminating young students from the research in a natural way, while ensuring that respondents were people who were already settled in village life.

The study limited itself to non-students and people who were not involved in literacy for professional reasons. In this respect, students and careerists such as teachers, secretaries, clerks, nurses, librarians and so forth, were excluded as informants. This was

---

education, 4 years of secondary education, 2 years of high school, and 3 years of university studies. In 1985, there was another educational change in which case there was introduction of 8 years of primary schooling, 4 years of secondary education, and 4 years of university education.

necessitated by the fact that such careerists would automatically be engaging in literacy or multiple literacies as a result of their vocations, something which would have militated against the objectives of the research. The goal of the research was to appraise literacy practices of former students in the villages, a factor which rendered careerists unviable as respondents. Nonetheless, professionals in the book industry, and who were living in urban areas, provided the second cohort of respondents for comparative purposes.

1.9 Theoretical Framework

This research was based on the social theory of literacy. The theory obtains from the premise that literacy is a social practice as exemplified by several tenets. Barton and Hamilton (2000) outline six precepts of the theory. Some of these precepts were earlier espoused by Barton (1994a). They include the notion that literacy is best understood as a set of social practices, that there are various types of literacies based on different domains, and that literacy practices are regulated by social institutions and power relations. Other tenets include the actuality that literacy practices are situated on wider social goals and cultural practices, that they are historically situated and that they are dynamic and frequently changing.

Barton (1994a) and Barton and Hamilton (2000) illustrate that literacy is a social practice by arguing that there are cultural ways in which people make use of the written word in their daily lives. They argue that literacy practices[5] can either be individual or social putting into account that they connect people with each other. They also entail shared values, ideologies and social identities of the people. Literacy practices are also

---

[5] Barton and Hamilton (2000), state that 'literacy practice' implies the mode of using reading and writing in a given situation. In this instance, the concept 'practice' has more meaning than learning through repetitions. While literacy practices can be observable in the sense that they are what people do with the literacy, they may also be invisible bearing in mind that they include behavioural units like attitudes, feelings or social relationships. Examples include people's awareness of literacy, their views about literacy or their discourses of literacy. In other words, the behavioural units entail how people talk and make sense of literacy. Barton and Hamilton (2000) further opine that a literacy practice entails the cultural ways in which people make use of the written word in their daily lives and in their environment. The duo also explains that literacy practices are patterned, regular or routine practices, which are sometimes governed by some social institutions. An example of a literacy practice is the Bible reading session by family members.

governed by social rules for example, in the production and distribution of texts. Literacy is further social because it entails events.[6] In the light of this, practices, events and texts characterise the first precept of the social theory of literacy.

The second principle of literacy as a social practice is that people have multiple literacies, which are founded on different domains of life. Literacies can mean a number of things as seen in the section of definitions. They can be distinguished by different media, cultures and languages, or coherent configurations of literacy practices in particular domains, as shaped by specific cultural life (Barton 1994a, Barton and Hamilton 2000). In this respect, different literacies have different domains of life. Domains are defined and structured contexts within which literacy is used or learned. Domains can be supported by formal or informal institutions. Some of these institutions are formally governed, while others are run through social conventions and values. The domains can be the home, school, church, farm, roadside or work as chapter 5 demonstrates. In these domains, literacy assumes further social ramifications as can be exemplified by the different clothes worn sometimes in these institutions, a case in point being the church. However, domains are not equal since some are more powerful than others, particularly those that are supported by powerful institutions.

This brings us to another proposition of the social theory of literacy that literacy practices are governed by social institutions and power relations. This suggests that some literacies are more powerful and visible than others. According to Barton and Hamilton (2000), literacies are not judged as equal putting into consideration that there are imposed or self-initiated uses of literacy. This argument is in line with the postulation that there are always minor and dominant literacies. While dominant literacies are promulgated and supported by dominant institutions, non-dominant literacies are founded on the people's everyday life and do not receive much official notice, if any.

---

[6] A literacy event is a situation when the written word has a role in everyday life. The functions where literacy has a role can be garnered from texts which are central to the activity, and from which the course of the talk derives. Barton (1991) gives examples of literacy events as cooking of a particular recipe, discussing a newspaper content with a friend, when an adult reads a story to a child, organising a shopping list or taking a phone message on behalf of another person. Events are observable and buttress the situated condition of literacy, solely in the social context. Events are patterned by regular and routine practices, sometimes governed by formal or informal social institutions.

While powerful institutions like government ministries support dominant literacies, other literacies are less visible and hardly benefit from aid of any powerful institution. Suffice it to say that literacy practices are regulated by social institutions, but some of these institutions wield more power than others. This has been elaborated in chapter 5, where it is reported that the research unearthed several literacies among Murugi villagers, but which were not supported by government or any powerful agency.

There are more cases that illustrate that literacies are characterised by various power relations. A good example would be their regulation by division of labour. The relationship can be unequal for instance, in practices involving parent and child or teacher and pupil. Barton (1994a) relates to a British newspaper report on a survey that indicated that in the home, wives wrote more to keep contact with friends as evinced by Christmas or birthday cards, while husbands were more inclined to write cheques. He also reports his research findings in the Lancaster neighbourhood, which revealed that children were read more to by females than by males. Barton (1991) explains that practices of literacy demand that people call into play their cultural knowledge. In the abovementioned cases, it is apparent that in the home, literacies are positioned in social institutions or the power relations that sustain them as the case of gender points out. This can be illustrated by colleges, schools, workplaces or the prison, which are some of the institutions where definite power relations are exercised. This proves that there are literacies which are more dominant and more visible than others.

Another precept of the social theory of literacy is that literacy practices are etched on broader societal goals and cultural practices. This implies that literacy can be both an end in itself or a means to another end. In this case, literacy practices are sometimes situated on wider goals and contexts. Among villagers in Murugi for example, it was found out that the reading of farming utility texts was incidental because the driving goal was the broader socioeconomic goal of realising good farm produce through good farming. This shows that texts and people interrelate to provide meaning to each other. Yet, literacy has several functions in a given activity. It can serve the role of the spoken language, facilitate communication, help in settling a problem or act as a memory aid.

Literacy can also act at both micro and macro-levels, thus at individual and community points. However, at both levels, individuals and groups regulate and are regulated by literacy practices.

There is evidence that literacy is embedded in cultural practices going by the constructions that people make of it. In this regard, the act of reading or writing can be symbolic of such behaviour as defiance, conformity, solidarity, haughtiness, laziness or a sign of change. This is once again aptly elaborated in chapter 5 where it emerged that sitting down to read for example, fiction among the villagers in the face of more pressing socioeconomic chores is a sign of laziness. Similarly, Barton (1994a) shows that people have attitudes about reading at the meal tables or writing in books. Such constructions obtain from the fact that different people have different views about literacy, which underscore their attitudes. The same attitudes are reflected in the whole question of not being able to read or write fluently, to the point of some people electing to join the adult classes. Likewise, while literacy is sometimes given a lot of premium, in other cases, it can just be viewed as leisure. In other words, opinions about literacy practices are ambivalent.

It becomes manifest also that literacy practices are situated on social goals and cultural practices going by the people's networking that they facilitate. Barton (1994a) shows that despite the centrality of the views that the mind is fixed and given, it is socially constructed within the physical parameters of a human being. Literacy links the psychological with the social. A case in point is in writing, which mediates between the individual cognition and the social as results show in chapter 5. Literacy and language work together to mediate what goes on in our heads and what happens outside, or to simply put it, the psychological and the social. In this case, literacy negotiates between the self and the society. Additionally, literacy mediates the spoken and written languages, which in one instance appear as separate and in the next, as intertwined. Chapter 5 reports how Murugi villagers English-written minutes are oralised through Meru renditions and discussed in meetings. However, while speaking is instantaneous and transient, writing helps to fix things in time and space.

The social theory of literacy also holds that literacy practices are situated in history. Considering that literacy practices are always changing, scholars require ideological, cultural or traditional approaches on which the practices are based. Foremost, it should be remembered that contemporary practices derive from the past. Additionally, every person has a literacy history from childhood to adulthood, yet there are times that one is involved in one type of literacy more than other times. Accordingly, literacy makes sense to different people at different times in different ways. History reveals how the wider context of cultural history influences contemporary literacy practices as chapters 3 and 5 demonstrate. For example, chapter 5 makes it clear that school literacy has a bearing on the literacy practices of the villagers, implying that past and present literacies have a confluence. A person's literacy practices can also be gleaned from their history for example, if a study takes a historical approach to a person's life.

Another tenet of the social theory of literacy is that literacy practices are dynamic such that old ones get dropped as new ones are acquired. Taking formal literacy as an example, it has already been stated that the Kenyan education system has been reviewed at least twice depending on either the interests of the leaders or the people, or both. Additionally, in the definitions of literacy and literacies, it was mentioned that literacies are changing rapidly especially in the wake of new technology such as the computer with all its manifestations. Such changes have affected the realm of literacy in regard to forms of reading, writing or in the manner of sharing text-based material.

Literacy changes are common in both formal and informal learning set ups. The upshot of this is that people have diachronically different ways of learning, varied views about literacy and education, and varied strategies that they adopt to engage in, or in learning new literacies. There is need to note that people use literacy to cause desirable changes in their lives, and in turn, literacy changes people. It therefore follows that people's understanding of literacy is important in their learning, as their theories about it inform their actions. Chapter 6 indicts the Kenyan education policy for remaining monolithic and rigid for too long, to the point of failing to recognize literacies as practised outside the school set up. It is for this reason that a recommendation is made that change is

embraced by for example, formulating a literacy policy that captures all multiple literacies.

1.10 Conclusion

This chapter has offered an overview of all the chapters in the dissertation. It started by offering a background to the study by pointing out what factors motivated it, its problematic and the objectives that it set for itself. It also spelt out the scope and limitations of the study, showed its significance in contribution to knowledge, and its potential benefits to the nation of Kenya, in specific. The section also delineated the key terms 'literacy' and 'literacies,' which are used extensively in the study. It articulated the theory that guided the study and offered a rationale for its choice. It further offered some traces of the methodology employed for the research and provided shades of the research findings in summation. The main purpose of the chapter was to acquaint the reader with thumbnail sketches of the dissertation's content and organisation.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 LANGUAGE SITUATION IN KENYA

2.1 Introduction

Language is a very important tool in any given society as it stores and transmits people's culture. Dione (1984:191) asserts that "in Africa, each language tends to become the property of a given ethnic group. It owes its birth to this group, it conveys its culture, it is the stamp of its identity, the expression of its distinctive personality, the roots which anchor it to the past, the umbilical cord attaching it to its ancestors." Meanwhile, Mazrui and Mazrui (1998:53) state that "language is sometimes regarded as a reservoir of culture which controls human thought and behaviour and sets boundaries of the world view of its users."

Besides its importance in the realm of culture, language is equally important in the dissemination of knowledge. For example, in traditional African societies, language was used alongside participant observation tools to pass knowledge from one generation to another. The question of language remains paramount in the contemporary world. It is for this reason that there is formulation and planning of language policy in various countries, the world over. Considering that language and education are integral, it follows that language and education policies work hand in glove. Education is generally transmitted through language, and it would be inadvisable to address the question of literacy or literacies without making reference to language.

This chapter demonstrates that Kenya is a multilingual nation. Focus on the country's language policy is imperative taking into consideration that one definition of literacies that was provided in chapter 1 derives from skills that are acquired in languages, other than the dominant ones, whether minor or marginal. The question of dominant and minor languages is in tandem with that of dominant and marginal literacies, which are investigated in the study. In chapter 1 also, literacies were defined in regard to the types of evolutions that people make with respect to reading and writing, cases which are

exemplified in this chapter by invention of Sheng and Engsh patois in Kenya. Similar contrivances are discussed in Chapter 5, especially as regards Meru's appropriation of both English and Kiswahili, which enrich the language's vocabulary. It is in view of these reasons that a focus on language policy in Kenya obtains.

2.2 Distribution of Languages in Kenya

Kenya is both a multinational and multilingual country. In this composition, there are dominant and minority languages. Major languages include those that have been given official recognition and support like English and Kiswahili, as well as those that are spoken by members of ethnic groups with high populations. Among these are Kikuyu, Luo or Kamba. Influential languages have been standardised and are used in schools, though at different classes as will be discussed later. Conversely, minor languages lack official recognition, are not standardised, and little writing, if any, is done in them. They are also used by members of ethnic groups with small populations in comparison with the majority languages.

Classification and enumeration of Kenya's languages and dialects has been a controversial exercise, occasioning varying figures pertaining to their number. This is as a result of political, ethnic and national interests; failure to notice languages that are used by small populations, as well as the methodologies that have been employed to carry out the categorizations (Mazrui and Mazrui 1998, Ogola 2003). It is in the light of this that Mbaabu (1996) puts the languages of Kenya at approximately 40, while Ogola (2003) puts the figure at around 42. However, Gordon (2005) places the figure much higher at 61. This study elects to use Mbaabu's (1996) and Ogola's (2003) approximations as a result of the credibility of the methodologies used to classify them, contrary to those of Gordon (2005). The figures provided by Mbaabu and Ogola appear more persuasive since the authors have relied more on aerial, historical and linguistic parameters to arrive at their conclusions. However, while Gordon's figures might have followed the same parameters, they appear to have also been influenced by ethnopolitical factors, which undermine the veracity of his classification.

According to Heine and Möhlig (1980), Kenyan languages can broadly be classified as belonging to three genetic families: The Bantu, the Nilotic and Para-Nilotic, and the Cushitic. Heine and Möhlig argue that the Bantu are approximately 65%, the Nilotes about 30%, while the Cushites are about 3%. However, these percentages are unconvincing bearing in mind that there are other languages used in Kenya, and which they fail to mention. Among these are languages that are outside the genetic classification of Kenya's languages like English, Gujarati, Punjabi, Urdu, Hindi, German and French, which were documented earlier by Gorman (1974). There is need also to note that the population of Kenya has risen quite drastically since 1980, providing more evidence that the percentages may not be so reliable, though they offer an overview of the language situation in the country.

Except for Kiswahili, other African languages are marginal in the sense that they are not designated as official or national languages[7]. English and Kiswahili are the country's lingua franca, with Kiswahili being the preferred language by the masses, while English usage is largely the province of the elite. From the period of colonialism, English, Kiswahili and the mother tongue have existed in a dominant-subordinate relationship, with English invariably enjoying the advantage. In the face of this, suffice it to state that many Kenyan languages have been relegated, and so have been many people who do not speak Kiswahili or English. Worse still, Kiswahili, the national language has occasionally been derided as Arabic, pidgin, the language of slaves or the language of cheats (Ogola 2003)

2.3 Historical Basis of Language Policy in Kenya

Language policy in Kenya cannot be addressed without taking a historical perspective. The two main languages in the country, Kiswahili and English; have a history which is

---

[7] Though there is agreement that African of local languages have their basis in particular African communities that use them, there has been controversy over the dichotomy between a Kenyan (local) or African language and a non-Kenyan (non-local) or non-African language. While it is generally agreed that English for example, is a foreign language in Kenya, there are scholars who would like to view it as an African language considering that there are Kenyans, though few, who speak it as the first language. However, in view of the argument that is raised with regard to language policy in Kenya in the dissertation, English is an example of a non-Kenyan or non-African language.

worthy focus in this study. The origin of Kiswahili language is claimed to be the Kenyan coast. Going by the accounts that Mbaabu (1996) documents on the first Arab contact in this coast, arguably Kiswahili was already in use in 5th Century, when the first Arabs of Omani ancestry arrived in the locality. There occurred interaction between Africans and Arabs leading to trade and intermarriages between the two races, and in the process, Kiswahili benefited a great deal from the Arabic culture, religion and language, especially in the lexicon.

Kiswahili spread into the interior of East and Central Africa during the long distance trade when Arab caravans started moving inland. There was trading in ivory, minerals, cloth, pottery and slaves. In most cases in Kenya, those who joined the Arab caravans to provide services as porters were the Kamba. Kiswahili became the lingua franca, especially in urban centres, where it facilitated communication between the Arab traders and members from different communities in the Kenyan hinterland. During this trade, the East African coast was under the jurisdiction of the Zanzibar-Arab Sultanate.

Over time, Kiswahili grew in spread, usage and literature. For example, there is evidence that the language has enjoyed a long tradition of writing as seen in its written poetry of *Herikali* (1728), *Hamziya* (1747) or *Al Inkishafi* (1800). The poetry was first written in the Arabic script, but with the advent of Christian missionaries, it was rendered in the Roman script. The Arab occupation of the East African coast preceded the coming of Europeans who arrived in the Kenyan coast in the 15th Century, after Portugal's Vasco da Gama had made the first journey by sea to India. The Roman script was introduced by the likes of Reverend Krapf, who published the first Kiswahili grammar in 1850 and the first Kiswahili dictionary in 1882. Meanwhile, Bishop Steere published his *Swahili Language Handbook* in 1870. In this regard, Christianity and the building of the Kenya-Uganda railway which began in the late 1890s, also contributed to the growth and spread of Kiswahili.

2.4 Colonial Language Policy: Domination-Subordination

The colonial language policy has its basis in the scramble for Africa by European powers, which took place towards the end of the 19th Century. The boundaries of the continent were defined by Europeans in the Berlin Conference on December 1884– January 1885. In 1886, a joint commission comprising of representatives from powerful European nations like Britain, Germany and France, met to deliberate on the Zanzibar's Sultan authority in the East African coast. Britain and Germany entered into agreement over each empire's sphere of influence in East Africa. Kenya fell under the rule of Britain, promulgating the colonial language policy, especially in the realm of education. However, this language policy kept vacillating over the years as a result of the interests of several players and some realities on the ground. The realities in question derive from historical, social and economic forces. This is as a result of the fact that language policy has mainly been informed by decrees and exhortations of powerful people such as political leaders and scholars. Njoroge (1990: 257) argues that:

> A language policy might be taken to refer to decisions made by people with administrative and judicial responsibilities, decisions that regulate language choice in various state controlled domains such as schools, the parliament, law courts etc. and that since these are national institutions, the policy affects that national or official language choice.

Generally, language policy in British colonial East Africa can be described in view of two important epochs: Pre-Second World War and post-Second World War.

2.5 First Epoch of Colonial Language Policy

Several ideological and pragmatic factors were considered to come up with the language policy before the Second World War. These included Christianity, economy, politics and philosophical inclinations (Mazrui and Mazrui 1998). There were several players involved in the formulation of the policy in this period. They included Christian missionaries who thought that gospel would best be spread in the mother tongue, and colonial administrators who had an interest in controlled teaching of English to Africans in order to obtain low cadre employees in their administration. There were also the

British settlers who feared the Europeanization of Africans through English language lest they became too educated to accept the role of wage labourers. The interests of all these players were always vacillating and inchoate, impacting language policy in a number of ways.

Language policy was closely tied to colonial education, which was introduced by missionaries such as Bishop Steere, Reverend Krapf and Father Sacleux. Language issue, thus the mother tongue, Kiswahili[8] and English; in the realm of education was discussed during the United Missionary Conference in Kenya in 1909. The Conference adopted the use of mother tongue in the first three classes of primary school, Kiswahili in two of the middle classes in primary, while English was to be used in the rest of the classes up to the university (Gorman 1974). The missionaries also boosted Kenyan languages by according them orthography based on the Latin alphabet. Local languages received a further boon when the colonizers started publishing firms. While English language was the major beneficiary of this venture, Kenyans also started producing creative works in local languages, though under the watchful eye of the administrators lest the works undermined colonial rule (Ngugi 1978). Examples of such works, and which were later published, include Kiswahili plays like *Nakupenda lakini* by Henry Kuria or *Nimelogwa Nisiwe na Mpenzi* by Gerishon Ngugi. This was a substantial boost for Kiswahili, the plays' failure to tackle the theme of commitment notwithstanding.

While the mother tongue, Kiswahili and English, were used with ease at various levels of education; the colonial administration grew apprehensive over the teaching of English to Africans shortly before the 1920s. There was realisation that English education interfered with the goal of maintaining a subordinate class of workers, forcing it to review the education policy. Kenyans who had imbued a lot of English book-learning were reluctant to do menial work, while preferring to take up white collar careers. Additionally, some colonialists were jealous of allowing many Africans to learn their language. Mazrui and Mazrui (1996: 272) state:

---

[8] Kiswahili was then the national language and the lingua franca. However, this was more of the reality on the ground rather than the colonial government's position.

Many European settlers regarded the teaching of the English language to "natives" as potentially a subversive force. Social distance between master and subject had to be maintained partly through linguistic distance.

The foregoing quotation arguably points to one of the contributing factors behind the status of English as a language of the elite in Kenya. Following the review of the education policy, English was to be taught to the Africans guardedly in order to ensure that the majority of them never acquired secondary and university education. Just as Mazrui and Mazrui (1996) and Brutt-Griffler (2002) argue, this move somewhat retarded the growth and spread of English in the colony, contrary to the long held view that it was the policy of the colonialists to spread English to the colonized (Phillipson 1992, Chimerah 1998).

It should however, be pointed out that denial of Africans to learn English on the contrary provided a stimulus for them to study it. The colonized people had already realised that English language was a sure ticket to white collar employment and wealth, such that to deny them a chance to learn it was tantamount to condemning them to perpetual menial jobs. It is for this reason for example, that the Kikuyu of Kenya started independent schools to learn English without inhibition in the 1920s (Whiteley 1974). Africans also lobbied to be taught English more because it was the gateway to elite career. In the 1920s however, the Director of Education J.R. Orr supported the teaching of mother tongues and dismissed the teaching of Kiswahili as a waste of time. In 1924, the Phelps-Stokes Commission also recommended that Kiswahili be dropped from the curriculum, except where it was spoken as the first language; the mother tongue be taught in early primary classes, while English was to be taught from upper primary all the way to the university.

However, various commissions and individual people started voicing concern over lack of materials and personnel to effect the proposed language and education policies. Among these were the 1924 Departmental Report and the 1925 report of the East Africa Commission, which was headed by Ormsby-Gore. There was also the East and Central

Africa education directors conference at Dares Salaam in 1929 (Gorman 1974). In 1937, the Commission on Higher Education in East Africa made several recommendations on the use of language in schools. The importance of teaching in Kiswahili was acknowledged, but it was stated that to delay the teaching of English learning in primary schools for its sake was anomalous. In 1943, the Advisory Committee on Education released a Memorandum on Language in African School Education, which passed that education would begin with the child's first language, while the learning of English was underscored as crucial. Nonetheless, teaching in Kenyan languages was affected by the multiplicity of languages, which made it difficult to produce books in all of them. There was also lack of a clear language policy stating the languages that were to be used at various stages, and lack of standardized orthographies in various languages. It is as a result of some these concerns that the East African Directors of Education Conference of 1944 passed that efforts be made to produce literature in African languages. This culminated in the setting up of the East African Literature Bureau in 1948.

Going by the above, it is evident that the first epoch of colonial language policy remained eclectic depending on the colonizers interests at any particular time. There were times when the administrators would favour the promotion of either African languages or English in view of their interests at stake. Additionally, there were occasions when the objectives of the missionaries and those of the administrators would conflict with respect to the language policy that was to take precedence. It is therefore apparent that the colonial language policy in Kenya prior to World War II was never compact, and when there were attempts to concretise it, it was plagued by inadequate manpower and resources to mount it. In spite of its inchoate status, the first epoch of colonial language policy laid groundwork for English hegemonic status in Kenya.

2.6 Second Epoch of Colonial Language Policy

After the Second World War, there was a shift in the British colonial language policy, which hurt local languages. When self rule was imminent in Kenya following the freedom struggle, the British colonialists mounted a campaign to create some

Westernized elite in the country.[9] They believed, and rightly so, that such a cream of leaders would protect their interests in independent Kenya. This is obviously another step that buttressed English hegemony. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, the Education Department Reports pointed out that it was inappropriate to teach three languages at the primary school. The Reports included Beecher's which was published in 1949, Binn's 1952 and the Drogheda Commission of 1952. The documents recommended that English be introduced in the lower primary to be taught alongside the mother tongue, and called for the dropping of Kiswahili in the curriculum, except in areas where it was the mother tongue. The implementation of this policy took effect in 1953-1955 (Gorman 1974). For example, in 1953, a tentative syllabus for African intermediate schools recommended that English be the language of instruction in schools and the language of examination after the 8 year primary education. Chimerah (1998) and Mazrui and Mazrui (1998), reveal that Kiswahili's elimination from the curriculum was partly aimed at forestalling its growth and spread, on which Kenyans freedom struggle was coalescing.

Another reason that was used to eliminate Kiswahili from the curriculum was the contention that it interfered with the good learning of English. There was segregation and stratification of education in which case the Europeans were ranked top, and taught solely in English. Asians schools were ranked in the middle, while African schools were at the bottom. In this arrangement, English was the language of instruction among Europeans right from the beginning class in primary school, unlike in African and Asian schools. Mbaabu (1996) reveals that Asian and African pupils did not do as well as the European children in English examinations prompting an investigation by the Department of Education. The findings blamed the poor performance on the teaching of Kiswahili and mother tongue. This led to the dropping of Kiswahili in the school curriculum, while the learning of mother tongues was slated for lower primary, as English became the sole medium of instruction in the rest of the educational levels.

---

[9] Mazrui and Mazrui (1996) make a reference to Marshad (1984:56), who highlights how the British created Westernized elite in Kenya, in his unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Illinois.

The entrenchment of English teaching from the early classes in primary schools was contrary to UNESCO's 1953 position that pupils would best be served by learning in mother tongue in the early years of schooling. It should also be noted that English was taught at a costly price for Africans, a toll that has characterised its teaching in independent Kenya as well. Ngugi (1986:11) laments about his nasty experience in the primary school when he stresses that:

> Thus one of the most humiliating experiences was to be caught speaking Gikuyu in the vicinity of the school. The culprit was given corporal punishment - three to five strokes of the cane on bare buttocks - or was made to carry a metal plate around the neck with inscriptions such as I AM STUPID or I AM A DONKEY. Sometimes the culprits were fined money that they could hardly afford.

Ngugi also cites cases in schools and universities where Kenyan languages were associated with negative qualities of backwardness, underdevelopment, humiliation and punishment. He adds that in the final analysis, school leavers graduated with a hatred for their people, their culture and languages; which had brought them humiliation and harassment in their history of schooling. Hatred for one's mother tongue is a big threat to multilingualism, especially as far as African languages are concerned. Roland-Breton (2000:24) observes:

> Language murder or "linguicide", whether it is carried out intentionally or not, is one of the basic tools of ethnocide, of the deculturation of people, which has always been perpetrated by colonization and is still the semi-official aim of governments which do not recognize the rights of their native minorities. As local languages are increasingly excluded from the education systems, "linguicide" is speeding up.

Mazrui and Mazrui (1998:46) capture the effect of such linguistic conquest as follows: "the psychological damage to the colonized African was immense. Most Africans not only seemed to accept that most of their languages were fundamentally inferior to English language; they became convinced that it was not worthy doing anything about

it." Wide usage of English continued in the Kenyan schools and in 1962, all teacher training colleges were advised to prepare the would-be-teachers to teach using the English medium.

Going by the colonial language policy in Kenya after the Second World War, it is evident that English was supported at the expense of local languages. However, it has been observed that this support was not motivated by the interest to make Kenyans learn the language, but more in the interest of preventing Kenyan nationalism which was solidifying around African languages, specifically Kiswahili. English promotion was also inspired by the interest to nurture a sycophantic, Westernized class in independent Kenya. The move bequeathed Kenya a disparate linguistic legacy after independence, taking into account that English continued to play the divisive role of the haves (English users) and have-nots (non-English users). Nearly fifty years after Kenya's independence, English is yet to be rid of its elitist and exclusionist status.

2.7 Language Policy in Independent Kenya: A Colonial Legacy

Following the attainment of independence in 1963, the Ministry of Education took several steps towards language planning in the country. However, the government continued with the colonial language policy with no change worthy of mention for over twenty years (Ogola 2003). In 1964 for example, there was the Ominde Commission, whose findings revealed that many Kenyans wanted a trilingual approach to education. The mother tongue was preferred for verbal communication especially in rural areas, while English and Kiswahili were preferred for education from lower primary up to the university. Kiswahili was especially favoured in education for purposes of national and regional unity. Mazrui and Mazrui (1996) reveal that Kiswahili was also seen as the appropriate language for the Pan-Africanism dream.

However, the findings further revealed that most people were in favour of English being the medium of instruction from the beginning class in primary school to the university. Mazrui and Mazrui (1996) explain that the Ominde Commission threw its weight behind

English language arguing that it would expedite learning in all subjects, by ensuring smooth transitions from "vernaculars," and owing to its "intrinsic resources." The Commission threw spanners in the working of mother tongues when it recommended that the languages were most important in verbal communication and recommended that they get incorporated into the curriculum of lower classes, especially for story telling sessions.

The Ominde Commission further made a lukewarm recommendation for the use of mother tongue and Kiswahili in the education system. For instance, Kiswahili was not considered for examination at the end of primary school education, unlike English, a factor that undermined it since it was not taken seriously. It is no wonder that in some schools, Kiswahili was not taught at all putting into account that it was never examinable at the end of primary schooling. Further boost for English at the expense of local languages occurred when the Prator-Hutasoit Commission of 1965 advised that English be the only language of instruction in all school grades, starting from beginners classes in the primary schools, heralding the New Primary Approach, better known as the English Medium Approach. To implement the new curriculum, more teachers were to be trained in English, while their first language was viewed as a premium in the teaching of lower primary schools. Arguably, this was another step in consolidating English supremacy in Kenya.

The question of attitude has also had a bearing on language policy in Kenya. Hemphill (1974), states that there were cases of some teachers viewing the mother tongue as an arcane subject in the curriculum, while Kiswahili was dismissed as a language that served no important purpose. It is for these reasons that the mother tongue and Kiswahili were allotted little or no time in the school timetable. This was contrary to English which was accorded compulsory status, besides being an examination subject in both primary and secondary education. Nonetheless in 1967, The Kenya Institute of Education (K.I.E) started producing books in various mother tongues, Kiswahili inclusive; for use in primary schools. In the same year, Kiswahili was pronounced the language of Adult Education, alongside mother tongues (Gorman 1974).

Another Report that focused on language policy in post-independent Kenya was that of Wamalwa, which was constituted in 1971. The Report advised that Kiswahili training among civil servants be emphasised since some bureaucrats had exhibited handicap in its usage, especially when dealing with the public. This led to the introduction of Kiswahili courses for civil servants in some colleges. Additionally, the Report recommended that international communication be considered through the use of French and German. In this regard, French and German studies were introduced in some designated secondary schools as well as in some post-secondary institutions.

English preponderance in the Kenyan education system was nevertheless entrenched following the Gachathi Commission in 1976, which proposed that the tongue becomes the language of instruction from the fourth grade in primary school to the university. The Commission also urged that each language be taught in view of its areas of catchment. In the light of this, urban areas were viewed as catchment areas for Kiswahili, while rural areas were deemed as catchments for mother tongues. English demand rose especially when it became an important determinant for admission into secondary school. The Commission stressed Kiswahili as an important subject in primary and secondary classes, and recommended that it should be compulsorily taught and examined in the final primary school national examination. This increased the number of Kiswahili students in schools and in the university. However, the language received inferior status when compared with English in the school curriculum. While English was allotted 8-10 periods out of the 40 hours per week, Kiswahili was allotted a paltry 3 hours (Chimerah 1998). While all this was happening, many mother tongues were marginalized and it is not surprising that to date, a good number of them have never been reduced to writing.

2.8 Language Policy and the National Language

In spite of its declaration as the national language in 1965 through a Parliamentary decree, Kiswahili faced several hurdles. Powerful people in the independent government were mainly scions of English education and were therefore averse to the incorporation of Kiswahili into the school curriculum. The language was frustrated by some prominent

personalities who opposed it. Chimerah (1998) cites the example of the former Attorney General Charles Njonjo, who was quoted as having said that there was no need of giving Kiswahili much attention as anybody could pick it in the street. Such a pronouncement from a senior government official had certainly a negative impact on Kiswahili at the expense of English.

Furthermore, there has been a lackadaisical commitment to the question of the Kenyan national language by both Kenyan officials and intellectuals, especially those who were churned out of the English education system. Promotion of any local language was feared as a risk for their careers, resulting in their covert opposition to such endeavours. Kiswahili as a national language was also faced with a number of problems. While there was no clear language policy in Kenya, the language was derided as borrowing heavily from other languages while its authenticity as a Kenyan language was normally questioned. In regard to attitudes, it was rejected as incapable of facing technological challenges, the language of former slave masters and the language of tricksters (Ogola 2003).

However in 1981, the Mackay Commission recommended the introduction of a new education system in post-independent Kenya. It advised that there be 8 years of primary school, 4 years of secondary school and 4 years of university education (8-4-4). This was a shift from the previous 7 years of primary schooling, 4 years of secondary schooling, 2 years of high school and 3 years of university education (7-4-2-3). The Commission passed that English remains the language of instruction, while Kiswahili was made a compulsory subject in both primary and secondary education. This resulted in thousands of children getting a chance to learn Kiswahili from tender ages. The policy was also followed by the production of Kiswahili books to meet the increased demands of both students and teachers. The teaching and examination of Kiswahili in schools, colleges and universities got underway.

According to Njoroge (1990), the Mackay Commission further advised that the mother tongue be used in lower grades of primary schools, in areas where this was possible. The

Kenya Institute of Education also produced more instructional materials in Kiswahili alongside several Kenyan languages in the wake of 8-4-4 education system, increasing the readership of these languages. The requirement that those who wanted to pursue particular courses in the university must pass either English or Kiswahili also propelled interest in the learning of the latter. Additionally, good performance in Kiswahili became a requirement to join a number of career training institutions, encouraging its study further.

However, while most of the views about lapses in Kenya's language policy hold water, there are some that are untenable and misrepresentations of facts. For example, Rhoades (1977:11) is concerned that Kiswahili was made the national language of Kenya without collating the opinion of the people. "Swahili is Kenya's national language, but this was done by government action as part of a deliberate effort to build national identity rather than a groundswell of popular sentiment based upon an existing identity with Swahili." This concern is unfounded because Kenyans embraced Kiswahili as a national language and there has been no serious grievance against it. There were a few grumbles however, immediately after independence as a result of political and ethnic affiliations. Nonetheless, Mazrui and Mazrui (1995) and Ogola (2003) correctly affirm that Kiswahili was endorsed in all corners of Kenya owing to its neutrality status. In other words, the language is not ascribable to any particular ethnic grouping in the country, and therefore, it cannot be accused of aggrandizing the interests of any specific community at the expense of others, unlike the majority of other Kenyan local languages.

In a similar vein, Eastman (1985) unconvincingly argues that Kenya's linguistic scenario is faced with the challenge of divisive diversity. He claims that there exist sociolinguistic generational gaps in Kiswahili which bode ill for the country. The gaps in question are said to involve the Kiswahili that is spoken by the traditional coastal communities, the standardised or the one that is taught in schools, and the pidginized form. He argues that each of these divisions accords various users different identities, and there has not been an effort to bridge the gaps. He also claims that there are several coinages that fail to be

arrived at through consensus between Kenyan and Tanzanian experts. However, going by the situation today, Eastman's views are hollow. The diversity in the Kiswahili spoken is a feature of many other languages, English inclusive. For example, Mazrui and Mazrui (1998) and Griffler-Brutt (2002), demonstrate that there are several 'Englishes' that are spoken in Britain, let alone the world over, but they all subscribe to one generic language called English. Granted, there are also several 'Kiswahilis' in Kenya, not to forget others in East and Central Africa, yet they all answer to the title Kiswahili. In fact, it is preposterous to imagine that a language with millions of speakers can be used in a homogeneous way.

2.9 Multilingualism and Language Policy

So far, it has been demonstrated how education policies of both colonial and post colonial governments affected various languages in the country. However, there are other non-educational factors that influenced language policy in Kenya as well. These are largely socio-cultural, such as the case of multilingualism. Njoroge (1990) argues that multilingualism in Kenya has militated against the formulation of a clear language policy. He reveals that this has been both at societal and state levels, as a result of the multiracial status of Kenya, which includes Africans, Arabs, Europeans and Asians. He convincingly argues that amid these races and multilingualism, it has not been easy to distinguish a language family, a language and a dialect, as all these tend to overlap. This argument corresponds with the various figures provided at the beginning of this chapter to show the number of languages in Kenya. In a like vein, some dialects happen to be so distinct from others in the purported same mother language that it becomes difficult to draw a line between a language and a dialect. This can bear further problems in cases where the asserted language is considered for standardization in an area where dialects are so dissimilar.

Language policy is also hindered by spatial distribution of many people who speak varieties of languages that must be factored in when drawing its strategy. Njoroge (1990) calls this situation "spatial multilingualism," implying the existence of many languages

within a geographic area. In such heterogeneity, it becomes difficult to mount a language policy considering that it cannot to meet the interests of everybody in the scenario. Such distribution is also found in the classrooms making it difficult to implement a language policy in view of the mother tongue, which is prevalently used in a given area. In such situations after all, the language policy is apt to be rejected if it is deemed to be aggrandizing the interests of one group at the expense of the interests of other groups within the area. Amid these concerns, it only becomes imperative to identify Kiswahili, the country's lingua franca for use. Going by this, it is evident that multilingualism impacts on language policy, especially when the dichotomy between a language and a dialect is hazy.

Ethnicity has also impinged negatively on a clear language policy. Chimerah (1998), states that when Kiswahili was pronounced the national language in Kenya, there were arguments that languages like Dholuo, Kikuyu or Kamba were equally national, and therefore, warranted equal status. This was partly precipitated by the fact that Kiswahili belongs to the Bantu family of languages unlike the Nilotic or Cushitic languages, which are also used in Kenya, as earlier mentioned. Chimerah (1998) observes that such questions were politically motivated putting into account that Tanzania had over 120 ethnic groups, yet there were no qualms in executing Kiswahili as the national language there. However, it has already been stated that Kiswahili was endorsed as the national language in Kenya mainly as a result of its neutrality in regard to ethnic affiliations.

2.10 Impact of Unclear Language Policy

What is evident from the foregoing so far is that Kenyan education has been pyramidally structured from colonial days as a result of unaffordable school fees, separatist examinations, or inequity in the provision of school facilities. These drawbacks have not been redressed in spite of the post-independence government objective to make education egalitarian. Bogonko (1992) argues that several years into independent Kenya, there was fear that segregation based on social stratification had replaced racial segregation. This is because there were a few schools which were the exclusive of the

sons and daughters of the affluent in Kenya, as opposed to the rest of public schools. Taking into consideration that the education sector impacts other important sectors in any country, it would be prudent to assess the effect of Kenya's language policy in other fields. While there are many domains that could be put into perspective, in this study, it is only key sectors which seem to have an important bearing on the lives of Kenyans in a big way that are illuminated. Among these are the arms of government, the arts and in particular literature, and the media.

2.10.1 Arms of Government

2.10.1.1 Legislature

The Kenyan Parliament, like many similar institutions in the world is the body that makes laws for the country. According to Ogola (2003), the Kenyan parliament is tailored in view of the British House of Commons. He adds that the institution is not very different from the colonial 1885-1900 legislation of parliament, which governed the East African Protectorate, of which Kenya belonged. The legislature comprised of Europeans alone and English was the sole language of use. The Kenyan parliament has also inherited from the British House of Commons institutions and structures like the speaker, clerk, questions, motions, bills and so forth. Ogolla (2003:186) rightly argues that:

> The legacy of British House of Commons bequeathed through English cannot be overemphasised. It is also apparent that the Parliament of Kenya underwent little change, even after independence. Currently the Parliament of Kenya is considerably influenced by Commonwealth Parliamentary practice (the influence of the British House of Commons again) and is also a member of international parliamentary Union. The Parliament of Kenya has therefore maintained an international character rather than a national character. The objective of wanting to make the Parliament of Kenya an African forum of discussion and deliberation as was articulated by President Kenyatta during his first official address has therefore not been largely met.

The Kenyan legislature reveals some ugly facts about the country's lacklustre language policy. For instance, while parliament adopted a bilingual approach for use in the House, whereby English or Kiswahili would be used, by and large the business of the house is conducted in English. Of course, there was an attempt to make parliament run its business in Kiswahili in 1974 through a presidential decree, though the language's operations in parliament were rendered hollow for lack of adequate corpus planning, necessitating a review of the policy in 1979.

The statutes also provide that those seeking to be Members of Parliament must be conversant in either English or Kiswahili, which must be proved by passing a language test. Nonetheless, aspirants can be exempted from the test after proving that they passed either language in the secondary four examinations. However, the statutes also provide that every bill and the memorandum accompanying it, all acts of parliament enacted, all other legislations under the authority of parliament, all financial resolutions and all proposed amendments must be written in English (Ogola 2003). Furthermore, the annual Budget reading in Parliament is presented in English, meaning that most of the citizenry have only to rely on a few translations of its excerpts.

Ogola (2003) brought to fore the importance of English as opposed to that of Kenyan languages as far as the Kenyan law makers are concerned. In his investigation, he found that the legislators read more of English newspapers than those of Kiswahili at a scale difference of 82.75 to 17.24 respectively. The legislators explained their preference for English papers to those of Kiswahili as the sketchiness and lateness in news reportage of the latter. This readership status is a pointer to the exclusivist tendencies of English users since the same study revealed that 82% of the Kiswahili daily readers of *Taifa Leo* lived in rural areas, which are generally characterised by peasantry, as opposed to only 18% of the same paper readers in urban areas. Additionally, the research revealed that only 2% of *Taifa Leo* readers were vocationally in management positions, implying that the newspaper enjoys readership among people in the lower middle class or below, who typify the masses in Kenya. Such languages choices can be viewed in the same vein with school literacy and multiple literacies in the country, whereby the latter, which

characterise the masses in specific contexts as was unearthed about Murugi villages, are given a blind eye or frowned upon by leaders and policymakers.

In this arrangement, Mazrui and Mazrui (1998) argue that the Kenyan parliament denies many Kenyans an opportunity to participate in the formulation of laws, and cuts off many people from political participation, particularly those who are not proficient in English. In this regard, it is arguable that the majority of the people miss its gist. The question of Kiswahili, Kenya's national language in parliament can thus be said to be an offer by one hand and a denial by the other, as far as the statutes are concerned. To this end, English usage in parliament is statutorily more of the rule than the exception as it is the language of choice in questions and debates. It is also the sole language for bill drafting, the language of budget reading, and the language of the House's audits and accounts (Ogola 2003). In this case, English and Kiswahili in the Kenyan legislature exist in a dominant-subordinate configuration, just as was seen in education.

2.10.1.2 Judiciary

The Kenyan judiciary has had a triple heritage: The traditional, Islamic and the English laws. Regarding the institution, and the constitution specifically, independent Kenya language policies have not been very different from those of the colonial government. However, there are measures that have been taken in an attempt to bring some desirable changes. For example, several policy decisions have been made by the government since the attainment of independence in 1963. Poignant among these has been the attempt to entrench language policy in the constitution. A case in point is the constitutional provision that anybody wishing to be considered as eligible for naturalization as a Kenyan citizen must certify the authorities that they have adequate knowledge of Kiswahili. In this respect, registration for citizenship demands knowledge of the national language. Additionally, it has already been mentioned that there is a clause that deters those with no knowledge of Kiswahili to vie for parliamentary elections, while another clause states that the business of the National Assembly shall be conducted in English and Kiswahili languages.

In spite of these clauses, it is the English law that has assumed supremacy in the legal sector. The Kenyan constitution provides that English shall be the language of the High Court and that of the Court of Appeal. The legal language in Kenya is English, mainly borrowed from Latin. Mazrui and Mazrui (1998), stress that the lingo-legal situation renders the constitution incomprehensible and even irrelevant to the ordinary people. In the law courts for example, miscarriage of justice cannot be ruled out particularly when the accused and the judge have to rely on half baked translators. The upshot of this is that most of the citizenry is screened out from participating in national development. This is also linguistic exclusion because Kenyan languages, which are understood by the majority, are intentionally or inadvertently denied a chance to develop a legal register. Suffice it to state that there is also a big linguistic gap between the constitution and the citizenry, which renders the constitution immaterial to most people.

2.10.2 Literature

One way to aid Kenyans learn English in the education system has been through literature. However, some of the literature that is hitherto in use smacks of colonialism, a baggage that the country is yet to eschew. This is more evidence of failure to have a clear language policy, especially in the realm of education. This can be seen in the same vein with the education system that was also inherited from Britain, and which remains averse to the question of multiple literacies in their contexts, which this study investigates. While written literature is attributable to the British colonizers, there has always been a long tradition of orature (oral songs, dances, fables, poetry, riddles, proverbs, myths, legends and so forth), which was undermined in colonial Kenya. Christian missionaries were in the vanguard of this stultification while arguing that orature was heathen. However, Kenyatta (1979) and Ngugi (1997) reveal that the move to abolish orature by the colonialists was meant to undermine Kenyan cultures for easier colonization. Nonetheless, there has been a revival of oral literature not only in the school syllabus, but also in extra curricular activities as seen in the annual Kenya Schools and Colleges Drama Festival and in the Kenya Schools Music Festival. There

has also been vibrant literature authored by Kenyan writers in Kiswahili, English and mother tongues.

In spite of all this, colonial literature is to date used alongside contemporary literature. Critics hold that such literature has no basis for the indigenous Kenyan culture. In a like vein, some of the colonial literature is blamed for espousing racism in its content, imagery and idiomatic expressions. Ngugi (1986) argues that the literature was penned to make Africans hate themselves, and at the same time revere the White people, who were their colonizers. A case in point is Rider Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines* (1993:40), where the author describes Gagool, an African old woman as illustrated below:

> […] the creature crept on all fours, but when it reached the place where the king sat, it got to its feet. It threw off the fur covering, showing itself for the first time. The face was that of a very old woman, but it looked no bigger than the face of a one-year-old child. Among the folds of skin was a slit for a mouth, a small, flat nose, a pointed chain, and a pair of large, black, gleaming eyes. The head itself was perfectly bare, and yellow in colour: it moved about like the head of a snake. She was terrible to look at. […] the hand had nails at least an inch long …

Such depiction is denigrating to the African people, and can make young readers develop self hatred and diffidence. Ironically, the book was even translated into Kiswahili to give it wider readership.

Mazrui and Mazrui (1998) cite another element of colonial legacy as the contemptible depiction of Black people in literature, some of which borders on racism. Yet, such literature has occasionally been used as set books in the Kenya education system as exemplified by Shakespearean classics. Mazrui and Mazrui (1998) provide some cases in point as when Portia makes unsavoury remarks about the skin colour of the suitor from Morocco in *Merchants of Venice*[10] or the prevalence of black imagery in malevolent

---

[10] Shakespeare, William (1981) *The Merchant of Venice*. London: Oxford Univeristy Press.

situations in *Macbeth.*[11] The scholars also mention the example of John Milton's *Paradise Lost,*[12] in which Devil turns black after falling from the favour of God in heaven.

English domination in Kenya notwithstanding, scholars also challenge its segregationist tendencies for adopting black imagery to connote negative ideas. Mazrui and Mazrui (1998) assert that racial slurs against Black people are perpetrated through the use of black metaphors and idioms in English. The scholars aver that this occurs when there is use of English terms like 'animism', 'tribe', 'primitive' and so forth, in describing the African world. The authors further offer examples of the black metaphors prevalent in English language, and which are based on racism. These include 'blackmail,' 'black market,' 'black sheep,' 'black cat,' 'dark ages' or 'dark continent.' There are also idioms like 'the devil is not as black as he is painted' or 'the case of the kettle calling the pot black.' The association of blackness with emptiness ramifies into a number of sub-associations such as of ignorance and primitiveness.

While writers like Ali Mazrui, Alamin Mazrui and Ngugi wa Thiong'o are persuaded that there are English literary works, and usage of English language that is to date racist, there have been no clear education and language policies regarding their teaching in Kenya. For failure to have such policies, there is no guidance as to whether the works should be dropped from the curriculum altogether or whether they should be used in schools as exemplars of racist art. Instead, some of these works are occasionally identified as set books for examination candidates, while the book market teems with them. Sometimes also, it is the discretion of various teachers or schools to use or not to use such works in teaching. Such laissez faire use of controversial language and literature is testimony to lack of a compact language policy.

---

[11] Shakespeare, William (1975) *Macbeth*. London: Methuen and Company

[12] Milton, John (1952) *Paradise Lost*. London: Oxford University Press

2.10.3 Media

The situation of the media defies any documented statistics considering that it is a sector that is growing rapidly by the day. For example, statistics provided by Mazrui and Mazrui (1996), Chimerah (1998) or Ogechi and Bosire-Ogechi (2002) have since been overtaken by time, following the fast growing media industry. Even at this moment of writing, there is information that there is burgeoning of more radio stations into the Kenyan airwaves, while there are media operators who are waiting to launch their stations in the near future. However, what is apparent is that the Kenyan media was structured in line with the colonial media immediately after independence. For example, there was a single electronic media station, the Voice of Kenya, with one television station, and a few radio channels all under the control of the Kenyan government. The radio channels were the Kiswahili or National Service, the English or General Service; and the few stations broadcasting in mother tongue. The local languages channels broadcast in some designated zones of Kenya, for a few hours each day. The Voice of Kenya broadcast its programmes at the behest of the government pointing to the fact that the electronic media lacked freedom.

In the print media however, were the East African Standard, Daily Nation, *Baraza* and *Taifa Leo*, which exercised some freedom since they were privately owned. In 1985, the government attempted to start publications of rural newspapers in Kiswahili, courtesy of Kenya Rural Press Extension Project. The project was short-lived, and though there is literature in mother tongues today, it is produced out of private or non-governmental organisations initiatives, with the aim of dealing with specific concerns like HIV/AIDS, local news, poverty alleviation or conflict management.

While the situation of the media in Kenya can be said to have been grim in view of media freedom several years after independence, it has since improved substantially. There has been maturation from the monolithic state-controlled radio and television stations, which dedicated most of the time to English programming, to a multiplicity of radio and television channels, most of which are privately owned. The new broadcasting stations have grown prolific following the liberalisation of the air waves in the 1990s, in the wake

of multiparty politics. There are nearly fifty radio stations, most of them broadcasting on frequency modulator (BBC World Service Trust 2008). The stations broadcast in mother tongue, Kiswahili and English. However, television stations are apparently tilted in favour of English language. Of the six mainstream television stations, two broadcast in English, while the rest broadcast in both English and Kiswahili, with the latter receiving a paltry air time. This happens as a result of the many European and American-made programmes that are televised by most of these stations.

In addition, the situation of the print media remains dismal as far as local languages are concerned. For example, of the five daily newspapers which enjoy countrywide and out-of-country readership, there is only one Kiswahili paper. The English dailies are Daily Nation, The Standard, The People Daily and Kenya times, while the sole Kiswahili paper is *Taifa Leo*. In a similar vein, there are many English urban-based magazines and newspapers, against a dismal backdrop of similar papers in Kenyan languages. There are also dozens of English weeklies and monthlies such as Drum, Parents, Move, True Love, News, Adam, Real Men, Revival Springs and so forth. There are also foreign magazines available on newsstands such as BBC's Focus on Africa, Time, Newsweek or Newsafrica. However, there are hardly magazines of such stature in Kenyan languages. One can agree with Bogonko's (1992) assertion that the English newspapers and magazines are an index of the luxury of the rich in urban areas, and would not fit in the realm of mass media in Kenya. So are the films which are mainly in English and which depict the Anglo-American culture.

Internet technology has also made inroads in Kenya as a communication channel. However, the technology remains a monopoly of the middle and upper classes of society, particularly in urban centres. It characterises the lifestyles of this cluster of people, in their homes, offices and in institutions of learning. Chapter 5 reports that in some Kenyan zones, procuring of computers for internet services is hindered by infrastructural setbacks such as lack of electricity. Accordingly, the internet appears to be another media that enhances the divide between the elite and the masses in Kenya. However, the story behind the evolving media technology in the country cannot be said to be so grim in the face of

the cell phone, whose usage cuts across different classes of people in equal measure. Statistics show that over 17 million of Kenyans, nearly half of the country's population, is actively using cell phones (BBC News 2009). Yet, one can infer that the cell phone subscribers are adults because infants and children do not generally own the gadgets, suggesting that this could be one type of media industry, among a few, that is not exclusionist, and therefore, egalitarian.

In view of the foregoing, it is discernible that the media industry in Kenya is a disservice to quite a substantial percentage of the population. Most broadcasters visions and missions revolve around the tenets of informing, educating and entertaining. However, considering that the mainstream media is heavily tilted into the use of English, while the majority of the population do not understand the language, one can argue that the media is also in a way an agent of exclusion. The situation has not been helped by the advent of internet technology which is solely patronised by the people of some particular social class in society. However, the heavily-inclined English programming could change, taking into account that there are rising numbers of Kiswahili programmes, among them soap operas, as the stations continue to compete for wider audience. Such a trend in Kiswahili programming is already evident on Citizen, Kenya Broadcasting Corporation and Nation televisions. It is also gratifying to find that the cell phone technology is utilized by people of all classes in the society, an exemplar of how the rest of the media can work towards offering their services to clientele from all walks of life.

2.11 Evaluation of Kenya's Limp Language Policy

2.11.1 English Hegemony

It has so far been demonstrated that language policy in Kenya remains loose. The ambiguous policy has largely obtained from government directives that have been rather eclectic. However, rarely have such guidelines been followed by any observable implementation, to the point that detractors have had the nerve to challenge their legitimacy or efficacy. To complicate the matter, language policy has been undermined by the fact that the government does not state which machinery is to be used in the

implementation process. This can partly be explained by the fact that the government is not keen to develop a coherent language policy as a result of ideological, practical and lethargic reasons. However, while Kenya's language policy remains vague, what is clear is that in the circumstances, English has thrived at the expense of local languages. The success of English obtains from failure to have a radical change of policy upon independence.

Ogola (2003) states that the sociolinguistic situation in Kenya is triglossic in the following order: English is top of the rank as the official language; Kiswahili is in the middle as the co-official language and the local lingua franca, while at the base are the local languages or mother tongues. In the ranking, English is not only the co-official language, but also the language of administration, education, science and technology, and official commercialization. Kiswahili is the co-official language, but is not the language of choice in domains where English use is the vogue. It is the lingua franca among people of various Kenyan communities and the language of intercourse among the masses. The mother tongues are confined to their catchments, are recognized as important in sustaining national heritage, and are used in early classes of primary schooling and in adult education. A good number of them have no orthography, have no written material, have never been standardized and are yet to be reduced to writing. They also have a limited number of speakers, and are less used in the media or in literature writing. The above rankings illustrate that the state of local languages in Kenya is wanting as a result of the tenuous language policy. The languages that are mainly used by the majority of the population are given a short shrift to the advantage of English language, which is mainly the reserve of the elite.

English is to date the medium of instruction in schools. The question of language policy in schools is at variance with the reality of the language situation in the country whereby hardly a quarter of the population can use English effectively, as opposed to Kiswahili, which can well be used by about thee quarters of the same population (Heine and Möhlin 1980, Ogechi 2002). Bogonko (1992:245) asserts that:

English erodes African culture and perpetuates Western neo-colonialism in the region. The use of English language in East African schools accelerates and perpetuates the growth of a top, privileged class which lives off the sweat of the peasant-worker majority and strives to acquire more power and more socioeconomic benefits by virtue of its status.

In the above quotation, the author sees English in the same vein with Ngugi wa Thiong'o, who holds that it is an agent of neo-colonialism. Bogonko opines that English serves the same interests as it did during colonialism in contemporary Kenya, suggesting that self rule was simply a replacement of "white faces with black ones." This can further be supported by the fact that education in Kenya seems to have failed to meet its objective of redressing regional disparities. Bogonko (1992) provides the example of the differences between Nairobi or Central Province and North Eastern Provinces in education, whereby the latter is deficient not only in terms of school facilities, but also in enrolment.

While all this is happening, there is a heavy investment in English by both the Kenyan and British governments. This has especially happened when falling standards of English have been registered in higher institutions of learning or in national examinations.[13] The end result has been the building of English supremacy at the expense of other Kenyan languages. While taking cognisance of Mazrui and Mazrui (1998) sentiments that the hegemonic status of English may after all be no cause for alarm since it is becoming a Kenyan language going by its usage as the first language by some people, its powerful status ought to raise concerns. In spite of its preponderance in key sectors in the country, it has already been stated that it can barely be adequately used by a quarter of the Kenyan population. Additionally, it should raise concern because it fosters stratification in the Kenyan society, and has failed the egalitarian test in social cohesion.

---

[13]Mazrui and Mazrui (1996:281) make reference to the Daily Nation, June 5, 1993; which quoted Prof. Japheth Kiptoon, the then Vice Chancellor of Egerton University, decrying the falling standards of English among students in public universities in Kenya. Prof. Kiptoon claimed that many university students were functionally illiterate in English, could not write simple application letters for a job, and a number of employers had expressed concern that many graduates could not communicate well in English.

Mazrui and Mazrui (1995:136) stress that language policy is critical in East Africa in view of two objectives: National integration and social integration. They define national integration as "a process of merging subgroups identities into a shared sense of national consciousness," while social integration "is the process by which the gaps between the elite and the masses, the town and the countryside, the privileged and the underprivileged, are gradually narrowed or evened out." The two scholars assert that there is a problem of integration in Kenya in view of language. Thus English can foster national unity, but not social integration unlike Kiswahili.

Granted, English just like Kiswahili the national language acts as a lingua franca among people who speak different African languages, and who can use it. This is a premium bearing in mind that there is a multiplicity of over forty ethnic languages, which are normally deemed a hindrance in interethnic communication. However, as has already been stated, English is divisionary in that it creates a chasm between the elite and the masses. Bamgbose (1999) avers that such exclusion is tantamount to the Biblical question of Shibboleth in Judges 12:4-6, between the /sh/ pronouncing people of Gilead and /s/ pronouncing people of Ephraim. Those who were not able to pronounce /sh/, but instead pronounced it as /s/, were killed as they were viewed as outsiders by the people of Gilead. Bamgbose (1999:1) opines that:

> The consequence of this is that two classes of citizens are immediately created, the class of the advantaged, and therefore *included*, and the class of the disadvantaged, and therefore, *excluded* […] the included are a major stumbling block in the use of African languages in a wider range of domains.

The above quotation captures the situation in Kenya aptly because those who use English are mainly the advantaged, while those who are not able to use it are the majority, who remain disadvantaged. In view of this, English has served to perpetuate the class divide in the Kenyan society. It has already been observed that it is barely understood by 25% of the more than 40 million Kenyans, remains the official language, and is used in most of the official transactions (Ogechi 2002). There has been no serious

programme to make it classless, as a way of bridging the gap between the elite and the masses.

2.11.2 Negotiation with Hegemony

Ashcroft et al. (1989) reveal that while English language was used as tool for colonization, in the post-colonial theory scholars have started seeking points of convergence in this history. Through this, it can be demonstrated that the colonized have also impacted English in some way, implying that it can no longer to be viewed in terms of the Standard English. This reconciliation is generally achieved by transforming and subverting the language into several varieties, culminating in 'english.' Similar views are held by Brutt-Griffler (2002), who cautions that the role of English should not be viewed in a unilateral way in regard to how it was used to colonize, but should also be read in relation to the role of the colonized in shaping it.

While English supremacy in Kenya goes on, there appear to be disjointed attempts to negotiate with it. There is also evidence of mediation and contestation against Kiswahili whose dominance is building up. One example of negotiation with both English and Kiswahili is the development of Sheng, deriving from the acronym 'Sh' for Swahili and 'eng' for English, by the Kenyan youth especially in urban centres. Investigations have however, revealed that Sheng also sources its lexicon from other Kenyan languages including Kikuyu, Dholuo, Kamba, Kisii or Luhya (Ogechi 2005, Kingei and Kobia 2007). Sheng is based on the morphosyntactic structure of Kiswahili, which is akin to those of other Bantu languages.

On the one hand, Sheng can be seen as a contestation against the standard co-official languages in Kenya, English and Kiswahili. It breaks the rules of these languages by thriving on what would be deemed as non-standard by many scholars. Similar mediation and contestation are revealed in chapter 5, where it is demonstrated how Murugi villagers appropriate Kiswahili and English for use in Meru language. Mbaabu (1996) argues that the development of Sheng was occasioned by lack of a focused language

policy in Kenya. Considering that people have not been provided with a clear position pertaining to language, the author argues that they opted to create their own direction with argots like Sheng. There is fear that Sheng is bound to impact on any move to draw a language policy in Kenya since it is growing pretty fast. However, such concerns are unfounded because Sheng is transient and divergent in terms of micro and macro-places where it is used in Kenya. A case in point would be the Sheng that is spoken in Nairobi's Southlands at any given time and which is bound to be different from the one that is used in Eastlands at the same period, and the vice versa.

Mbaabu (1996), King'ei and Kobia (2007) and Momanyi (2009), argue that Sheng is impacting negatively on the teaching of languages in Kenyan schools. Mbaabu (1996) adds that the argot even affects the development of Kiswahili more than that of English considering that it uses Kiswahili grammar, and therefore to distinguish it from Standard Kiswahili among learners is difficult. At the same time, the patois is stigmatised as a language of the lowly and misfits (Momanyi 2009). However, putting into account that Sheng obtains its lexicon from Kiswahili, English and mother tongues; and thrives on the Kiswahili morphosyntactic structure, it becomes manifest how people are making use of the dominant languages to express themselves in their own fashion. Mbaabu and Nzuga (2003) argue that the youth use Sheng to cut off adults who are not conversant with it. They go on to caution that the argot should not simply be viewed in a uni-dimensional manner as if it is simply a threat to mainstream languages in East Africa, but should be seen as a future reservoir for Kiswahili lexicon.

In the light of this, one can deduce how societal members who subscribe to the standard norms, and in this case English and Kiswahili, denigrate variants like Sheng while its users are at home defying the standard. This defiance can be seen in a broader context as a protest against hegemony, bearing in mind that a language such as English remains the reserve of the elite as has already been stated. What is interesting about this contestation against hegemony is that those who use Sheng are able to offer themselves an identity that is distinct from that of those who use Standard English and Kiswahili. It is also a defiance of the standard, which also indices the elite in the Kenyan society, who are

normally accused of thriving at the expense of the poor masses, just as was the case in colonialism (Bogonko 1992).

Sheng can be seen in the same breadth with Engsh (deriving from abbreviations of English and Swahili) argot. Abdulaziz and Osinde (1997) assert that unlike Sheng whose origin is ascribed to low income estates in Nairobi Eastlands, Engsh's origin is attributed to the affluent suburbs of the city. This does not only distinguish it from Sheng as a different argot, but also in regard to its users identities. For example, it is the reserve of the sons and daughters of the well-to-do parents in the neighbourhoods of Nairobi. The only commonality between Engsh and Sheng is that both are creations which have obtained from standard languages, and which are arguably appropriating or contesting against Standard English and Kiswahili. They also use a code that is indistinct to people who are only conversant with the standard language usage, and who are screened out by the variants.

The first notable contestation against English hegemony however, happened much earlier in 1968 when Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Awour Anyumba and Taban Lo Liyong, rejected the Europeanized running and teaching of English in the Department of English, University of Nairobi. Ngugi (1997) argues that the department was an overseas extension of the London School where literature teaching was tilted in favour of English authors like Shakespeare, Spencer, Milton, James Joyce, T.S Eliot and so forth, while the curriculum never incorporated African writers. The scholars protests and debates led to the replacement of the department of English with that of Literature in the University of Nairobi. The department initiated the teaching of African authors in literature, while lobbying for the inception of Kiswahili literature in the same university.

The scholars also agitated for the training of Kiswahili teachers and the teaching of oral literature in African universities. In 1974, more literature teachers at the University of Nairobi spelt out the need for the introduction of Kiswahili literature in institutions of education. Among these were Eddah Gachukia and S.A. Akivaga, while two years later, Chris Wanjala made a similar exhortation (Chimerah 1998). A conference regarding the

issue of literature and language in Kenyan universities was held in Nairobi School in 1974, sparking a heated debate, which spilled over to national newspapers. In the long run, the departments of literature and languages acquired parity in the teaching of both African and European languages and literature.

2.12 Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that language policy in Kenya has been an integral part of the education policy, which is involved in the question of literacy. It has shown that the country has never had a clear language policy, a situation that favours English. This is as a result of the fact that language policies formulated in both colonial and post-colonial governments were skewed in favour of English, propagating the prevalent hegemonic status of the language. It has been argued that this supremacy goes hand in glove with literacy in Kenya, putting into consideration that though the Kenyan government has attempted to seek independence of its education system through the constitution of a number of investigative commissions, the sector smacks heavy of colonial hangover. A case in point is the preponderance of English not only in the education sector, but also in other key governmental sectors in the country.

It has however been shown that English domination in Kenya is largely at the service of a section of the society. In this case, the language is elitist, exclusive and serves best the interest of the powerful people in the country. This can be seen in the same perspective with formal literacy which is exclusivist in regard to examinations that cut out majority of the students, not to forget the regional disparities that it engenders. Yet, as demonstrated in Chapter 5, apologists of the current education system are averse to accepting that there is existence of multiple literacies as practised largely by rural people. Nonetheless, the chapter has also demonstrated that language dominance is being negotiated in mediation and contestation by the common people, as exemplified by the evolution of Sheng and Engsh. This development has been shown to tally with similar manifestations that were unearthed about respondents' language usage during research, as outlined in chapter 5.

<center>**CHAPTER THREE**</center>

3.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on literature review. It examines the debate between the proponents of both the single and multiple literacies models, and evaluates standpoints that are propagated by each camp. This assessment is preceded by the antecedents of the debate such as the differences between anthropoids and humans, orality and literacy, and literates and non-literates. The chapter further appraises the arguments for and against the consequences of literacy for both cognitive and social developments, while evaluating contentions on literacy as both an agent of equality and inequality. Finally, the section shows that while single and multiple literacies are divergent, there are points of mediation between them. The chapter advises that it is on such reconciliation that emphasis should made taking into account that research results showed that there is negotiation between the two, as reported in chapter 5.

3.1.1 Literacy and Literacies

It is difficult to treat the concept of literacies without focusing on literacy. Etymologically, literacy and literacies may be akin, but their meanings are quite divergent. Definitely the usage of the term 'literacy' preceded that of 'literacies,' though it is axiomatic that the notions of both concepts originated the same time. As this chapter is going to show, literacy and literacies are rather antithetic ideas in the contemporary world. Collins and Blot (2003) state that on the one hand is the single-literacy model, which conceives reading and writing as a uniform set of techniques and uses of language. The techniques have identifiable stages of development and clear, predictable consequences for culture and cognition. On the other hand is the socio-cultural or situated model, which conceives both reading and writing rationally as intrinsically diverse, historically and culturally; hence multiple literacies. Exponents of the single-model of literacy view it as a single, unified, technical skill, that is neutral and universal,

and that is a prerequisite for both individual and societal development.[14] In the light of this, a literate person is believed to be smarter than a non-literate, not only in regard to the mental faculties, but also in view of his or her external surroundings. The scholars in this camp as mentioned earlier include Havelock (1963), Goody (1977, 1986), Ong (1982) or Olson (1994).

Conversely, subscribers to the idea of multiple literacies contest that 'literacy' is a technical skill while contending that it is ideologically inclined and therefore, a social phenomenon. It is for this reason that they vouch for the idea of multiple literacies.[15] Adherents of the multiple literacies notion stress that the dichotomy between for example, 'literate' and 'illiterate,' has social connotations in which case the latter is viewed as lacking or unfit, in contradistinction with the earlier, which is treated as the standard. They further opine that this dichotomy is socially structured in view of the fact that it propagates inequality between the literate and the 'illiterate,' and between the dominant or standard literacy, and the marginalised literacies. It is for this reason that they assert that the model of treating literacy in a technical sense is suspect since it is geared towards the creation of asymmetrical relations between the literate and the non-literate in technical senses. This argument is pertinent for this study because it is aptly shown in chapter 5 that villagers in Murugi engage in multiple literacies, which are nonetheless frowned upon by the elite, who have proved to be successful in the dominant literacy. Among the exponents of the notion of literacies are Street (1988), Graff (1986), Courts (1991), Barton (1994a) or Collins and Blot (2003).

In this chapter, both models at the centre of debate are illuminated, and the arguments of each camp are put into perspective. The spotlight is first made on the arguments of those who treat literacy as a single and technical skill. While most of them are based in the West, the chapter also focuses the model's proponents in Kenya, and Africa in general. It is argued that this model had to thrive in the African countries taking into consideration that it is the one that was introduced during colonialism, and which was perpetuated by

---

[14] See chapter 1, subsection of literacy and literacies.
[15] See chapter 1 subjection of literacy and literacies.

independent governments. Street (1993) brands the technical model 'autonomous' and the social model 'ideological,' terminologies which this study avoids to use because they are not only loaded in meaning, but they can also be controversial.[16] Instead, 'single-literacy' and 'multiple literacies' models are used. In the final analysis, the chapter stresses that by tailoring their education systems to the single-literacy model, developing nations have failed to realise the objective of making education accessible to all since the model is inequitable in favour of some class of people. One way of redressing this imbalance would be for the countries in question to recognize the existence of literacies and support them as per their contexts, instead of disregarding them. This way, it will be possible to cultivate robust and lifelong literacies.

3.1.2 The Antecedents of the Debate

According to Luria and Vygotsky (1992), the literacy and literacies debate can be traced as far back as when studies on the differences between anthropoid apes and man were conducted, for example, by Bühler[17] and Köhler.[18] Köhler held that anthropoids behaviour was innate, while that of man was learned. The two scholars also found out that chimpanzees, just like human beings, were able to use tools for their own good. Nonetheless, the primates use of tools was rudimentary in comparison with that of man. Additionally, the studies showed that though chimpanzees had the capacity to use their brains just like humans, their intelligence level was much inferior to that of people.

The most telling findings of Köhler and Bühler research was that the anthropoids brain was different from that of human beings, in that people were able to use language owing to brain development in the fibres of the cortex of the forebrain unlike the apes. The studies revealed that chimpanzees' thinking was entirely independent of speech, contrary to that of human beings. Their findings further demonstrated that human behaviour was

---

[16] To call the technical approach to literacy the 'autonomous' model smacks of bias, putting into account that not all proponents of the model denounce the social dimension of literacy. Yet, to call both 'literacy' and 'literacies' models ideological, though correct because they are so in a big way, may also engender confusion since the term is loaded in several meanings.

[17] Bühler (1930) *The Mental Development of the Child*. New York: Harcourt.

[18] Köhler, Wolfgang (1925) *The Mentality of Apes*. London: Routledge.

determined not essentially by the laws of biological revolution, but by the laws of historical development in society.

Luria and Vygotsky (1992) go on to explain that the anthropoids aside, there came the issue of differentiation between the primitive and the civilized man as demonstrated by Taylor and Spenser. This differentiation was further espoused by Levy-Bruhl,[19] who affirmed that man's psychological nature was ever changing. He argued that the brain of the primitive man was pre-logical, while that of the civilized man was logical. It is from these observations that a number of literacy scholars based on the single-literacy model have been categorical that literacy improved people's brains, and that there was a marked difference between the literate and non-literate, as far as their psychological development was concerned. Literacy is seen as a key factor, if not the chief one, in the transition from 'primitive' to 'advanced' culture.

3.2 Literacy and its Consequences

3.2.1 Literacy and the Brain

Proponents of the single-literacy model assert that literacy has consequences to both the brain and surroundings of a person. They argue that literacy has a developmental role on the mind of a person. This is said to happen as a result of regular reading activity, which is attributed to the stimulation of imagination and the development of verbal skills. Reading is further credited for promoting patience as one reads sentences, paragraphs and pages. It is also argued that literacy engenders cognitive consequences and societal development. For example, Classica and Burns (1989:1) stake the claim that neurological research has accumulated many indications of the cognitive benefits accrued from reading by asserting that "a review of the current findings in neurological research seems to indicate that the acquisition and exercise of literacy in childhood are powerful stimulants in individual mental development." The duo also claims that

---

[19] Levy-Bruhl (1925) *How Natives Think* (Les functions Mentales dans les societes inferieures). New York: A.A Knopf. (Original Text published in 1910).

geneticists agree that the development of spontaneous use of language is an important trait that separates homo-sapiens from their hominid ancestors. They further argue that even on low levels, the process of learning develops new abilities.

Classica and Burns (1989) support their argument by citing the study of Frank Benson,[20] who enumerates crucial insights into the study of the neuropsychological processes involved in reading. They report that the study revealed that reading has an important effect on the brain since it causes it to have continuous and intensive exercise during its time of greatest plasticity in childhood and youth. This is said to occur when new neural structures are developed, consequently honing cognitive abilities. The authors cite a similar study conducted by Arnold Scheibel,[21] a psychiatrist and anatomists, on the effect of reading on the mind. They state that the study findings revealed that brain cells change in size and structure under constant intellectual stimulation. Specifically, they assert that in areas most closely involved in complex tasks like language and information-processing, the size of neurons and the number supporting glial cells increases, and the dendrite system becomes more thickly branched.

In the light of this, they avow that that the intensive efforts involved in learning to read and write as well as in further education may actually develop new brain circuitry, and consequently improve the mind. The authors also stress that there is evidence that language has played an important part in human genetic evolution as well as in cultural developments. In this case, knowledge no longer dies with its possessor as a result of the writing technology, which records it for future generations. In a similar vein, the writers hold that literacy has been helped by technological dissemination, thereby facilitating universal literacy.

Carson (1992) asserts that good reading habits are imperative. He quotes William Channing (1780-1842), who argued that, "it is chiefly through books that we enjoy

---

[20] Benson, Frank (1981) "Alexia and the Neuroanatomical Basis of Reading." In: Wittrok, M.C and Pirozollo, F.J. (eds.) *Neuropsychological and Cognitive Process in Reading*. New York: Academic Press, 69-72.

[21] Marian, Diamond; Lawrence, Elson and Scheibel Arnold (1986) *Human Brain*. Harper Collins.

intercourse with superior minds. In the best books, great men talk to us, give us their most precious thoughts, and pour their souls into ours." Carson opines that reading activates the mind in a similar manner in which people activate muscles when they lift weights. He avers that the more active people's minds are, the more agile they become, culminating in a higher level of creativity. The scholar goes on to state that the mind that has been stretched by an idea can never return to its original dimensions. He argues that knowledge which people gain through reading has a ripple effect since it can help them make desirable changes in their surroundings.

Cunningham and Stanovitch (1998) are also categorical that reading has positive cognitive consequences. They report several of their research findings to show the importance of reading. They invoke the notion of "Mathew effects," which derives from the Biblical scripture regarding the rich-get-richer and the poor-get-poorer, in analogising what reading and failure to read do to people. They assert that from childhood, a good reader is fast in developing automacity and speed at the word recognition level. They go on to stress that in children, reading develops word recognition and good vocabulary, good spelling, verbal fluency, while offering a familiarity with complex syntactic structures. The duo states that reading also improves knowledge by honing people's cognitive structures. They hasten to add that though cognitive capacities or skills are groomed by reading, what matters is how these skills are used throughout one's lifetime.

Goody (1977) is also emphatic that literacy has positive consequences, especially for the mind of a person. He calls for the diffusion of relativism that has been taken by socioculturalists, and which tends to feign a blind eye on the advantages of literacy. He argues that writing has a technological effect in the communicative acts and that it is important to the logic of man. This is because it enables him to separate words, manipulate their order and develop syllogistic forms of reasoning. This, he states, increases the scope of critical activity, rationality, scepticism, awareness, commentary and logic.

3.2.2 Literates and Non-Literates

It has been mentioned that proponents of the single-model of literacy assert that literacy has positive consequences for a person's brain. It is in this line of thought that they also hold that there is a noticeable difference between literates and non-literates. Goody (1977) stakes the claim that literacy sophisticates the minds of the literate as opposed to those of the non-literate. He states that literacy fosters greater abstractedness among the literate, unlike in the non-literate whose abstractedness is inferior. Additionally, he argues that literacy causes reclassification of information and changes the nature of representation of the world, a cognitive process. This is said to occur when reading develops differences in modes of thought and in reflective capacities, enhancing cognitive growth. He proffers another advantage of literacy as the recording of knowledge that endures time consequently sharpening creativity, while also encouraging recognition of individuality. The scholar further argues that literacy has caused the differentiation between myth and history, especially after the stage of alphabetization.

Olson (1994:14) opines that the differences between traditional, oral cultures and modern ones are to be explained in mental functioning:

> The primitive mind constructed an "enchanted" world, a world inhabited by spirits and demons, influenced by incantations and omens, whereas the rational mind gave rise to a scientific conception of the world, a conception clearly based on evidence and on principles of causal and rational explanation.

Olson also argues that writing is important to psychology in that it makes the activity conscious unlike speech. He refers to the findings of Goody and Watt,[22] who pointed out that the study of logic and grammar always preceded the invention of writing systems in various societies. It is for this reason that he argues that the modern mind is superior to the "savage" mind putting into perspective that the latter cannot differentiate representations and reality.

---

[22] Goody and Watt (1968) "The Consequences of Literacy." In: Goody, Jack (ed.) *Literacy in Traditional Societies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 27-68.

Olson (1994) further defends his postulation by citing Lev Vygotsky's[23] research findings in Central Asia among non-literates, literates and teacher trainees; which showed that the non-literates treated tasks in concrete, context-bound ways, while the more literate people took an abstract and principled approach to the task. The same research is referenced by Ong (1982) who stakes the claim that there is a marked difference between the literate and the non-literate as far as their mental faculties are concerned. He states that the research revealed that the primitive mind was pre-logical and magical. Ong (1982:68) argues that this was especially found to be the case putting into account that illiterates live in "verbometer," rather than in "the high technological worlds of the literate."

However, Scribner and Cole (1998) contest the view that literacy has noticeable consequences for cognition. They support their position by making reference to their research on the Vai of Liberia, which set out to investigate whether there were differences between the literate and non-literate. Informants comprised of literates in Vai, Arabic and English scripts. They interviewed people who were literate in any one of these scripts, though there was some evidence of literacy in at least two or in all the three scripts. After comparing the literate and the non-literate, there was no marked difference in view of the logical or classificatory tasks. The same test showed no marked differences in regard to literacy or non-literacy, and people's memory.

Nonetheless, literacy showed some marked difference in language analysis and communication skills, implying that reading and writing may after all promote specific language processing and skills. For example, those literate in Vai were better than those literate in Arabic in regard to communication. Nevertheless, the researchers reveal that the differences were not as a result of school-based learning, but village learning. In this case, it emerged that the consequences of alphabetic literacy are generally overstated, putting into account that there was no indication at all that reading and writing improve cognitive skills, which in turn sharpen intellectual performance. Street (1994:13) refers

---

[23] See references.

to the same research findings which punched holes on the postulation that there was a great divide between the literate and illiterates, and which had dominated studies for a long period: "it was no longer enough to simply 'give' people literacy and assume that cognitive and social consequences would follow: it all depended on the context in which literacy was learnt, the particular literacy being acquired and the uses to which it was put in that situation."

3.2.3 Literacy and Orality: The Differences

Olson (1994) argues that literacy is superior to orality as far as language is concerned. He is categorical that literacy has succeeded in preserving the verbal through time and space, and that it is important for epistemological function. He proposes a theory of the mind, based on Levy-Bruhl,[24] who proposed that differences between oral cultures and modern ones were to be explained on the differences in mental functioning. He proposes a theory that should address the correlation between speech and writing, especially on the lexico-grammar segments. He avers that it should also focus on speech acts and discourse properties of both speech and writing, and the role that transcription plays in their divergence. In this case, he opines that it should offer an account of how the evolution of script altered the practices of reading. The author also argues that the theory should suggest how changes in reading and writing contributed to distinctive shifts in conceptual orientation that were associated with significant cultural changes. It should also indicate ways in which learning to read and criticize texts contribute to the development of critical thought generally.

Olson (1994) further refers to Levy-Bruhl, who stated that writing brought the displacement of orality by a logical inquiry, specifically in the art of thinking. This happened when speech was substituted by writing. He points out that writing shifts speech from its context to an object of thought and interpretation. He is convinced that writing does not alter one's stock of concept, but simply makes it easier to use the concepts that one has already. The writer proffers some literacy consequences for the

---

[24] See footnote 19

cognitive as effects on the general mental faculties, the growth of intellectual disciplines, and alteration of what people know about their language and what they think of it. In a nutshell, he argues that writing is responsible for bringing the spoken language into consciousness, making it reflective and analytical.

Furthermore, Olson (1994) argues that writing changes people from mere speakers into language users. Through this, he affirms that they are able to carry out an introspection of the grammar of their speech through writing, whereby casual speech may be found to be unruly and ungrammatical. He contends that both speech and writing are complementary, in which case speech is primary in expressive, while writing is primary in linguistic consciousness. In other words, writing brought words into consciousness many millennia back in such places as Mesopotamia in Egypt or in China. To this end, syllables, lexical, syntactic and logic properties are brought into consciousness. He adds that writing also brings into awareness knowledge of aspects like phonemes, implying that those unfamiliar with writing may not even notice them. Nonetheless, the author is also aware of the limitations of literacy. He agrees that writing cannot bring into awareness all what is said in speech as is evident in the realm of pragmatics. In other words, aspects like the declarative, imperative, locutionary and illocutionary processes cannot be brought into awareness through writing. In this respect, he agrees that writing does not represent a complete model of what is said and brought into consciousness, making it necessary to look for further meaning beyond the script.

Ong (1982) compares speech and orality and states that literacy has several significant consequences. He holds that literacy has shaped man's consciousness towards a top-notch technology, unlike speech which is limited in this dimension. He adds that writing fosters more elaborate and fixed grammar because it is context-free contrary to speech, which is heavily laden with content. He is emphatic that reading also improves analytical skills as opposed to speech which carries a cargo of epithets and other formulary baggage, which high literacy undermines as cumbersome and tiresomely redundant owing to its aggregative weight. Ong also stresses that writing offers a clear text-line of continuity outside the mind unlike orality, which is redundant and repetitious. He argues

that writing frees the mind because its storage is outside the brain in contrast to utterances which are conservative and traditionalist, and which leave a lot of mnemonic load on the brains. These sentiments are corroborated by Goody (1993), opines that writing helps in deciphering contradictions in speech. He asserts that this happens when writing arrests the flow of oral conversation, enabling one to compare utterances that have been made at different times and in different places.

Ong (1982) further claims that writing is abstract, detached, objective and neutral to human action; unlike oral cultures that must conceptualise and verbalize all their knowledge as far as the human world is concerned. He explains that it is for this reason that oral cultures tend to be agnostic in their verbal performances as opposed to writing, which fosters abstraction and disengages knowledge from the context where people are engaged in struggles. He quotes Goody and Watt,[25] who argue that speech nurtures homeostasis by recalling memories which have no relevance today. The writer states that this is contrary to writing which records past events and which can be read in the future.

All this notwithstanding, Street (1993) is critical of the divide that is drawn between literacy and orality. He argues that in new literacies, orality and literacy are viewed in a 'continuum,' rather than as a divide that has been articulated by scholars of the single-literacy model. He explains that it is for this reason that he came up with the 'ideological' model to capture 'literacies,' taking into consideration that the term encapsulates both the 'technical' and 'cultural' aspects of literacy, and it does not object to the technical skill or the cognitive aspects of literacy. He states that educationalists, linguists and psychologists have been making a mistake by conceptualising literacy as a universal constant whose acquisition leads to higher cognitive skills, improved logical thinking, critical inquiry and self-conscious reflection. He adds that the distinction between myth and history, science and illusion or democracy and autocracy, have all generally been attributed to literacy as though it were a single entity with consequences, irrespective of context.

---

[25] See, footnote 22.

Nonetheless, all the observations made in this section are sound and relevant for this study. They inspired the formulations of some of the objectives and research questions, the problematic, as well as the interview questions. Particularly noteworthy are Classica and Burns (1989) revelations about the effect of reading on the brain of a child. The two have shown that literacy has noticeable consequences especially for the mind, contrary to some critics views to the contrary. Conversely, Scribner and Cole (1998) have revealed their research findings among the Vai of Liberia, which showed that there is little correlation between literacy and cognitive development. This demonstrates that the question of the effect of literacy on the mind remains a bone of contention, and the debate is far from over. Meanwhile, Olson (1994) has aptly shown that in spite of the conscience-creating capacity that is ascribed to writing, it also has limitations in some cases such as where it cannot bring into awareness utterances that border on pragmatics unlike speech, consequently proffering that a theory of speech and writing be formulated.

The approach to literacy that has been taken by most of the above scholars is rather inclined to psychology. The scholars tend to treat literacy as an infallible phenomenon, yet there is its negative side also. For instance, Graff (1987) aptly demonstrates that literacy can be a tool for imperialism through social control of knowledge and education. Additionally, the scholar proffers that literacy can indeed disseminate knowledge, but where it is restricted or censored, it can subvert it. Arguably, it is for displaying such uncritical stance towards literacy that exponents of the single-literacy model have sometimes been accused of conspiring to universalise dominant literacy (Freire and Macedo 1987, Macedo 1993). The exponents fail to convince that their approach to literacy is neutral and objective in view of the social context, as they are wont to claim. This notwithstanding, the single-literacy has had a strong bearing on literacy studies in the world as the subsequent topic shows. However, a viable approach to literacy research needs not only focus on the facet of psychology, but should be broad enough to incorporate its sociocultural perspective.

3.3 Literacy and Social Development

Views on the correlation between literacy and development have dominated people's thinking for a long time. Going by the single-literacy model, it has been argued that literacy is a precondition for advancement in individual cognition and social development. Conversely, it is held that 'illiteracy' can undermine such progress. It is in line with this postulation that governments, UNESCO and other agents with similar persuasion mounted literacy campaigns to check 'illiteracy.' This was mentioned earlier in chapter 1 about Kenya. It is held that reading regularly is a prerequisite for change and cultural development.

Goody (1986) illuminates the advantages of literacy to the whole spectrum of human life using a historical perspective. He states that it is literacy that helped to spread religions like Christianity, Islam or Judaism in the world. He goes on to claim that literate religions are abstract, decontextualised and superior; since they have dropped rituals like sacrifices, and started fulfilling crucial needs of their faiths. In regard to economics, the scholar argues that literacy fosters development. He cites the example of business transactions, which he claims improve from pedestrian to abstract levels as happened during the shift from barter trade to written deals in medieval Sumeria. The scholar adds that written records also help in reorganising for improvement. He cites the example of Africa where he claims that writing improved economy such as in record keeping, as traders were able to sustain all the deals, unlike in the past when memories could fail them.

Goody (1986) further states that literacy has had a positive effect on polity as is demonstrable in the civil administration, electoral system, legislature, and in external relations. He cites the case of colonial administration in Ghana, where records and reports could be relayed to London expediting administration. He argues that this led to the creation of bureaucratic states. He attributes these changes to effective communication on the part of governments, where writing was embraced. Similar views are expressed by Goody (1977), when he argues that literacy has proved to be a boon to the politico-legal domains. This is because it is able to control secondary group relations

by written communication. He cites another benefit of literacy as depersonalization of recruitment method to office for instance, through the use of written texts or examinations. In a like vein, the author argues that literacy affects bureaucratic role as is evident when the ruler and the ruled are made impersonal or even abstract through the written word, culminating in abstract systems of government.

Kagoda-Batuwa (1998) argues that reading conveys important information to people. She adds that this information is necessary in initiating, and in the process of, development. She cites some advantages of this information as the following: Good planning, making sound decisions in various sectors, in the development of education and professionalism among people, in supervising and preparation of daily lives, and in research. The author goes on to argue that prosperity of the developing nations is impended by lack of adequate information for example, which can be garnered through reading. She adds that benefits accrued from regular reading can be harnessed and incorporated to generate cultural development to a people. She cites the example of the Asian Tigers who have achieved development after acknowledging the importance of information, partly derived through reading and making use of it. Similar views are held by Mbae (2004), who asserts that reading books adds to our stock of existing knowledge as well as self-improvement. He claims that people with wrong attitudes can acquire self-motivation by reading about it in relevant books. The scholar exemplifies this by citing people who have transformed positively through book-reading. He also argues that books are important for recreational purposes.

All these observations are insightful and beneficial to this study. Contrary to some proponents of the single-literacy model who treat literacy as asocial, the above scholars approach it from a social dimension also. Additionally, it is indisputable that literacy is an agent for social change as is evident in our societies. For example, Classica and Burns (1989) refer to epochs like Hellenistic, Renaissance, Age of Reason and the Industrial Revolution to argue that literacy impacts positively on societal development. It is for this reason that they assert that literacy is the cornerstone and prerequisite of all learning and intellectual development. However, caveats have been made against ascriptions to

literacy as an agent of change. This is because such changes could also be receiving influence from other social, economic and customary forces, an argument that is also fronted by several scholars of the multiple literacies model.

3.3.1 Contentions over Literacies Consequences

Critics of the hypothesis that literacy causes development generally contend that the single-model of literacy is enacted within an array of social practices such as power relations, values, beliefs, objectives, economic and political conditions, just to mention a few. Accordingly, the consequences of literacy flow not from literacy, but from the aggregate operation of the text-related aspects, and all the other factors that have a bearing on the practices in question. Bélanger (1994) asserts that the standpoint that literacy is an index of development is unfounded. He argues that there are always structural factors that affect literacy, such that it would be ill-advised to use it as a yardstick for measuring development.

The foregoing observations are corroborated by Dubbleldam (1994), who is critical of the single-literacy model exponents for claiming that literacy has noticeable social consequences for development. His argument is that though literacy is normally used as a corollary of development, it is difficult to garner the correlation between the two. This is as a result of the many factors that are involved in development, yet they have no direct relation with literacy. He cites the example of oil that can give a high national income per capita regardless of the education level of the population. While stressing that he is not devaluing the importance of literacy, the author argues that it is fallacious to claim that functional education can trigger economic development single-handedly. Similar sentiments are expressed by Holme (2004), who asserts that it is unjust to attribute socioeconomic development to literacy, while ignoring other factors like gender, race or even ethnic background, which play a major role.

Giroux (1987) cautions that changes arising from literacy could be the ones authored and designed by leaders in a particular hegemony to perpetuate themselves in authority,

while maintaining the status quo. He advises that it is imperative to interrogate the dominant school literacy vis-à-vis other literacies that there might be, in order to distinguish between wheat and chaff. These views are corroborated by Freire (1972, 1973),[26] who denounces the psychological view of literacy arguing that it causes reductionism in the concept of 'literacy.' He further argues that the 'word' and 'world' are dialectically linked, and that education for liberation has the objective of interlinking the two within transformative cultural praxis. The scholar further alludes to the impossibility of literacy operating outside of social practice and consequently, outside processes of fashioning and maintaining the social worlds. In view of Freire, the urgent issues entail the types of social worlds that people initiate through their language, the negotiation or subversion that takes place, and the role of education as either a tool for liberation or repression.

Graff (1987) asserts that it is a misconception to claim that literacy engenders development. This is as a result of the fact that literacy is only an enabling factor, and not the causal factor for development. The author holds that literacy is only a potential state, and that it can only cause change when it is exploited by human beings. He goes on to state that with respect to economic development, literacy has been given a vague and superficially powerful role that is difficult to prove. He contends that there is no evidence, past or present; which lends credence to the opinion that literacy can cause individual achievement. Instead, he stresses that what is evident is that there are generally several contributors to individual achievement, implying that it is fallacious to ascribe such to literacy singularly.

To this end, he advises that literacy and education be viewed as necessary, but not sufficient prerequisites for development. The author further argues that literacy was spread in the world as a Western way of modernizing societies. Its objective emphasised aggregate social goals such reduction of crime and disorder, the instillation of proper moral values and limitedly, increased economic productivity. In this case, he avers that

---

[26] Paulo, Freire (1972) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed.* Harmondsworth: Penguin.
 Paulo, Freire (1973) *Cultural Action for Freedom.* Harmondsworth: Penguin.

individualistic goals of intellectual development and personal advancement were rarely among the list of priorities.

3.4. Declining Literacy Standards

Taking cue from the adherents of the single-literacy model, some scholars decry failure of the people to have good reading habits. It was earlier mentioned that regarding Kenya for example, they warn that the literate could decline into illiteracy for failure to continue reading after school. Bataille (1976) argues that there is evidence that former participants in adult education relapse into illiteracy. He advises that there is need for post-literacy activities to ensure retention of skills and knowledge acquired in literacy programmes. He refers to a statement by UNESCO (1953), to the effect that the map of the world illiteracy is in tandem with the map of the world poverty, particularly rural neediness. He explains that illiteracy is a feature of underdevelopment and that literacy is inextricably linked with all facets of development.

The above observations are corroborated by Mazrui and Mazrui (1995), who state that among the challenges that face East African countries today are not only how to combat poor reading habits, but also how to guard against the literates relapse into illiteracy. They argue that reading competence can be lost by the literate if they fail to exercise their reading skills for a long time. They go on to stress that reading skills are especially lost among those who have just learnt reading when they fail to continue with the exercise. Similar views are expressed by Chakava (1998), who regrets that there is the threat to new literates reversing into illiteracy since there is absence of more reading materials and follow up, to ascertain that when people leave school they continue with the practice.

3.4.1 Literacy and Language in Kenya

There are several factors that are said to affect good reading habits in Kenya. Among these is the choice of language for writing books. Altbach (1992) is concerned that the books in the Kenyan market hamper people from having good reading habits because

they are written in English, a language that does not identify with their cultural issues, and which is hardly understood by 20% of the population. These sentiments can be viewed in the same breadth with those of Chakava (1998), who states that Kenyans fail to read regularly because most of the literature is in English, a language that is used by a low percentage of the population. The scholar goes on to claim that this is ironical putting into account that English remains the official language. He adds that publishers also lack resources to publish in mother tongues, which are understood by the majority of the people.

Ogechi (2002) stakes the claim that Kenyans have poor reading habits for lack of suitable books in Kiswahili, the national language. He states that 60 percent of the Kenyan population can read and understand Kiswahili, but the publishers have a penchant for publishing English works, though the language is only understood by a quarter of the population. Furthermore, Ogechi and Bosire-Ogechi (2002) state that Kenyans fail to read because there is inadequate reading material in Kiswahili, the national language. This is as a result of the fact that Kiswahili books are either prescribed school texts or fiction, which have the potential of being made set books. They further argue that in Kenya, there is only one Kiswahili daily paper unlike several English dailies, the weeklies inclusive. The scholars also assert that Kenyans are oral-oriented, while written literature remains something peripheral to many of them.

Mutahi (2000) blames the dearth of reading culture in Kenya on writers failure to write in local languages. He argues that since colonialism, there has been a common resentment against local languages at the expense of English. He cites the example where his own mother tongue Kikuyu was forbidden in school, as speaking it exposed one to beating and punishment, and in some cases, to temporary expulsion. Mutahi confesses that he also became a victim of this colonial hangover when he became a teacher and started punishing students who spoke local languages. He owns up however, that when he started writing novels, he encountered a limitation in regard to spellings and new vocabulary. It is for this reason that he opted to write in Kikuyu, especially after receiving inspiration from Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Gakaara wa Njau, who were already

writing in the medium. Through Kikuyu, he claims, he was able to reach out to peasants and workers who were in dire need of reading material, putting into account that they were cut out by English which they did not understand.

Ngugi (1997) takes a similar line on the question of language and literacy in Kenya when he asserts that majority of Kenyans, especially peasants fail to read regularly because they are mainly literate in mother tongues, yet the available reading materials are in foreign languages. He explains this as the major reason for his shift to writing in his maternal language, Kikuyu. According to him, this move revolutionised reading culture as evinced by the publication of *Caitani Mutharabaini* (Devil on the Cross). He affirms that it was a sure family read, whereby a family would converge and one of their literate members would read it for them. Similarly, workers would also get into groups, mostly at lunch break, and get one of them to read the book. The author explains the success of this Kikuyu novel in regard to readership when he stresses that it was read in buses, taxis and even in drinking bars. In view of the author, the net effect of this was the compelling sales of the book, in which case 15000 copies were sold out within eight months.

3.4.2 Socioeconomics and Literacy in Kenya

Chakava (1998) claims that Kenyans lack good reading habits as a result of unavailability of suitable books in the market. He argues that available books in Kenya fail to focus on the values and aspirations of the people. The publisher also cites failure to price books reasonably and the colonial system of education which Kenya inherited, as other factors that demotivate people from reading. He also has a bone to pick with publishers whom he states are culpable as they concentrate on set books so much at the expense of other types of books. The situation is said to be even complicated by public libraries in Kenya, which intimidate would-be-readers, and which are exclusive to scholars. These sentiments are corroborated by Ogechi and Bosire-Ogechi (2002), who are of the view that Kenyans, majority of whom speak Kiswahili and mother tongues, have poor reading habits for failure to have economic muscle to buy books. They argue

that economic power is mainly rested in the hands of those literate in English. It follows that publishers are reluctant to publish in languages that offer little or no market, unlike the lucrative English books.

Mbae (2004) laments that Kenyans have poor reading habits in spite of the country's reputation as a home to highly educated people in East Africa. However, he contests the factors that are attributed to Kenyans poor reading habits such as their inclination to a strong oral tradition, the pricing of books and lack of interesting literature. Instead, he attributes poor reading habits to attitudes and laziness. In view of the scholar, there is also the question of Kenya's education system, which he blames for being examination-oriented, thereby failing to inculcate reading habits among students. He indicts teachers for self gratification by imagining that they are doing their jobs well, when in the real they are an impediment to good reading habits. Mbae (2004:16) expresses discontent over Kenyan students who he argues are trapped in the cage of studying set books, an enslavement that they free from with much glee upon completion of formal schooling.

> […] it seems clear that our teachers expect their students to study their text books, pass their exam and forget the rest. [...] Little wonder that at the end of the school cycle many students make a bonfire, burn their school books and celebrate the end of enslavement by swearing never again to read books in their lives. […] the sight of a book conjures up ugly memories of being forced to cram and memorize stuff they never understood, but which they needed to reproduce to pass their exams.

The scholars underscore the irony that exists when schools that were supposed to teach students the practice and value of reading end up making them hate the business. The foregoing observations are similar to those of Altbach (1992), who is categorical that Kenyans do not read after formal education as a result of the colonial education system which they embraced. He argues that Kenyans who are in schools are deluded that they are bound to accrue a lot of wealth upon finishing formal education, and subsequently, stop reading immediately they are through with schooling.

However, Graff (1987) challenges readers to reflect on whether literacy is declining or increasing world-over. He argues that there is a general postulation that literacy is declining in the world, but this has not been aptly proved. In the wake of too much exposure to media, the scholar suggests that literacy practices have changed, becoming more technologically oriented. Accordingly, literacy is not necessarily declining, but it is only involved in its dynamicism, a fact that could be missing the eye of some people.

Graff (1987) stresses that traditional conceptions of reading and writing, inherent in all literacy campaigns, are inadequate to meet new needs. It is for this reason that he advises that literacy should be reconstructed such that it is able to highlight how, when, where, why, and to whom it was transmitted. Additionally, this reconstruction, he avers, should show the meanings that were assigned to it, its importance, demands placed on literate abilities, the degrees to which they were met, the changing extent of social restrictedness in the distribution and diffusion of literacy, not to forget the real symbolic differences that emanated from the social condition of literacy among the population. These sentiments are corroborated by Cope and Kalantzis (2002), who state that considering that there are revolutionary changes in literacy for example, in the advent of the computer technology; literacy pedagogy must change to be relevant in the new demands of working life.

There is motivation to agree with Graff (1987) and Cope and Kalantzis (2002) critiques. Those raising concern over declining literacy standards in Kenya paint so dim a picture tantamount to stating that the country is facing a disaster. However, while such scholars arguments could be welcome, there is evidence that they fail to take cognisance of other forms of literacy practices, besides the school-based literacy that could be in existence. They also slight the purported poor readers by calling them 'lazy' or when they warn that they are bound to relapse into 'illiteracy.' They are in tune with the traditional approach to literacy which typically treats literacy as a single, universal entity, which is independent of context; while viewing humble reading habits as a malaise that has to be cured urgently. The scholars also do not see poor reading habits as possibly occurring as

a protest by the people, taking into consideration that they do not help in meeting their day to day needs, unlike the other literacies that they are involved in.

The critics of poor reading habits statements also smack of sheer generalizations as far as reading habits are concerned, because except for Ogechi and Bosire-Ogechi (2002), and Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1997), they do not provide any specific examples or statistics to back up their arguments. This is proof of the impact that the single-literacy model has wrought on academics in Kenya, and in the developing world. They exhibit an unswerving loyalty to dominant literacy, as is evident when they root out for good reading habits. This is more evidence of how the single-literacy model has succeeded in spawning quiescent adherents.

However, this study makes a departure from the question of reading habits to focus on people in a particular location in rural Kenya. Additionally, the study focuses on people's literacies, which chapter 5 demonstrates as existing in marginalised status.
In a way, the study interrogates the single-model of literacy to establish its veracity and relevance, especially to the masses. In this case, people such as the villagers in Murugi Location may demand more persuasion that they do not have good reading habits, when in the real; they are practising literacies on a daily basis going by the research results.

3.5 The Literacies Model

Contrary to the single-model of literacy, it was earlier mentioned that there are several scholars who assert that literacy can only be understood well by approaching it from a social perspective. They comprise of the second camp in the literacy debate. These scholars cut across various disciplines such as linguistics, sociology and anthropology. They have heralded a new approach to literacy in New Literacy Studies (NLS). The literacies model proponents are critical of the traditional school of scholars who treat literacy as an independent variable with notable consequences, consequently stripping it off its social foundation. They argue that the position taken by the adherents of the old school are at odds with what people experience in their daily lives.

Cope and Kalantzis (2000) argue that literacy can no longer be viewed as an independent phenomenon in the global geopolitics of today. They stress that cultural and linguistic diversity is now a central issue implying that the understanding of literacy pedagogy should also change. They go on to argue that the old, monocultural and nationalistic sense has vacated, and its place needs filling. The scholars further stress that the diversity is not occurring in literacy alone, but also in other facets of life such as gender, ethnicity or sexual orientation. Similar views are held by Collins and Blot (2003), who assert that there is a fundamental shift in approaches to the study of literacy. They argue that the shift has happened from a single thing called literacy, to the recognition that there are several literacies. They criticize the proponents of the single-literacy model for attempting to delude people that literacy is a technology. They stress that literacy does not happen to people who are sort of 'tabula rasa' or blank space, but has a social goal such as to dominate. It is for this reason that they advise that literacy be approached inductively as anthropologists do, and consequently accord it a social meaning.

Graff (1987) opines that schools do not after all teach skills alone, but propagate the task of schooling and its legitimising theme, such as values, habits and norms. In the long run, schooling is expected to reinforce morality and eventually achieve cohesion and order. He cautions against viewing literacy in an abstract sense as this makes it appear as a technique that can be acquired, a foundation that can be developed, be lost, stagnate or at worst, get meaningless. In a like vein, Ivanic (1998) invokes Barton's (1994a) metaphor of ecology of literacy to show that a large number of interrelated social factors support the survival of particular acts of reading and writing, just as requisite conditions support the survival of species like newts. The author refutes the claim that literacy practices are universal. She argues that the practices are culturally shaped in view of how they serve the social ends of different people. The foregoing views are corroborated by Street (1995), who laments that literacy has been pedagogised such that it is seen as what teachers and pupils do in schools, obscuring its other meanings as is evident from ethnographic research.

However, there are scholars who fault the multiple literacies model for a number of loopholes. Ivanic (1998) critiques the definition of literacy in the social perspective by claiming that it is too much all-embracing. She therefore supports Street's (1994a), suggestion that scholars should talk of multiplicity of specific literacy events and practices, rather than talk of literacies amorphously. Meanwhile, Collins and Blot (2003) question the model for failure to focus on important social aspects in their approaches to literacy. For example, they state that though its proponents accept that literacy is socially embedded, they fail to focus on the aspect of power comprehensively, a very important component in the realm of literacy. The two scholars assert that the proponents of this model fail to capture the micro-powers that inform literacy practices, while focusing on the broader power relations between dominant and marginal literacies.

3.6 Literacy and Inequality

So far, the debate regarding literacy and literacies points to the asymmetry between the two. Formal literacy seems to be favoured at the expense of literacies. However, while the relationship between the two tends to be viewed asymmetrically; there is a second symmetry within the dominant literacy. Agnihorti (1994) shows inequality between the two models of literacy when he argues that local literacies are not always acknowledged in many societies. He contends that this is occasioned by the fact that the elite regard the literacies as a threat to the prevailing structures of power. It is for this reason that they, with support from some lay people, are not keen to undertake literacy in local languages. After all, such languages are not associated with job opportunities or social mobility.

Bogonko (1992) argues that education in Kenya has been inclined to harping on specialization as a prerequisite for modern technology and industrialisation. However, he asserts that such education can make experts uncritical in matters outside their fields. Such lopsided type of education is decried as inappropriate for the citizenry since it is apt to animalize the human soul and life. It is for this reason that Bogonko goes on to argue that subjects like theology, music and the arts, which seem to contribute little to

gross national product are necessary in the fulfilment of a person or in other words, in the creation of an all-round person.

In a like vein, Giroux (1987) has a bone to pick with the single-model of literacy when he indicts it for being a chauvinistic pedagogy, camouflaged in 'Great books.' He argues that the model fails to recognize that literacy is not simply the inability of the poor to read and write, but that it also has a strong bearing on the political and ideological positions of these people. He therefore asserts that this type of literacy is disempowering and oppressive. Giroux (1987:6) proffers that a cultural politics of literacy be formulated to rescue those who have been "silenced or marginalized by the schools, mass media, cultural industry, and video culture to reclaim the authorship of their own lives." The author further argues that there is need to employ critical literacy in studies to unearth how some regulations instil a culture of stupidity resulting in the silencing of all the otherwise would-be critical voices. He adds that in spite of ideas about universal literacy, literacies are not spread equally in all societies. This is as a result of restrictions that are put to some of the literacies. Hornberger (1994) takes a similar line of argument when she states that school-based literacy is sometimes an agent of social inequality, though its objective is spelt out as eliminating it. In this case, literacy is deemed as serving both roles of liberator and oppressor.

More evidence of inequality as perpetrated by the single-literacy model is alluded to by Lankshear and Knobel (2006:12), when they argue that for a long time, 'reading' has been perceived in psychological terms, though literacy has been viewed in a sociological perspective. They argue that such dichotomy is anomalous because terms like 'illiterate' and 'literate' characterising the inability or ability to read respectively carry some social connotations with them. For example, they state that being illiterate has been associated with poverty and depravity. The scholars assert that by embracing the keyword 'literacies' in their realm, proponents of the sociocultural approach to literacy are recanting the narrow and reductive position that has existed regarding the concept literacy, and consequently placing it in broader social practices. In the light of this, they

are able to highlight the social aspect of literacy, and in so doing, situate it within the larger social practices.

Lewis (1994) states that while literacy is treated as a universalistic tool through which equality can be achieved, it is offered as though in a vacuum. He argues that while there is an attempt to treat all learners the same, below the surface there looms a dichotomisation of the literate and the illiterate. He contends that there has been a mistake of treating literacy as an isolatable, measurable and uniform commodity that can be acquired if one has the motivation to participate in learning opportunities or literacy programmes. These sentiments can be seen in the same vein with the contention of Freire and Macedo (1987) that appropriate literacy is not simply the ability to decode and encode the written word, but literacy should be central to the formulation of critical social praxis among the literate.

In this regard, illiteracy is viewed as resulting from an unjust social system that was formed historically into a structure. According to the two scholars, appropriate literacy education demands politicisation and radical strategy to engender desirable changes in society. Similar views are raised by Courts (1991), who faults the single-literacy model as practised in the school system. She argues that this literacy is "ill literacy" because it is controlled by corporations that try to sell their books. She further criticizes parents and teachers for embracing the literacy. The author goes on to interrogate the methods of teaching in school in view of the ultimate goal of the practice. She is conscious of the fact that teaching methods are prescribed by people with an affiliation to commercial ventures. It is for this reason that teachers are not able to evaluate the methods in question or their sense.

Macedo (1993) alludes to inequality that is engendered through the single-literacy model when he argues that it propagates docility of the mind. He states that this model emphasises the mechanical reading and writing skills, while sacrificing the critical elements that generate the need for reading in the first place. He argues that skilful literacy has produced functional literates in a bid to make people participate in economic

life. In so doing, the author avers that the education anesthetises students critical abilities such that they are unable to interrogate the order of things. The author claims that in view of this, education which is an agent of cultural domination becomes a one-way traffic, whereby the educator knows, while the educated does not know. The scholar adds that this education provides no room for critical inquiry. He attributes the uncritical type of education to colonialism considering that the era's education was geared to train state functionaries and commissars, while discriminating against millions of lay people. According to him, such education domesticates students, and in so doing, cultivates acquiescence. To redress the inequality, Macedo suggests that the reading of the world should precede the reading of the word. In this case, history, values, beliefs, the cultural, social and political issues that occur in the world should be considered first before making sense of the written script.

Pardoe (2000) relates to the asymmetry that exists within the dominant literacy between successful and unsuccessful scholars. He expounds this by citing cases of students writings which are seen either in the 'right' or 'wrong' divides. He outlines other epithets that derive from this symmetry such as 'adequate' or 'inadequate,' 'successful' or 'unsuccessful' or 'dominant' or 'marginal.' He explains that success is hinged on the 'right' divide and conforming to the standardised forms of dominant discourses that are used. He goes on to argue that low status writing is viewed as unsuccessful, or worse still a failure, because it fails to conform to the standard or dominant parameters. He opines that in both cases, critics fail to capture the different social contexts which inform either of the writings, and which could be so central to the identity of the student. He suggests that we adopt 'suspended judgement' as outlined by Street (1996). This implies that researchers elect not to mark cases as 'negative' or 'positive,' until an investigation is complete. He argues that this can guide us in stopping to be dismissive of various statuses of literacy.

Shuman (1993) states that deliberations on literacy drive us to consider issues to do with exclusive domains as regards who claims the rights, and who appropriates whose territories. The scholar argues that generally, literacy is presented as an open channel of

communication which is accessible to all, but when it comes to the question of skills, it becomes a barrier. Yet, the approach of literacy as a skill shadows the manner in which it is used to measure one's success in communication by the axis of standard or deviant. In this scenario, there is the authority who claims the right to judge what is the standard or not, but which writers may appropriate for their own reasons. Rather than focus on literacy skills alone, the author suggests that literacy should be viewed as genres, each with its own standards and conventions. While viewing literacy in terms of genres emphasises the interaction between participants, the skills focus which is emphasised by proponents of the single-literacy model oversimplifies this relationship into a polarised battle between gate-keepers and an excluded class of people.

Street (1988), states that some of the research that has been done to validate the dichotomy between preliterate and literate people is based on the Western convention of literacy, an illustration of the social stratification through literacy. He refers to Labov (1973),[27] who found out that what are normally tested in such research are social conventions of the dominant class, rather than the universal logic. The writer also argues that some of this research is ideologically informed in order to justify the huge expenditure on Western education systems and eventually represent the ideal of the writers on culture as a universal necessity.

Meanwhile, Street (1993) states that researchers who are dissatisfied with the single-literacy model view literacy practices as inextricably linked with power and cultural structures in society, and in different contexts. He opines that literacies are diversified and that there is the danger of imposing one's cultural practice on other people's literacies, by treating literacy as a constant universally (uniform model). The single-literacy model, he argues, reifies literacy as a form instead of electing to consider its place in structures of power and ideology. He explains that his choice of the term 'ideological literacy' does not derive from ideology in the old or neo-Marxist sense, but in a sense obtaining from anthropology, sociolinguistics and cultural studies, to imply the tension between power and resistance. However, the author states that there are

---

[27] Labov, William (1973) *Language in the Inner City*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

normally pressures for uniformity as far as the question of literacy is concerned, especially from states and educational systems. He argues that literacy practices entail power relations, and models that demonstrate this are necessary.

Street (1994a) argues that while literacy programmes formulated at the national and international level could be welcome in local situations, in many instances people fail to see their relevance in their daily lives. He claims that this occurs especially when such literacy is disseminated in an alien language or when it is based on a different tradition from that of the people. Referring to his experience in Iran in the 1970s where local literacies were in much practice, Street (1994:10) states:

> […] the bringers of 'new' literacy were so intent on making the 'illiterate' literate, on bringing 'light into dark,' on stimulating skills and cognitive processes they assumed were absent that they were unable to see what was already there, the rich literacy practices in which people engaged without the help of outside agencies and city-oriented teacher.

The foregoing quotation can be tendered as typifying some parts of Kenya going by the comments that are made by scholars with regard to the reading culture of Kenyans, especially in villages in rural areas.

Street (1994a) goes on to stress that literacy has been a form of domination, disguised as a neutral technology, with the sole purpose of imparting some particular skills. Yet, in cases where there could be existence of other literacies, there is tendency to present them as inadequate or as ones that have fallen short of the standard literacy. Worst of all, those who practice these literacies are viewed as culturally deprived. The scholar cautions that just as in languages where there are the dominant or standard languages amid other varieties, this is the way literacy should be viewed. In other words, there are dominant literacies in the face of several varieties. To this end, the author suggests that instead of holding on to the cliché of how literacy affects people, it would be prudent to take a different tack and ask how people affect literacy. To facilitate this for example in research, the author cautions that data should not be examined in the parameters of the

85

standard literacy, but just as a community's repertoire. This way, scholars will be able to eschew the habit of viewing variants of the standard as deficiencies or anomalies.

Additionally, Street (1995) asserts that literacy is a social practice, going by the iniquitous connotations that are used to describe it. He cites stereotypes that posit 'illiterates' as backward and 'literates' as progressive, as good examples. He adds that the dominant literacy statements such as literacy is a prerequisite for development are rather Western-oriented and narrow. In his view, this explains why literacy campaigns in many countries have become a cropper. He indicts the campaigners for stigmatising the non-literate, instead of correcting the stigma against them. According to him, it is imperative to acknowledge a multiplicity of literacies, instead of pretending that there is only one 'L'iteracy.

The author further argues that dominant literacy has a flaw in view of the fact that even in situations where people have indigenous literacies, literacy campaigns tend to ignore them while branding their users 'illiterate.' He cites the example of his own findings in Iran where 'maktab' and 'commercial' literacies were already in place, but were ignored by state intervention and Western education. This observation corroborates the findings of this study since it is vividly shown in chapters 5 and 6 that there exist literacies in Murugi villages, but which are marginalized in favour of dominant literacy. Street (1995) cautions that even the long held view that literacy is a sure ticket to a good job does not always hold water putting into account that variables like class, gender or ethnicity also play a role.

The author further argues that the single-literacy model is guilty of using the 'if I were a horse approach' to other cultures, as attempted by James Frazer.[28] This approach tries to put the self in the shoes of the subject, and assume to experience the situation as him or her. Through this model, the author asserts that Western literacy, power and culture are spread to other cultures despite the fact that their disseminators are not fully conversant with the social context of the subject. In the developing world, the governments and

---

[28] See, Leiden Brill (1971) *Historia Religionum II: Religions of the Present*. Amsterdam.

local experts are drafted in the spread of this hegemony. Street (1995:94) cautions that, "[...] the representation of literacy as an unambiguous skill that we find in European ideology can be interpreted as a form of political disguise of its true nature in order to privilege European interpretations and maintain European hegemony."

The foregoing arguments which present literacy as an agent of inequality despite attempts to present it as neutral are sound. However, the contentions are flawed for their lopsidedness as far as the question of inequality is concerned. The criticism of Collins and Blot (2003) that the proponents of the multiple literacies model view inequality engendered by literacy only in the dominant versus marginal axis is vindicated. Except for Pardoe (2000), they fail to cite that even in the play of dominant literacy alone, there is asymmetrical relationship between the successful and the non-successful scholars. Additionally, it is reported in chapter 5 that marginal literacies among villagers were occasionally found to be typified by hierarchisation implying that they may not be the quintessential of equality after all. However, this hierarchisation was found to be benign, contrary to the dichotomisation that is perpetrated by, or which occurs within, the hierarchical structures of dominant literacy.

3.6.1 Negotiation between Literacy and Literacies

While literacy has been shown to engender inequality not only in regard to those who excel or fail it, but also in its relation to the dominant versus marginalised literacies, people on the ground have not always remained quiescent to this disproportion. Ivanic (1998) argues that in the light of this, literacy practices are shaped, and also shape people's identities. She asserts that this negotiation can build up identity in person-hood, such as those of a leader, farmer or preacher, as well as in selfhood or private life. She illustrates this by citing the case of adults who might change their statuses to those of the academic class once they get involved in education. She adds that literacy may also involve taking up of alien identities, affecting a person's substantive identity. These dynamic identities are important in literacy as they sometimes spur resistance to the

power of hegemony. This happens, she affirms, when those involved in literacy refuse to be colonized by the privileged world view.

Lewis (1993:149) refers to a feat by a prominent elder, in one of the north eastern clans of Somalia during the Italian occupation, who invented the first script of Somali. He asserts that this invention was a way of contesting against dominant literacy. The script was named Osmaniya after its inventor. Further contestation against dominant literacy is exemplified by Lave and Wenger (1995), who show that learning can take place by use of indigenous methods, which do not take into account dominant literacy. Contrary to the old school of literacy, the authors demonstrate that people acquire skills to do tasks by engaging in the process at hand, contrary to the approach where learning is viewed as acquisition of some abstract knowledge, which is stored in memory and used later. Their findings are somewhat a wake up call to scholars to rethink their view and understanding of the learning process. They show that even in apprenticeship, learning occurs when initiates participate in the event at hand.

Lave and Wenger (1995) present five accounts of apprenticeship deriving from their own and other scholars' research: The Yucatec midwives in Mexico, tailors in Liberia, U.S qutermasters, butchers, and slightly different; alcoholic anonymous. The authors reveal that the studies showed that the relationship between the master and apprentices depends on decentring ideas of mastery and pedagogy. Thus, mastery does not reside in the master, but is inherent in the community of practice. Apprenticeship involves both observation and participation at various stages. Lave and Wenger (1995:95) state that this type of learning entails, "who is involved; what they do; what everyday life is like; how masters talk, walk, work, and generally conduct their lives; how people who are not part of the community of practice interact with it; what other learners are doing; and what learners need to learn to become full practioners."

In view of the foregoing findings, Lave and Wenger distinguish between a learning curriculum and a teaching curriculum. The former consists of situated opportunities, exemplars inclusive, which take place on a daily basis from the perspective of learners.

In contrast, a teaching curriculum is designed for the teaching of freshers. This is mediated by an instructor's position, and includes an external lens about what knowing is. However, a learning curriculum is situated, not isolated and is not manipulable in instructive or analytical terms. This is because it is founded on social relations that shape and legitimate measured participation. It also entails reproduction of the learned, just as happens when school students reproduce what they learnt from the teacher.

However, unlike in school where learning involves reproducing performances of others or receiving knowledge transmitted in instruction, in apprenticeship, learning takes place through centripetal involvement in accordance with the ambient community. Using their research on learning through apprenticeship among the Vai and Gola tailors in Liberia, Lave and Wenger (1995) reveal that it emerged that tailors learnt without being taught, examined or copying all tailoring tasks; yet they graduated with awesome craftsmanship. This was because learning was found be part and parcel of the social practice. The scholars go on to interrogate the single-literacy model, which approaches a person as merely 'cognitive,' and tends to produce a skewed view of knowledge, learning and skills.

Street (1994), states that literacies can also be sites of negotiation and transformation. He argues that this is a departure from the long held structure of society, which was characterised by a top-down process of domination. In this arrangement, the author states that the reigning ideologies serve the interest of the ruling class, their followers and those of passive or un-conscientious victims. Nonetheless, this position has had a shift whereby the question of agency is incumbent. In other words, this is the way that people may use various means to resist and negotiate the positions that they have been ascribed. The arguments of Street are pertinent as far as this study is concerned considering that chapters 2 and 5, focus on cases of negotiation between dominant and marginal literacy practices.

Nonetheless, while it is agreeable that the inequality propagated by the single-literacy model is being contested, Bélenger (1994) cautions that it should not be misconstrued

that literacies are always emancipatory. He argues his case by stating that literacies are not uniform or universal, but context-specific. Additionally, he avers that no matter how community literacies appear endogenous, they are not exactly so, and cannot be totally detached from national or supranational contexts, which also inform the dominant literacy. These sentiments are in concordance with the findings of this study as reported in chapter 5, particularly with regard to the hierarchisation of villagers literacies as earlier mentioned. However, the findings also revealed that villagers literacies were egalitarian, distributive and participatory, unlike formal literacy which is generally stratified in the axis of teacher-pupil or 'good'-'poor' pupils relationships. It was also found out that while literacies obtain from the school literacy occasionally, this transference takes place in a mediated aura such that the latter's dominant traces are eschewed by the former.

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter has focused on literature review with an emphasis on the single-literacy and multiple literacies models. It has shown that the two models are divergent. The single-literacy model has been demonstrated as being dominant and based on psychology. It has been stated that its proponents hold that literacy has apparent consequences for both the mind and the surroundings of a person. In contradistinction, the literacies model has been found to be relatively new and somewhat marginalised. Its proponents hold that there are several literacies, and that literacies can never be detached from the social realm.

The views of both groups have been spelt out and evaluated. For example, attributes that are ascribed to the single-literacy model have been focused. Among these are its purported consequences for the brain and socioeconomics. However, views countering such ascriptions have also been fronted, especially by invoking the opinions of the proponents of the literacies model. It has also been shown that generally, the objective of the single-literacy model is stated as realising equality among all learners, though the chapter has vividly argued that it can also be an agent of inequality. Nonetheless, it has

been shown that the literacy domination is sometimes negotiated in a number of ways, especially by use of literacies.

The literature has been found to be interesting and quite important in that it has inspired this study a great deal. It inspired some research questions, the problematic and some of the research methods for the study. The differing arguments of scholars over the same subject matters, as a result of their inclination to either of the literacy approaches have proved insightful. The literacies model has especially proved a welcome contribution considering that for a very long time, Kenyan researchers have focused on the standard or school-based literacy; which is sort of treated as the sacrosanct, natural and the sole form of learning. By adopting the social approach to literacy, this research stands to fill an important gap in the sphere of literacy education in Kenya.

However, while this research has a few similarities with both perspectives of literacy practices, it is still different in a number of ways. Foremost, unlike the single-literacy model whose emphasis is formal literacy, the research's focus was rural literacies. Contrary to formal literacy which takes place in formal places also, the research was carried out among ex-student villagers in rural Kenya. Unlike previous research on literacies which focused on non-literate populations such as by Street (1988) or by Barton (1991), this study was based on people who were already through with formal schooling, but who led their lives in the villages. It is partly these people that Kenyan scholars claim stop reading immediately after formal schooling, and who they claim are apt to degenerate into illiteracy for prolonged stay without reading. The strength of the research remains that it was premised on the reconciliation of both approaches to literacy practices in a way. It focused on literate villagers who were categorized in the generalized ambience of Kenyans who could ossify into illiteracy for failure to continue reading in their lives.

CHAPTER 4

4.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the methodology that was used to conduct research. Its purpose is to orient the reader with the research design. To achieve this, it starts by offering the demographic situation of the area of study within the broader map of Kenya. It also offers insight into the people who live there with respect to their socioeconomic activities, shades of their literacy proportions and language usage. Demographic issues aside, there is an account of the research basis. In this respect, there is a description of the population and size of the respondents, the sampling procedures used, as well as the research methods adopted. The section also describes how data was finally organised after field research in preparation for analysis.

4.2 Location of the Study

Fieldwork was conducted in Murugi Location, Maara district, Kenya. Murugi Location comprises of six villages: Gantaraki, Gitombani, Kianjagi, Kiriani, Munga and Kithare. The location is situated in Maara, one of the districts that are inhabited by the Meru people. Other districts in the Meru region include Meru South, Imenti South, Imenti Central, Imenti North, Meru North and Tharaka. Figure 1 shows the locality of Murugi Location on the map of Kenya.
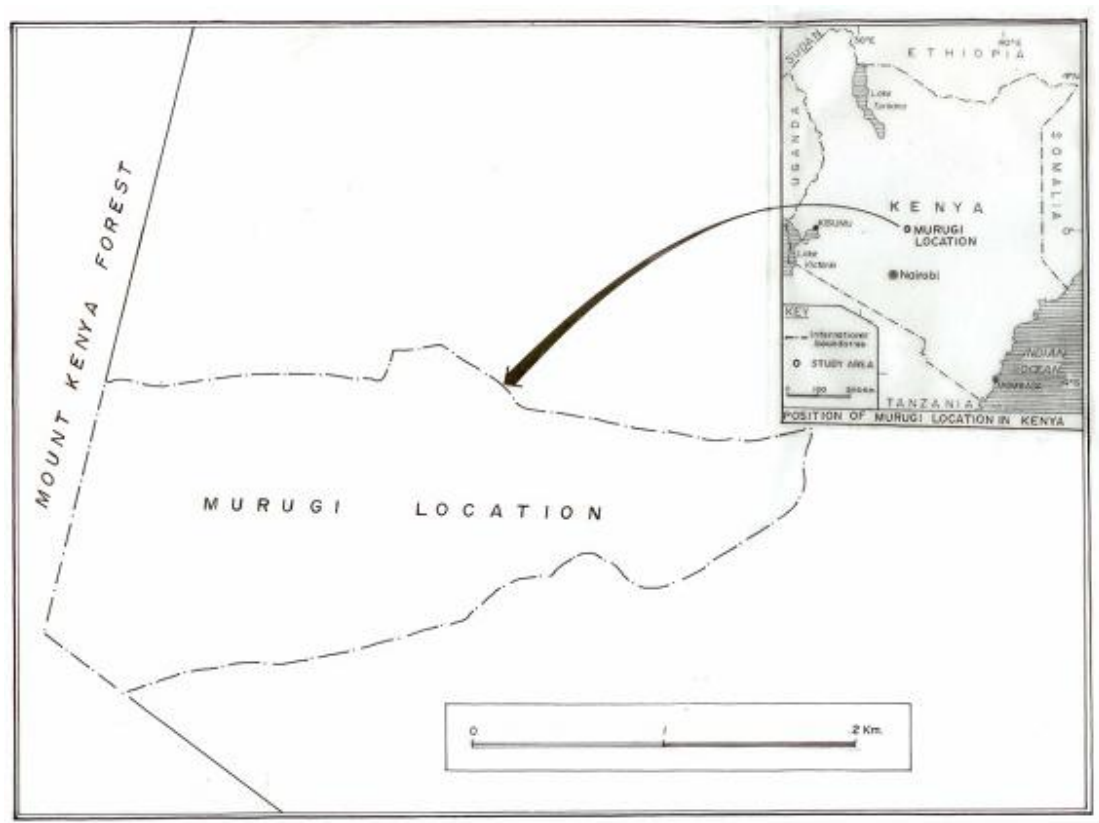
Figure 1: Murugi Location on the map of Kenya

Osawa and Muchunku (2006), state that a great portion of Meru is a high potential area, with agriculture being the main source of livelihood. Cash crops grown in the area include tea, coffee, cotton, wheat and khat; while the main food crops are maize, beans, potatoes and fruits. The area has also industries like cotton ginning, maize milling, textile, lumbering, quarrying and eco-tourism (Osawa and Muchunku, 2006). Murugi villagers are largely peasants, who practise small scale farming of both food crops and cash crops. However, crop farming and industry are not concentrated in one area, but are distributed in several zones of the region. The peasants are also involved in rearing of livestock in small scale. Besides these vocations, they also engage in other trades like shop keeping, tailoring or tour guiding to Mt. Kenya climbers, especially among the youthful lot.

All these attributes were important for the research as they were found to have a bearing on the villagers literacies. Generally, areas of high potential in Kenya have higher

93

literacy rates than areas of low potential. This is as a result of the fact that people living in high potential areas are better endowed economically than people in low potential areas, yet there is proof that there is a strong correlation between economics and literacy (Hountondji 1997). Additionally, high potential areas were preferred by both missionaries and colonialists for their agenda in pre-independent Kenya, providing evidence that inhabitants of such sections had a headstart in education in comparison with people of less potential zones. To add to this, finding literate ex-students in Murugi village for research was trouble-free because invariably all adults were literate.

4.3 The Language Situation in Murugi

Murugi villagers speak Mwimbi, one of the dialects of Meru. Other dialects used in Meru include Chuka, Imenti, Tigania, Igembe and Tharaka (Mbaabu 1996). In between Chuka and Mwimbi dialects, Mbaabu (1996) also identifies Muthambi; while between Mwimbi and Imenti, he identifies Igoji. Imenti is the standard language in Meru, and is supposed to be used in the first three classes of primary schooling. It is also the dialect in which books are written, the translation of the Bible inclusive. However, Tharaka has had some clear orthography as is evinced by the Bible translation into the language. Arguments of Mutahi (1977), Heine and Möhlig (1980), Mbaabu (1996), Mberia (1993) and Gordon (2005) prove that the enumeration of language and dialect remains a fluid matter. This is not surprising considering that there are aerial, historical, political and linguistic parameters that come into play in these classifications.

Distinction between dialects and language cannot be ignored, especially when one puts the case of Meru into perspective. Identification of one dialect as the standard can be rejected by speakers of other varieties who may feel dissatisfied as a result of various reasons. It was for example interesting to find that among Mwimbi speakers, where fieldwork was conducted, the residents opted to use the Kikuyu Bible and hymn books, a language that is used by people who are not only of a different ethnic group with the Meru, but who live outside the Meru geographical zone. Nonetheless, there is mutual

intelligibility between Kikuyu language and all Meru dialects. It is this linguistic conundrum that partly inspired the choice of Murugi villagers for this study.

Contrary to Mbaabu (1996), Heine and Möhlig (1980) state that Meru has five dialects as follows: Igembe, Tigania, North Imenti, Nkubu and Miutini. They also identify Igoji, Mwimbi, Muthambi, Chuka and Tharaka, which they argue do not belong to Meru language. Chuka is clustered together with the Central Kenya dialects of Kikuyu, incidentally where the authors also group Kamba. The authors premise their classification on mutual intelligibility between the languages in question. However, such basis are untenable considering that the authors arrive at their conclusions after comparing samples of lexemes from the various purported languages and dialects, without providing evidence of what size of data would legitimate such conclusions. This is especially so taking into consideration languages have enormous lexemes, sometimes in millions. Simple cross checks revealed that for example, Mwimbi-Muthambi speakers have a far much better mutual intelligibility with Chuka speakers, unlike with the Kamba or Kikuyu, though Heine and Möhlig (1980) cluster Chuka together with Kikuyu and Kamba, rather than with Mwimbi-Muthambi. Such comparison is further indefensible putting into account that Kikuyu and Kamba languages also comprise of several dialects, yet the authors do not state which dialects they chose for comparative purposes with Meru dialects.

Furthermore and contrary to Heine and Möhlig (1980), and Mbaabu's (1996) enumeration of Meru dialects, Grogan (2005) treats Chuka, Mwimbi-Muthambi, Meru and Tharaka, as full fledging languages. However, from Meru language, he identifies Meru, Igembe, Tigania, Imenti, Miutini and Igoji dialects. However, Grogan (2005) does not indicate which dialect of Meru he used to carry out his comparison with Kamba and Kikuyu, nor does he specify the Kikuyu or Kamba dialects that he used for his analysis, making his conclusions questionable. In a like token, for a 'language' like Mwimbi-Muthambi, he fails to show how he distinguished it as full fledging rendering his classification further wanting and unconvincing.

In view of the disparity that has been pointed out in the classification of Meru 'languages' and dialects, this study adopts Mbaabu's (1996) categorization. This is because the author articulates well the parameters that he chooses to distinguish dialects from the language. Additionally, unlike Heine and Möhlig (1980) and Grogan (2005), who rely on the linguistic yardstick (and arguably the ethnopolitical one in the case of Gordon) to arrive at their conclusions, Mbaabu also uses aerial and historical approaches, making his arguments more credible.[29]

4.4 Population and Size

The research was conducted among 30 informants, 24 from villages in Murugi Location and 6 among careerists in the book industry, and who were based in urban areas. Careerists were chosen for study for comparative reasons.[30] Such careerists occasionally double as advisers to the government. Accordingly, it was considered prudent to get their opinion in regard to multiple literacies vis-à-vis the opinions of the villagers. Informants among the villagers were categorized in some demographic levels to make the data diversified and as representative as possible. The categorization involved the level of education, age and gender. This was motivated by the fact that literacy skills have been documented as showing substantial variation in regard to age, educational level, social class, gender and ethnicity (Beller-Hann 2005).

With respect to age, there were the following brackets: 21-30, 31-40, 41-50, 51-60 and above 60. Educational categorization was done as follows: colonial primary and secondary; independent primary, secondary, and post secondary.[31] Pertaining to gender, there was identification of 12 women and 12 men in the villages. However, among careerists, these categorizations were not factored in, putting into account that

---

[29] Geographically, Mbaabu (1996) makes it succinct where the Meru dialects are spoken, while showing that their speakers belong to the same ethnic group. He also offers a clear linguistic argument in terms of the dialects linguistic parameters and mutual intelligibility. He also offers historical reasons that motivate him to categorize the dialects as belonging to one mother language, as opposed to languages of neighbouring communities like Embu, Kikuyu or Kamba.

[30] See an elaborate reason behind the choice of careerists for interviews on subsection 4.8.1

[31] See, chapter 2 on Kenya's education systems.

respondents in this cohort were not the object of research as such, but were only targeted for comparative purposes, and to offer professional opinion on the study.

4.5 Piloting

The main research was preceded by piloting whereby a quick survey was conducted in order to learn some basics about the people. During piloting, it became necessary to establish how the villagers organised themselves and whether they engaged in multiple literacies. Piloting was also a forum for acquainting the researcher with the villagers. It is from this early survey that some research questions were generated. It is also within this phase that clear geographical and conceptual boundaries were drawn. For example, while there was the objective of conducting research in all the six villages of Murugi Location, this was obviated after realising that all the villages never offered any distinct variants in regard to social, political and economic undertakings. This showed that covering some villages of the zone was adequately representative of the whole location and even beyond it.

It was also during piloting that the decision to involve assistant chiefs to help with the sampling of the respondents was arrived at. Piloting was also invaluable in the testing of the various tools that were to be used to conduct research. For example, there was random testing of the filling of diaries using only few cases. Satisfied that the respondents could fill them without many problems, the diaries were distributed during the last days of the piloting phase so that they could be filled in the subsequent two weeks. It is also during piloting that the sound working of the digital recorder for interviews was tested, while ensuring that data could easily be transferred from it and stored in the laptop.

4.6 Sampling Procedure

It has been mentioned that there was need to make the data as representative as possible. In connection with this, the researcher liaised with two village assistant chiefs in order to get respondents with all the required variables with respect to age, levels of education

and gender. The assistant chiefs were best placed to offer this information putting into consideration that they kept records of the villagers who were under their jurisdiction, and knew each adult villager by name. This liaison was also facilitated by the letter of authority to conduct research, which had been issued by the Kenyan Ministry of Education.[32] Despite the help from the assistant chiefs, sampling was done through snowballing and purposive method. The two methods were used to complement each other. Snowballing was used when one informant provided information about other possible informants in regard to the attributes that were in line in with the interests of the research. To this end, it was possible to identify respondents who had variables in different categories, making the data quite representative.

4.7 Ethnographic Approach

Since the problem of the research was whether ex-students among villagers practised multiple literacies, it became necessary to strategise such that the information sourced would be descriptive. In this connection, an ethnographic study proved appropriate in which case the daily lives of the villagers were investigated as a group culture. To facilitate this, it was found necessary to live, participate and observe the villagers daily literacy practices. The goal was to describe their social activities from an emic or insider's point of view. Besides participant observation, there was also use of interviews, which were preceded by the diaries; field notes and field documents as the subsequent sections lay bare. This triangulation helped in crosschecking data, comparing and contrasting information, before using it as a premise for forming knowledge base.

The research was conducted in two phases. The first phase ran between July-September 2007, while the second phase ran between July and September 2008. In both phases, field work was done while the researcher was living with the villagers. The first three weeks of July 2007 were spent doing piloting, while in the last few days of piloting was diary distribution. In the subsequent weeks, the main research started in form of in-depth interviews, whose questions were generated from the filled up diaries. There was also

---

[32] See appendix 1.

participant observation, collecting of field documents and writing of field notes. The study was extensive and was done in both day and night. The night study was necessitated by the fact that the villagers had been observed as engaging in demanding socioeconomic chores during the day, provoking interest as to what they did at night when they were not in the farms, markets or in community projects. In the course of the research, it also proved necessary to pull back occasionally in order to make sense of the recorded and observed data, before returning to the field again with rejuvenated ideas.

4.8 Research Methods

Just as has already be mentioned, the research involved triangulation which comprised of several methods. These were the use of literacy diaries, in-depth interviews, participant observation aided by picture-taking, field notes and the collection of field (literacy) documents from the respondents. The methods, though rigorous and time consuming, were important in triangulating in order to get different insights and perspectives. Triangulation also helped to check on possible bias since every method was finally given an independent analysis and its results compared and contrasted with the rest. However, suffice it to say that the findings from all the methods were more corroborative of each other than variant.

4.8.1 Interviews

Interview questions were largely sourced from diary entries in line with the objectives of the study. In this case, the interviews were 'home-grown,' putting into account that they were informed by the material that had come from the villagers themselves.[33] A total of 30 interviews were carried out, 24 with the villagers and 6 with careerists who were used for comparative purposes as earlier mentioned. This dichotomy was necessitated by the fact that Barton (1994a) observes that literacy is normally characterised by everyday theories of lay people and specialists. He argues that though the two theoretical binaries tend to overlap sometimes, the professional ones are more compact and enjoy higher

---

[33] See appendix 2.

status and influence as a result of several factors, their appearance in print form being one. Additionally, Street (1995) asserts that there are differences of opinion and approaches to literacy between professionals who sometimes double as advisers of governments and lay people.

Barton (1994a) argues that professional theories are the ones that inform media, politicians or parents positions about literacy. In view of this, practices like rural literacies are in most cases marginalised since they are not in tandem with the professional position or convention. However, Barton goes on to show that professional theories are not superior to everyday ones, and could indeed be misleading. It is in the light of this that it became necessary to investigate the villagers views on literacies on the one hand, and the careerists ones on the second hand. The interviews were recorded by use of a digital voice recorder and transferred to the computer for storage. After conducting interviews every day, there was a later replay of each on the computer, especially in the evenings, to ensure that they were clear and in good condition. Additionally, in some cases where there was unclear information, there would be recourse to the interviewee one day or a few days later for clarification.

Miles and Huberman (1994) correctly argue that in most research, the first steps of analysis take place while fieldwork is going on. Accordingly, it is in the repeated study of interview data while in the field that some salient issues regarding the objectives of the study started emerging. It became possible to abstract various features of data such as themes, concepts, inferences, typologies and propositions; from keywords, phrases, sentences and paragraphs, which carried recurrent messages. In the first instance, the leitmotif of literacies was isolated from keywords like *thoma* (read), *andika* (write) *kithomo* (studies/education), *tala* (count) and other attendant keywords. For example, from Serial Number 3, the keyword *thoma* appeared ten times, while *andika* appeared five times in the course of the interview with him. Identification of keywords obtained from their recurrence not only from one interview, but across all the 24 interviews conducted.

Similar abstraction was done to sentences to come up with multiple literacies or their various strands. A case in point is Serial Number 17 interview from which the legal strand of communal literacy was identified in the following sentence: "We went and gave audience to both parties, just like in a court of law, and any statement made was written down, and each disputant was asked questions by both the opposing and supporting camps." The foregoing quotation shows that the disputation involved literacy in the recording of the disagreement in writing, and one can deduce that the written material would also be read by interested parties.

In other cases, literacies were extrapolated from sentences that were not elaborately pointing out to them. For instance, from Serial Number 9, the Christian strand of communal literacy was fleshed out from the following sentence: "They [woman's guild[34]] separate themselves in this way; the woman's guild has a constitution in regard to how members will live going by the vows that they make, but women who are not part of the guild do not make such vows …" From the above sentence, it was discernible that the woman's guild is ran through a constitution. It was also deduced that there were people who sat down to write down the constitution arguably from the head offices. Yet, for women to be allowed into the guild, they must have read the constitution, understood it and accepted all its laws and by-laws as is manifest during their swearing in ceremonies. Thus, from the reference that was made about the woman's guild constitution, it was possible to ferret out the Christian strand of literacy, especially in form of reading.

Furthermore, identification of leitmotifs related to the objectives of the study was done through the singling out of literacy practices and events, which were explained in chapter 1 on the social theory of literacy. Literacy practices and events were teased out from long excerpts of interviews revolving around a single theme for example, agriculture or health, from which economic and communal literacies were abstracted. In such cases, the theme of literacy was identified from its recurrence, not simply from one

---

[34] The Woman's Guild is an organizational branch of women in the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA). Its objective is to worship God and offer spiritual and material support to the needy or indisposed members of society, especially women.

respondent, but from several of them, the weight of the respondents' statements regarding the subject inclusive. For example, from Serial Number 6, the strand of health literacy was gleaned from the respondent's accounts of literacy events and practices in several pages of the transcripts. The respondent gave an account of her training as a community health worker at Chogoria Hospital, her dissemination of health education in the villages, schools and church, and in her filling up of the clients' health forms.

To facilitate the categorization of salient traits in the interviews, coding was done in abbreviated writings at the transcripts margins or through the underlining of phrases and sentences. This involved the process of abstracting prominent aspects from the data, which were essential in regard to the objectives of the study. In the final analysis, this made it possible to isolate specific pieces of data which corresponded to emerging themes. The coding also helped in the easy retrieval of data whenever required. It also facilitated in the assemblage of the data coded into particular categories and consequently, making it possible to find out what data needed to be retained or dropped in view of the study objectives. Emerging patterns and issues from the interviews were compared and contrasted with the rest of the data to find out which ideas were sustainable in all the triangulated data types.

4.8.2 Literacy Diaries

Administration of literacy diaries to respondents for filling was another method that was employed during fieldwork. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), the diary method is documented to have been used by Zimmerman and Wielder in 1977. In regard to literacy, the method was also used by Brian Street and Joana Street to conduct a comparative study of literacy usage in the USA homes and schools.[35] In Murugi's case, diaries which were written in Kiswahili were designed in such a way that they had slots for entering literacies engaged in on a daily basis as follows: Morning, lunch hour, evening and night.[36] Kiswahili was chosen because it is standardised and has orthography unlike Mwimbi dialect which is used in the area. Additionally, unlike

---

[35] See, Street (1995:104), as provided in the references section.
[36] See appendix 3

English which was documented to be elitist in chapter 2, Kiswahili is egalitarian, and it was rightly presumed that villagers would be comfortable to write it.

The diaries also provided explanation as to what the respondents were expected to enter on them, some of which was reiterated verbally by the researcher in their distribution. Informants made entries of their daily activities on the diaries, specifically those to do with literacies for a period of two weeks. They were left free to choose the language in which to fill them, among the three common languages in Mwimbi: Meru, Kiswahili and English. A total of 23 out of 24 diaries were filled. The diaries proved invaluable in the research because they not only indicated that the respondents had the requisite formal school literacy, but they also revealed what they considered as literacy.[37]

To come up with a particular type or strand of literacy, several considerations were made. For instance, just as was stated about the interviews, there was identification of keywords or phrases as entered on the diaries. To abstract the business strand of economic literacy for example, a keyword like *kwendia*, to sell, was considered as a result of its recurrence. A case in point is Serial Number 1, in which the keyword *kwendia* appeared on the diaries 21 times, while from Serial Number 9, it appeared 9 times. Additionally, to identify strands of literacies like Christian, phrases and their recurrence were considered as exemplified by, *kuthoma mbuku ya Ngai*, "to read the Bible."

In other cases, there was extrapolation of the type or strand of literacy from the context on which the phrase was entered. For example, from Serial Number 10, there was recurrent use of the Kiswahili phrase, *kupeleka maziwa [kwa] dairy* (12kg), "took milk to the dairy (12kgs)." In such a case, the researcher had to contextualise what 'taking milk to the dairy' meant. After living with the villagers for months, it became apparent that taking the milk to the roadside for the buyer involved a literacy event. It entailed weighing the milk by use of lactometer, and entering the kilos on the farmers sales cards, a subject matter which is fully discussed in Chapter 5. The literacy event in this case

---

[37] See subsection 1.3.1 for the definition of literacy.

involved quantification of the milk kilos, arithmetic as the daily sales were added and recorded alongside the previous sales, as well as the reading of the sales cards and writing.

Another example of extrapolation comes from the phrase "I went to the Assistant Chief's office to hear a case between a man and his wife," as garnered from Serial Number 17. On the face value, it might appear as if the respondent simply went to observe the disputation, which involved verbal exchanges between the couple, before the Assistant Chief could make a ruling. However, just as shown in Chapter 5 regarding disputes settled in both customary and modern courts, the proceedings entail literacy events. They must be recorded in writing, read and verified as correct before a verdict is made. In such a case, the foregoing phrase was extrapolated as pointing out to the legal strand of communal literacy.

In some cases, phrases entered on diaries were elaborate about the literacy practice, and yet demanded extrapolation of a word or two to acquire a wider picture of the full practice. For instance, Serial Number 19 entered this phrase in Kiswahili, *kusoma Biblia katika kanisa na kutoa fungu la kumi*, "reading the Bible in the church and tithing." While reading the Bible is an elaborate statement, it demanded that the researcher unpack the word 'tithing' to understand that it entails making calculations of all one's monthly earnings in order to give ten percent to God through the church. In other cases, the literacy event involved was just apparent from the phrases entered. A good example is the Kiswahili phrase, *kusomea familia Biblia kabla ya kulala*, "reading the Bible to the family before sleeping," from Serial Number 2.

The diaries proved important because they pointed out to the villagers' literacies, especially in regard to deviation from the standard or school literacy. This was especially evident in their choices of languages for the entries and in their usage of these languages. They also demonstrated the villagers understanding of literacy since the instructions had stipulated that they enter all the literacy practices that they engaged in on a daily basis.

The diaries were reviewed by the researcher and set ready for more comprehensive analysis.

4.8.3 Field Documents

There were materials that were collected from the villagers and which had an affiliation with literacy practices. Street (1995) reveals that he used such documents when he collected invoices and bills in an Iranian village during fieldwork, as well as texts used to test basic literacy among adults in the USA. In Murugi villages, the documents were easy to collect putting into consideration that the villagers had alluded to them in both entries to the diaries and in the course of the interviews. In a similar token, other literacy documents were seen by the researcher during sessions of the villagers literacy events such as in the selling of the farm produce.

There was a maze of literacy documents in the village which included personal notes, meetings-minutes and invitation cards to various functions. There were also farmers sales cards, utility texts and health forms. In most cases, the researcher was allowed to photocopy these documents, but in some cases, it was possible to get the original documents, whose use had expired. However, it is noteworthy that there were other literacy documents that were found in the field and which could not be collected because they were personal properties, and in some cases, confidential. Among these were the Bible, novels, banking slips and receipt books. All in all, literacy documents proved invaluable especially in regard to their use in the village. It was also possible to find out in what language(s) they were written as well as their sources and purposes.

4.8.4 Participant Observation

Putting into account that the study was ethnographic, participant observation method proved obligatory. The method was used when the researcher stayed with the villagers while participating in some of their daily chores. The method helped in acquiring hands-on experience of their daily activities, especially in connection to literacy practices. Participant observation method was buttressed by use of a camera to record real life

situations as illustrated by several plates. Picture-taking was inspired by the fact that Hamilton (2000) affirms that photographs can be used as a source of data. The pictures helped in providing an ethnographic image of the various literacy practices engaged in by the villages, and in different circumstances. However, there is need to note that pictures could only augment the findings putting into view that some literacies resources like knowledge and feelings are invisible and cannot be captured visually (Hamilton 2000). In this regard, only traces of ocular literacy practices and uses could be captured by the photographs. Pictures were found to be especially useful as providers of memory resources.

4.8.5 Field Notes

Field notes were recorded by the researcher in the course of field work. They were used to document information that was not captured by the rest of the research methods. They were used to record profiles of the respondents as well as emergent analytical threads such as themes, hunches, ideas, propositions and so forth. The notes also collated information regarding the surroundings, scenario and the atmosphere that pervaded in data collection, whether tranquil or troublesome. For instance, field notes recorded information on the rough terrain of some villages, data collection which was done in darkness at night or occasional interruptions. Notes also provided information from respondents for example, with regard to why some diaries were filled scantily or not filled at all, at least in one case. The notes proved handy in entering snippets of observations for example during interviews, in readiness for later clarification, instead of bothering the speaker with incessant interruptions. There is need to note that field notes were the second method used on careerists also, besides the interviews. In short, field notes proved an invaluable research method because it was difficult to register and recall all that transpired during data collection, thereby providing an important recollection and retrieval system of the gathered materials.

4.9 Data Organisation

Several steps were taken after fieldwork was completed. With regard to the interviews, there was transcription of the data. This was done by replaying the interviews, which were already stored on the computer and typesetting them word for word. The transcription concentrated on words and avoided suprasegmental materials like pauses, intonations or laughter, because they were not considered necessary going by the study objectives and research questions. Storage was done sequentially in 30 files, starting from the first interview to the last.

Each set of data was identified just in the course of its generation and allied as per its type. To this end, it was categorised as interviews, diaries, participant observations, field notes or field documents. Each set was headed with an abbreviated name of the respondent, the site or the village, and the date of collection. The data was then filed in five different folders with respect to its type. Formatting and filing proved handy in data retrieval, especially in the stage of familiarisation, in which all the data was studied and reviewed several times. However, pictures and the raw interviews remained stored on the computer and could be retrieved whenever necessary for review. This arrangement helped in the coding of features that were prominent in each data type, before comparing and contrasting them.

In the phase of familiarisation, memoing and summaries were made at the margins in readiness for the main analysis. There was also cross-referencing of information in such a way that one file could show where similar information could be found in a different file. The annotations captured an overview of the data by highlighting both the nitty-gritty issues of the study in form of themes, suggestions, propositions, ideas, hunches and so forth. Memoing helped in corroborating evidence and in drawing a rough trajectory of the direction that the results were likely to take. Through repeated study of the data, it was possible to garner some early insights, impressions and intuitions as was mentioned earlier in the section of research methods.

In preparation for the main analysis, summary charts were drawn for some types of data. Miles and Huberman (1994), state that data summary charts expedite analysis as they allow the analyst to capture several characteristics of the data in a single display. The charts were drawn and entries of the main features of the data were made on them. For example in the case of the interviews, there were segments for the serial numbers, anonymisation, the type of data, the time it took to collect it and the village of respondents. There were also dockets for demographic information of respondents in regard to occupation, gender, level of education and age.[38] The charts provided an invaluable overview of all the characteristics of the data. They helped in highlighting the categories in which different types of data were considered or left out. They also offered key to codes and abbreviations which stood for words which could not be captured as a result of spatial constraints. Besides providing summarised overviews and ideations about the whole data, the charts also proved helpful in the retrieval of all types of data, especially in cross-referencing.

4.10 Data Coding

Data coding was necessary amid an array of huge volumes of material. The coding was invaluable in the sense that it aided in the identification of salient issues deriving from the data, besides pointing out to the direction that the findings were taking. To facilitate coding, two types of thematic conceptual matrices were drawn. The first type of matrices were used to capture an overview of data from the interviews, diaries and field documents since this is the data that was also subjected to analysis in view of the research questions. Miles and Huberman (1994), state that a thematic matrix derives from general conceptual themes, including an elaborate set of key variables. The matrix brings together items that belong together, normally obtaining from a priori of things regarding the researcher's expectation of the study in concordance with the study objectives.

---

[38] See appendix 4

In this connection, the matrices for the different types of data were filled up by a literacy checklist in accordance with the objectives of the study. The checklist sought for several aspects of literacies among the villagers. These included literacy events, literacy practices, means of carrying out literacy practices, the goals of the literacies, the domains of literacy practices and slots for the informants serial numbers. Additionally, the matrices had room for entering important information regarding literacies, which was not necessarily captured by the research questions and study objectives. Examples included linguistic characteristics like code-switching, code-mixing, standard and non-standard language or the language's orthographic status, which were all eventually captured in their type of matrix.

The second type of matrices was designed to capture outlines of data from field notes and participant observation methods. This is the data which was not being subjected to research questions or study objectives though it still tallied with the villagers literacies. The matrices had dockets for capturing several segments, if need arose. The slots included serial number, time of data collection, the place where it was collected, the event that was underway, salient issues attendant to data collection, and the researcher's remarks.

The matrices laid ground work for analysis because prominent features of the study could easily be captured in an overview impression. They also aided in the garnering of emerging themes and their recurrence as per each respondent, consequently facilitating in the build up a statistical premise in the qualitative research. The matrices were further crucial in analysis as it became possible to compare and contrast features appearing on them with those on the summary charts, or practices of literacies and people's demographic features. They also helped in comparing and contrasting multiple literacies, the use of language by the respondents in relation to their demographic attributes, as well as in the comparison of results from all types of data. The matrices also proved beneficial in that they enabled the clustering of all research questions together for easier analysis. This way, it was also possible to refine and tighten up ideas.

Finally, and before the major analysis, there was discounting of data. In this phase, there was reflection of the data in connection to the context in which it was collected. In view of this, it became possible to check out for solicited and unsolicited data. This was especially important in view of the fact that occasionally, respondents provided material that was incongruent to the study objectives, though it was accorded due consideration, and dropped only at the end if it failed to be relevant. Likewise, it was possible to single out material that might have appeared as central to the study only to be reduced to the periphery when all the key issues were displayed on the chart and matrices. In this connection, it became possible to drop such material in the analysis without impinging negatively on the study. Similarly, irrelevant generalizations, assumptions and presuppositions, which had emerged in the data were gleaned out and recanted.

All the steps that were deployed in the organisation of data after fieldwork were in preparation for data analysis. Accordingly, the layout and filling of the summary charts and matrices was followed by the development of a storyline. To realise this, there was a build-up of phrases and subtitles that described the study in general. The storyline served the purpose of integrating themes in the data. In connection to this, the storyline supplied all important aspects that were to be followed in data analysis. In a nutshell, suffice it to say that all the measures that were taken in the organisation of the data set the stage for data analysis by providing a clear course of action to take.

4.11 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the methodology that was used in conducting field research. It offered an orientation of the demographics of the people who were investigated. This was done by explaining the location of study within the map of Kenya, the socioeconomic activities of the respondents, and their usage of language. It revealed that the distinction between language and dialect remains problematic as a result of historical, geographical and even linguistic factors. The section has also offered an acquaintanceship with the research design as regards population and size, the sampling procedures and research methods. It has also detailed steps that were taken in the

organisation of the various data after field research. The chapter has also explained the procedures of data storage, its categorization, familiarisation and layout in summary charts and matrices. All these steps have been rationalised as setting the stage for data analysis, the topic which is treated in the subsequent chapter.

CHAPTER 5

5.0 DATA ANALYSIS

5.1 Introduction

Data analysis was done in accordance with the methods that were employed in conducting fieldwork. In this case, the analysis involved triangulation, thus gathering and analysing data from more than one source in order to gain a comprehensive perspective of the situation that was being investigated. Triangulation was done at the levels of data source and respondents, the methods of gathering it and through qualitative and quantitative approaches. The data comprised of interview transcripts, diaries, field documents, field notes and participant observation material. In this connection, different research methods were used to crosscheck and validate other techniques employed to arrive at various findings. To this end, it was possible to uncover varied strands from the data which offered different insights and views.

The interviews, diaries and field documents were subjected to analysis in connection with the research questions, which were provided in chapter 1. However, field notes and observations were not analysed with regard to any particular question, but in line with the whole objective of appraising multiple literacies among the villagers. This was occasioned by the fact that notes and observations were made extemporarily and sporadically, without necessarily basing them on research questions. Salient issues on each of the data category were identified. As was stated in Chapter 4, these included themes, ideas, suggestions, propositions and hunches, as well as the choice and usage of available languages by the respondents. In a similar token, where possible, there was comparison and interrelating of corpus from different tools such as interviews and diaries to offer an encompassing analysis. Additionally, demographic characteristics of respondents such as age, level of education and gender were compared and contrasted with the research questions and themes to ascertain whether they had any noticeable influence on the subject of study. After an evaluation of all these factors, several results emerged as discussed in the subsequent sections.

5.2 INTERVIEWS

5.2.1 Multiple Literacies among Murugi Villagers

A total of 30 interviews were conducted, 24 from respondents in Murugi villages, while 6 were conducted from careerists in the book industry for reasons that were provided in chapter 4. In view of research question 1, the interviews revealed that the villagers practised several literacies. Three types of literacies were identified, each bearing one or several strands. The first was communal literacy which entailed Christian, culinary, health, familial, legal and self-help strands. There was also economic literacy which comprised of agriculture, business and shopping strands; while there was also leisure and media literacy, comprising both leisure and media strands.

The literacies were found to be situated on the socioeconomic activities of the people such as weddings, land disputes, farming, self-help groups or church activities. For this reason, it was established that the literacies tend to be invisible and demand unpacking, for example through a research like this to be noticeable. Though this research cannot be tendered as representing other regions in Kenya, the invisibility of rural literacies may nonetheless explain why there could be assertions to the effect that that Kenyans stop reading immediately they are through with formal schooling (Chakava 1988, Altbach 1992, Mazrui and Mazrui 1995, Mbae 2004).

The invisibility was found to be at variance with the conceptualisation of research questions considering that villagers literacies are embedded in socioeconomic activities, and are never on the surface. In this case, research question 1 was found to be misplaced putting into account that it treated multiple literacies as full-fledging entities, but the results showed that they were etched on valuable societal undertakings. This tallies with Barton (1994a:49), observation that "in general, people do not read in order to read, nor write in order to write; rather, people read and write in order to do other things." In a similar token, the literacies were found to be rather tenuous considering that they were never the villagers' priorities, but were simply used as tools for attaining particular socioeconomic benefits.

It was established that the priorities of the villagers were the socioeconomic activities, which were founded on several domains. In the light of this, literacies were figured out as conduits which facilitate the attainment of targeted gains. As stated in Chapter 4, in the interviews data, the units of analysis were keywords, sentences, literacy practices and literacy events; which provided a framework of literacies which were practised in the villages. The identification also included relating to precedence such as Street's (1988) identification of *maktab* literacy in Iran's villages as well as personal ingenuity. Literacies were also identified in view of the definition of literacy in New Literacy Studies as spelt out by Camitta (1993), Street (1994) or Barton and Hamilton (2000) as outlined in Chapter 1. Besides the use of the analytical frame for identifying prominent patterns in the data, the analysis also included comparing and contrasting, clustering, counting and subsuming a maze of particulars into the general few.

It emerged that villagers literacies were never practised independent of each other since there was a lot of overlap between them. For example, while communal literacy could entail the parents and their school-going children doing homework together in the familial strand, the same family could also engage in economic literacy for instance, when parents sent children to the shops with shopping lists. Figure 2 shows the literacies that were found in the villages, their strands inclusive; as well as the average rate of each strand in relation to the number of respondents who indicated to engage it.
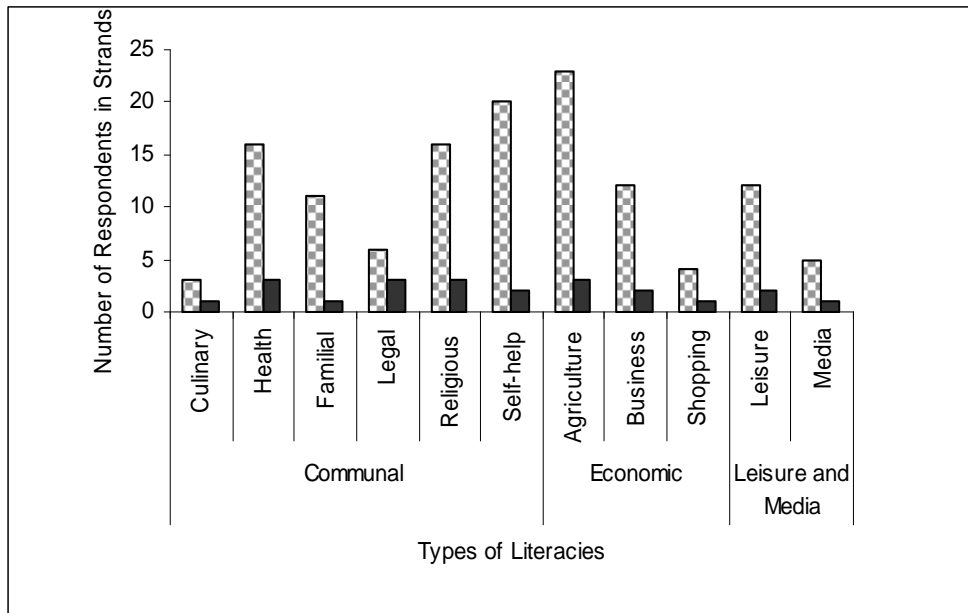
Figure 2: Multiple literacies, their strands, and the average participation in strands

Though the research was mainly qualitative, it became necessary to link it to the quantitative component for corroboration through triangulation, not only for purposes of achieving a thorough and rigorous analysis, but in order to provide new insight. The quantitative link also proved handy in verifying research questions, thereby helping to maintain candour in the research by avoiding biases.

Figure 2 shows that according to the interviews, agriculture and self-help strands of economic and communal literacies score high at 23 and 20 respectively among the 24 interviewees, in comparison with the other components of literacies that the villagers engage in. It can be surmised that villagers attach great importance to these types of literacies in comparison with the others. Religious and health strands of communal literacy also score substantially high at 16 each. However, culinary and shopping strands are at the bottom, with scores of only 3 and 4 respectively, indicating that such strands of literacies are not given a high premium by the villagers.

It should however be noted that while each strand of literacy is entered as only a mark on each interviewee, respondents showed that they engaged in some strands of literacies more than others. In this case, several instances of one strand of literacy could be

documented from one interview. For example, 9 cases of the health strand were abstracted from Serial Number 6, while 7 cases were garnered in the legal strand from Serial Number 18. However on the chart, all these cases are entered as one strand from the respondents in question. The motivation to treat several cases of literacy strands from an individual as singular arose from the objective of the study which was to appraise the villagers literacies, as opposed to individual engagement in one type or strand of literacy.

In view of this, an average rate of each strand of literacy is shown in Figure 2. It shows that agriculture, religious, health and legal strands score a high average rate of 3, while culinary, familial, leisure, and shopping strands score a low of 1 each. It is deducible that the average figures show which threads of literacies are highly or lowly valued by the villagers, certainly going by the gain that they derive from each. The differences in the strands of the three literacies are explained in the subsequent subsections, in which case every thread of literacy is scrutinized separately.

5.2.1.1 Communal Literacy

The interviews demonstrated that communal literacy is common among the villagers. Communal literacy is a joint activity involving several members of the community. The interviews revealed that it is rare for villagers to engage in literacy practices individually since they prefer engaging in them as members of one society. Communal literacy was garnered from such pronouns as 'we,' 'our,' or 'us,' as used in the course the interviews. Among the strands of literacy that were classified as falling under the rubric of communal literacy were Christian, culinary, health, familial, legal and self-hep. It is arguable that communal literacy is premised on the structure of many African societies, which are organised more on communal rather than on individual basis. Communal literacy was ranked second among the other two literacies, with an average score of 12 from the total number of all strands in each literacy type.

5.2.1.1.1 Culinary Strand

As it is demonstrable in Figure 2, it was brought to fore that communal literacy was also characterised by culinary tasks that are practised by the villagers, which however scored quite low. This is not because the villagers find culinary work unimportant, but because the chore takes a lower position in the order of socioeconomic priorities of the people, on which literacies are founded. Culinary education, it was determined, becomes handy when people are cooking for parties like weddings or when one has guests. It therefore demands that cooks do both arithmetic and approximations in order to know what ratio of ingredients and food stuffs to use. For example, it was found out that arithmetic helps cooks in determining how much oil, onions, tomatoes or salt to use in the cooking of similarly quantified foodstuffs like rice, meat or traditional foods like mukimo[39] and ugali.[40] Similar quantifications and approximations were found to take place in the making of beverages such as in parties.

It emerged that culinary chores entail further societal literacy activities. One respondent explained that in preparing for a wedding, they had to constitute a steering committee. The committee came up with all the foodstuffs and drinks that were to be prepared for the wedding, and an approximation of the cost of each item. A secretary recorded all the required items and their cost approximations, before the committee could come up with a budget for the wedding. With the budget in mind, the committee went ahead to raise money through pre-wedding parties. This case exemplifies that though the objective of the steering committee was to organise the wedding, it also ended up engaging in literacy. Similar literacy was also found to take place even at the home level for example, when mothers cooked for their families.

---

[39] This is a traditional type of food among the people of Mt. Kenya. It comprises of a pounded mixture of foodstuffs like beans, potatoes, bananas, greens, beans, and so forth.

[40] It is a hard food stuff made by stirring maize meal into boiling water, which is taken with various types of stews. Its origin is attributed to the people of Western Kenya. Today, it is somewhat the staple food in many Kenyan homes.

5.2.1.1.2 Health Strand

The research established that the villagers also engage in communal literacy as reflected by the health strand. It was brought to light that the health strand of literacy took place in a cycle, whereby some villagers went for health training and in turn, served fellow villagers using their knowledge. A case in point was expressed as when Community Health Workers (CHWs) were offered training at Chogoria Hospital so that they could offer services to the community on voluntary basis. One beneficiary of such a venture explained her health training as follows:

> *Our training was offered by Chogoria Hospital doctors. One doctor was assigned the task of educating us on agriculture, where we went for hands-on training on the farms. The second one taught us about delivering children, while the third one instructed us on how to manage sick people at the homes, before taking them to hospital. However today, the most important health education is on HIV/AIDS considering that we never had such ailments in the past. This has forced us to go back on the drawing board in order to be trained anew. After this training, each of us is assigned an area as his or her jurisdiction.*
> *(S.N. 6)*

The interviews showed that such literacy involved trainees sitting down in a room during the day for instructions while in the evenings, the day's education was buttressed using teaching aids like films, which focused on some of the diseases that had already been learned.

After such training, the research also revealed that Community Health Workers went to the villages where they engaged in more literacy as they educated fellow villagers on what they had learnt. They sometimes disseminated this education in liaison with the provincial administration at the village level, with church leaders or with schools administrations. It also emerged that this literacy was disseminated at public meetings, in church seminars or in schools. In some cases, the CHWs liaised with hospitals to offer the health strand of literacy by use of aids like films or videos. The interviews also

unearthed that community workers helped in the management of patients in the villages, among them HIV/AIDS sufferers. The health thread of communal literacy in the villages was strongly validated by people who confirmed that they went for such education as exemplified below.

> *It was a form of meeting. We met at Kianjagi Church where we had three instructors. The first one was involved in pictorial education; the second one was involved in oral teaching, while the third wrote on the blackboard to expound issues. We were only young men, and young women had a parallel session elsewhere. In total, we were about 200 participants. We were taught about HIV and how we could keep ourselves safe from it. […] One thing that we learnt was that before you get a female partner, it is imperative to go for HIV testing in order that both of you can know their status. Secondly, we learnt how you can avoid AIDS for instance, by using condoms. From the pictures, we saw how the disease affects people, how the affected people's bodies change, and even how those who accept to take medicine improve their health, their HIV positive status notwithstanding.*
>
> *(S.N. 15)*

The interviews also brought to fore that health education also focused on issues like pregnancy and children's nutrition.

Further literacy revolving around the health strand was found to take place on philanthropic grounds. One respondent gave evidence of how he helped to administer insulin to a diabetic on a daily basis. While this injection should have been self-administered, the informant explained that the patient was not able to do it because he was non-literate. He added that for successful administration of the injection, one was required to read the syringe and keep records of the daily jabs and doses. However, since the diabetic was living within one of the villages in Murugi, the respondent said that he volunteered to administer the injection all the time it was required, hence in the mornings and evenings, while doing the necessary recordings for the patient.

A similar case of literacy on the health thread was found to have taken place on humanitarian grounds when members of a clan joined together to pay a visit to one of their companions whose leg was amputated due to illness. The chairman of the clan liaised with his secretary to write letters to members informing them of the impending visit and its objective. The letters also urged every member to contribute 100 Kenya shillings, which was to be given to the patient. It was revealed that all the contributions were recorded in writing, and the total was summed up, before presenting it to the patient in hospital.

5.2.1.1.3 Familial Strand

The interviews also demonstrated that there was the familial strand in communal literacy. It was established that in a number of cases, communal literacy took place as a family matter involving family members. The familial thread of literacy was for example, cited as a common undertaking when parents and children engaged in homework. In most cases, it emerged that children were helped by one of the parents in the evenings. If it chanced that mothers were preparing supper, fathers would be helping children with assignments in the living rooms. Some other times, it turned out that the parent, who was strongest in a particular subject such as Mathematics, would help. In a number of cases, it was found out that it was both parents who helped in the school tasks, contrary to Barton's (1994a) findings in the neighbourhood of England, which showed that women helped more in assignments than men. In Murugi villages, what appeared to count was simply who was available to help the children with the tasks at any given time. The findings were also at variance with those of urban areas, as garnered from careerists, whose statistics showed that men went to the library more and read more books than women.

The familial strand of literacy was also characterised by spiritual activities. It was found that among several families, Bible reading took place in both mornings and evenings. Respondents stated that during such sessions, a member of the family read the book and elucidated the message to the rest. To facilitate this exercise, it demanded that the

speaker prepared much earlier by reading the particular text and reflecting on its message. One informant gave the example of the Biblical parable of the prodigal son as one of the readings that she had shared with her family in the immediate past. Additionally, the home was found to be a forum for sharing information that had been read from books. For example, one respondent said that her son who had finished secondary four and was waiting to join the university used to read novels and share their contents with the rest of the family. The respondent put this as follows: "Whoever reads can come and share with the rest of us [family]. Like the other day, he [my son] was sharing with us what he read in *Rich Dad Poor Dad*,[41] and we discussed the content" (S.N.2).

5.2.1.1.4 Legal Strand (Customary and Modern)

The interviews also revealed that literacy was integral to both modern and customary legal affairs. Regarding the Kenyan constitution for example, it was established that in the event of a crime like mugging, the victim ought to report the matter to the police. In such reporting, the interviews revealed that literacy practices took place. A case in point is that of a couple who were mugged and had to report the crime to the nearest police station, which has been cited elsewhere in this analysis. In recording of both the report and statement, literacy took place in writing of the verbal report, reading and validation.

With regard to the customary law, it was established that after a crime is committed in Meru, the complainant has the choice of pursuing justice in the modern court or in the customary legal court of the Meru, Njuri Ncheke (Narrow Jury). The customary litigations were found to be settled at the community level in line with the traditional jurisprudence of Njuri Ncheke. One respondent gave an account of a dispute involving an alleged case of impregnation and denial, which was being arbitrated by the traditional court. In the case, both the plaintiff's and the defendant's versions were recorded in writing. Similar recordings were made from the statements of the relatives of both the complainant and the accused. There is need to note however, that literacy in form of

---

[41] Kiyosaki, Robert and Lechter, Sharon (2000) *Rich Dad Poor Dad.* New York: Warner Books.

reading and writing in Njuri Ncheke affairs is a departure from the traditional institution's modus operandi. It emerged that not in the too-distant-past; all dispute settlements under the aegis of Njuri Ncheke were done orally, and entailed a verbal exchange between disputants, or between disputants and Njuri elders, in the presence of an audience.

Considering that the rivals in the dispute belonged to different clans, each clan had to hold its own meetings prior to Njuri's litigation to deliberate and plot how to assist their member, either the accused or the complainant. Clan members were invited for such meetings through letters, which also spelt out the agenda. During the meetings, all deliberations and resolutions had to be minuted by the secretary for later references as the clan prepared for the Njuri hearing. There was evidence of further written communication between the clan members and Njuri Ncheke elders, as they prepared for the disputation.[42]

The case revealed that the Njuri had encouraged encroachment of more contemporary literacy practices into its affairs by accepting the defendant's argument that the parentage of the child under dispute be determined through DNA tests, rather than through the traditional mode of making vows. However, it turned out that the institution of Njuri Ncheke is a very secretive body that remains averse to scrutiny for example, for study purposes. This implies that while some of its members could volunteer some information on the institution, there was a likelihood of receiving falsified material in an effort to keep off an investigator. It is for this reason that it proved difficult to access documents like minutes, which were recorded in disputations.

5.2.1.1.5 Religious Strand

The interviews demonstrated that there was wide practice of communal literacy among the villagers as exemplified by the religious strand of literacy. It emerged that Christianity surrounded all the life spheres of the people. It was the alpha and omega of

---

[42] See letter samples on appendices 5 and 6.

every activity in the community. This is as a result of the fact that homes, schools, weddings and meetings were run on Christian principles. In view of this, social events were found to follow a particular sequence based on Christian tenets as follows: A prayer, the reading of the Gospel, its explication and the singing of worship songs which were sometimes read from hymn books. It was further established that closing events could also follow a similar sequence. One villager captured the ubiquity of Christian instruction within the community as follows:

> *Praying is a custom that we found in place and which we have stuck to.*
> *For me, to wake up this morning, there is somebody who helped me out,*
> *and that is the Almighty God. We therefore allow him to take precedence*
> *over everything else because we trust that he is the one who guides us in*
> *all what we do. It is for this reason that we supplicate in his honour*
> *whenever we are undertaking a venture to seek his blessings.*
> *(S.N.22)*

The usage of the concept of 'praying' such as in the foregoing quotation requires unpacking in order to understand the context. After staying with the respondents for several weeks, it came to light that 'prayer' is more than closing one's eyes in an attempt to address God through speech or meditation. It entails literacy activities like Bible reading, interpretation of the reading, and the prayer itself. Such embedding of literacy on 'prayer' may further explain why it could be claimed that such villagers stop participating in literacy once they are through with schooling. Granted, it is not always easy to unpack such concepts as 'prayer,' which would in turn reveal that literacy underlies them.

5.2.1.1.6 Self-help Strand

The self-help strand of literacy was unearthed at both individual and communal level. At the communal level, it involved group activities which targeted particular benefits. Examples include ventures like dairy farmers, church groups and various self-help projects. During the meetings of such groups, literacy practices were called into use in

activities like minutes-writing or oralisation of written minutes for discussion by members. Literacy practices were also found to be exploited to communicate to membership of these groups in form of letters to individual members or to the whole group. It emerged that one communication in form of a letter could be disseminated to the rest of the members verbally, from one person to another. In this case, the written letter was oralised and its contents consumed by all, courtesy of verbal communication. The success of this media of communication was evinced by members reaction for example, by turning up for meetings. At personal level, literacy was used to read the Bible for spiritual fulfilment, banking transactions, sales of farm produce or in the writing of personal notes, which are fully dissected in the subsection of field documents. In all these ventures, all practices attendant to literacy like writing, reading, arithmetic, oralisation of the written word and participant observation would be employed.

5.2.1.2 Economic Literacy

Another type of literacy which was classified from some other strands of literacy was economic. It is stated elsewhere that Murugi villagers engage in multiple literacies with an economic gain in mind. It was established that their daily activities revolve around socioeconomic tasks that are apt to offer them some gains, especially monetary ones. It is no wonder that economic literacy was ranked top among other literacies with an average score of 13, from the total number of all strands in the three types of literacies. Among the strands that were found to fall under economic literacy were agriculture, business and shopping.

5.2.1.2.1 Agriculture Strand

A notable issue that emerged about the villagers is that literacy is part and parcel of their animal and soil husbandry. Foremost, it is noteworthy that every respondent in the village turned out to be participating in one type of farming or another. Majority of the informants were small scale agriculturalists, who owned farms and kept livestock. It transpired that farmers engaged in tea, coffee, maize, beans, potatoes, kales or khat farming. They also kept livestock like dairy cows, goats, sheep, poultry and pigs. This

farming was found to be crucial to the villagers. It not only provided them with foodstuffs and income, but it also helped them educate their children in payment of school fees or in the buying of an assortment of school requisites. In view of this, agriculture, which was categorized as a component of economic literacy, was found to be a serious undertaking by the villagers as they wanted to reap the best benefits out of it.

The villagers indicated that agricultural knowledge was acquired during formal schooling, on field trips, in farmer's educational days or from instructions on the various farming products that they were buying. One informant gave an account of how he used literacy in maize planting as follows:

> *In maize farming, we use technology as we are taught. For example, we were recently taught how to dig a hole of one foot by one foot. We were advised to put two tins [each tin is 2 kilos] of manure in the hole, and plant four maize seeds. If you plant 120 seeds, you ought to harvest one sack of maize. However, this will depend on the variety of maize that you plant, say, 614. I am convinced that when you use this education appropriately, your returns are really good. In the last five years, we have had an American teaching us about maize growing, but now, there are new instructions on this type of farming, as I have already told you. It is upon us farmers to compare the two methods to gauge the one that gives us the highest returns.*
> *(S. N. 24)*

The interviews laid bare the fact that such knowledge proved handy to the farmers and it was found to be well utilised. Additionally, several respondents attested to their knowledge of using various fertilizers to tend crops. Among the fertilizers that were said to be in much use were CAN, Mavuno, Atelic or 201010. It emerged that the fertilizers were used alongside manure from the livestock and poultry. The farmers also showed wide knowledge of watering their crops by use of makeshift irrigation or by relying on seasonal rains. However, despite the advantages that were attributed to good use of

literacy farming, there was assertion that if farming knowledge was misused or abused, it could turn out to be costly. One respondent cited one case of this abuse as when some farmers applied fertilizer on their tea crops in the dry season, instead of waiting for the onset of rain as per the advice of the agricultural officers. She lamented that in such cases, the fertilizer melted and evaporated, rendering it a waste.

The findings of the research also laid bare the fact that economic literacy as characterised in the agricultural strand did not start and stop at the point of improving farming. It transcended the farming process to the point of marketing of products. A villager whose vocation was to buy milk from the farmers to deliver it to the milk selling centre by use of his bicycle revealed that literacy was also paramount in the marketing of the farmers produce. He demonstrated this by his argument which appears in the following extract.

> *In the morning, I go to the farmers with two things; a lactometer for weighing the milk's density, and a drug known as ethanol, which measures its freshness. This ensures that the milk that I buy is clean. The other item that I normally have with me is the litre cup, with which I weigh the milk, instead of carrying the heavy weighing machine all the way. The litre cup is not only easy to use, but is also more accurate. After weighing the milk, I record the kilos on the monthly sales cards that farmers keep. I then transport the milk to Weru Station, where I deliver it to Brookeside Company. The company's agents repeat the process of testing the freshness of milk using ethanol, and then weigh its density by use of lactometer. After confirming that the milk is sound, we have to weigh the kilos afresh to determine whether they are tallying with my records. They then enter the records, which I must confirm to be correct by appending my signature.*
> *(S.N. 15)*

The above quotation proves that farm husbandry is closely tied with economics, and literacies only come handy to facilitate the two.

5.2.1.2.2 Business Strand

Interviews revealed that the villagers also practise more economic literacy as they engage in business. This is because some of them act as small scale business people, who sell farm produce or run businesses in the villages. It was established that running a grocery for example, could also double as a dispensing chemist. In this connection, it emerged that it was incumbent upon the person running such a venture to keep records of the goods sold. This is because after a sale of a drug for instance, the buyer could come back later with the same need compelling the grocer to review the medicine in cases where he or she has medical knowledge.

It was further determined that some villagers ran shops in which they sold products like sugar, salt, tea leaves or even medicine; while a few others ran hair salons. Additionally, most farmers engaged in business when they sold their farm products like kales, bananas, eggs or poultry. In conducting these businesses, it was discerned that the villagers got involved in literacy in form of reading, writing and arithmetic. One farmer who also doubled as a shop-keeper explained how she used literacy to run her business.

> *[…] mostly, I record medicine. I keep receipts of the medicine that I have bought in the chemist as well as the records of the medicine sold to clients. I am obliged to keep records of these drugs because I maybe forced to undertake a review on the client later, not to forget that the business of selling medicine can be risky. For instance, I have to keep records of the antibiotics sold because it is not advisable to issue them without caution. Similarly, the records help me to advise the patients because if they do not get well, I refer them to the health centre with the history of the treatment that has so far been offered. I also keep records of the shop items bought or sold, but what I record religiously is medicine. (S.N. 1)*

It was also unearthed that in the running of such small enterprises, it behoved the trader to keep records of the sold items to do a balance sheet, just in case of losses. In a similar token, it transpired that business people kept records of goods that were running out of

stock so that they could replenish them by further shopping. To do such purchases, shopping lists were found to be prerequisites, not only at the vocational level, but also in the home. In this case, it is apparent that villagers engage in economic literacy not so much as their priority, but only as a means to earning income. This is further evidence that economic literacy is embedded in socioeconomic activities.

5.2.1.2.3 Shopping Strand

Shopping was also found to be another strand of economic literacy. Shopping took place at the individual, familial and even communal level. At the home level, respondents stated that they were involved in the making of shopping lists before they could go to the market, or when they wanted to send other people to shop for them. Drawing a shopping list entailed writing a catalogue of the items that were to be bought, and in some cases, with approximations of the prices. Similar shopping lists were drawn at the community level such as in wedding preparations. After agreeing on the goods to be bought, and after raising the required budget, the wedding committee would assign some people the task of doing shopping of the required items. In order to facilitate purchases of several quantities of different items, the shopping lists proved handy. The lists were said to be useful in checking forgetfulness, in budget estimations and in ensuring that the right quantities of goods were bought. The shopping strand of economic literacy, which also permeates economic literacy, provides evidence that the categorization of literacies can never be definite since there is a lot of overlapping between them as a result of their social nature.

5.2.1.3 Leisure and Media Literacy

Leisure and media have been grouped together as a result of the interrelationship that was found to exist between them in the village literacies. While media and leisure are sometimes different entities, they were both found to have similar goals especially with regard to recreation. According to the villagers, the leisure strand of literacy entailed reading fiction or newspapers, putting into consideration that these practices were of veritably no proven benefit in village circles. Media literacy comprised of both benefits

and luxuries according to the respondents. For example, the radio was counted as beneficial when it disseminated information on ways of combating diseases or when it aired spiritual programmes. Conversely, media was also viewed as a luxury in activities like film-watching or in the listening of popular music. It is for this reason that media and literacy have been categorised together, but with different strands. Leisure and media literacy was ranked last among other literacies with an average score of 8, from the total number of respondents who engaged in each of its strands.

5.2.1.3.1 Leisure Strand

According to the interviewees, the leisure strand of literacy entailed reading that was not taken seriously such as that of fiction. The interviews showed that villagers engaged in leisure when there was no work to be done hence, in their free time. Contrary to other literacies which have been documented as being situated on social activities, the leisure strand of literacy was found to be independent of such events as it was practised when people were entirely free, especially on Sunday afternoons, after attending church in the morning. Some respondents indicated that they read creative works rarely. They said that this happened when they re-read some books that they studied during their school days, when they borrowed novels from friends or when they read fiction that was brought home by their children from school. However, most respondents indicated that the leisure strand of literacy was not important in their daily chores, and was only engaged in as a last resort, when every other important matter had been attended to. One respondent alluded to the fact that the reading of fiction in the face of more important duties could draw stigma, since it was a sign of snobbery or laziness.

5.2.1.3.2 Media Strand

Recreational literacy among villagers was found to derive from the media in a number of cases. It entailed reading newspapers, listening to the radio or watching screens. In some cases, media literacy was cited as educative. Among the television programmes that respondents said that they found educative and interesting were comedies and culinary ones, particularly among women viewers. Examples that were cited included

Vioja Mahakamani (Bewilderment in the Lawcourts)*, Vitimbi* (Intrigues) and *Upishi Bora* (Fine Cookery) on the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation television. Films were cited as teaching aids, especially in health matters. The media thread of literacy was also attributed to FM radio stations, which broadcast in mother tongue. A further strand of media literacy was found to be the various ways of cell phone usage, especially in reading and the sending of text messages.

5.2.2 Ways of Practising Literacies

Research question 2, which was concerned with whether the villagers have several ways of practising multiple literacies, was answered in the affirmative by the interviews. It was established that literacies were practised in several modes. These included participant observation, reading, writing, arithmetic and oralisation of written texts. There is need to state at the outset that these modes of literacy were found to be intertwining in several cases. A case in point was in the selling of a dairy product like milk, whereby the buyer would read and record the kilos on the farmers' dairy card. Simultaneously, both the farmer and the buyer would be doing calculations separately in order to revise and confirm the cumulative on a daily basis, up to the end of the month. Figure 3 shows the distribution of arithmetic, oralisation of writings, participant observation, reading and writing, as spelt out by 24 interviewees.
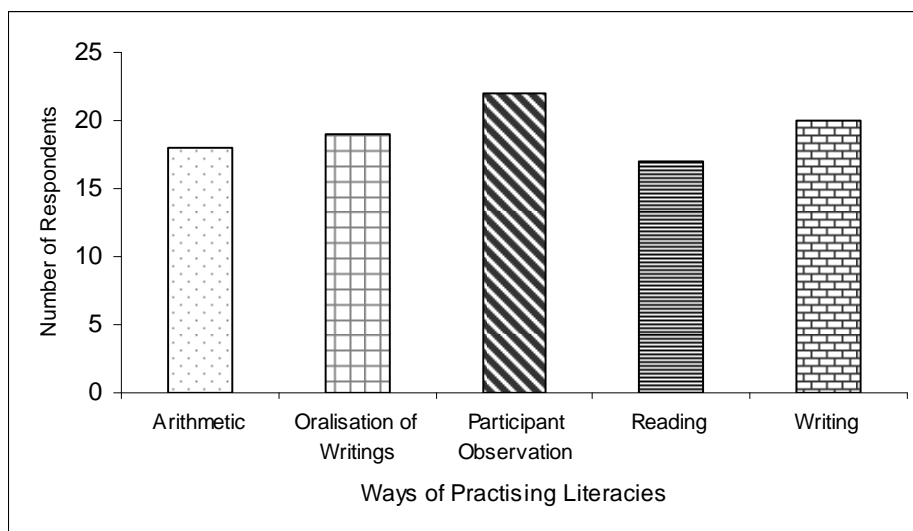
Figure 3: Ways of participating in multiple literacies.

5.2.2.1 Arithmetic

Interviews revealed that arithmetic was a common practice among respondents. One informant indicated that he did arithmetic so that he could know how to tithe in the church. From his earnings in a month, he had to do calculations to determine ten percent to take to the church, just as is stipulated in the Bible. More arithmetic was found to take place in the churches when those who were assigned the role of counting the offertory and tithes did their calculations. These were recorded by secretaries of various districts[43] in the church, before forwarding the sums to the church's registrar. The registrar in turn computed the sums from each district in order to arrive at an aggregate of all the money from the districts of the church. Similar additions were found to be carried out by people who were running small scale businesses like shops. They did arithmetic after closing down businesses for the day as a way of gauging whether they had made profit or not.

---

[43] In the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA), every church is divided into geographical zones which are called districts. A district comprises of members from the same area in a hived off village. There are weekly prayers for members of each district, which are held in one of the members homes.

5.2.2.2 Oralisation of Written Texts

A common way of practising literacies among the villagers was through the oralisation of written texts. Oralisation of written material was found to happen in such activities like Bible reading or group-minutes reading. It was unearthed that minutes were always written in English, as a result of a long, bureaucratic tradition of the practice. However, putting into account that not everybody was conversant with English, it became necessary to render them in Meru. To this end, the secretary to the group would read each minute quietly as written in English and convey it orally in Meru. However, this practice should not be misconstrued for translation or interpretation since it involved more than dissemination of what was written, in an effort to put the material within the context of the people. The secretary could even offer the background to the minute such as its motivation or even its import. Similar oralisation was found to take place in Bible reading. While English Bibles could be read to people who never understood the language, the message was eventually transmitted orally to congregants, not on word by word basis as it appeared in the text, but depending on the style and ingenuity of the speaker, in order to make the message as vivid as possible. This oralisation is distinct from other types of reading in which case the explication of the message must strictly fall within the facts and parameters of the written texts, unlike in the villagers case, where the oraliser enjoyed much latitude. Such renditions are in tandem with the definition of multiple literacies as noted earlier.

5.2.2.3 Participant Observation

Participant observation was found to be a common method used in the villagers literacies. The method is in line with traditional African education, where people learnt through apprenticeship (Bassey 1994, Metinhoue 1997). It is indeed a truism to state that all learning that takes place world wide entails participation and observation (Lave and Wenger 1995). This implies that the method is not exclusive to African societies, though it could be in more use in them. During the interviews, all respondents mentioned or alluded to getting involved in this learning method. The method was especially found to be common in the agriculture strand of economic literacy. Farmers

explained that it was normal for them to gather on other people's farms, which had been selected for demonstration purposes. The educators, who were mainly agricultural extension officers, would demonstrate the various methods of farming while farmers participated in the exercises. Additionally, it was established that skills like timber cutting by use of sawmills or power saws were largely learnt through participant observation, over a continuous period of time, sometimes from as early as one's childhood. The learners reported that they occasionally wrote down points about their participant observation. Participant observation mode of learning corroborates Lave and Wenger (1995) assertions about five different professionals whose learning they document as taking place in a similar manner.[44] The villagers acknowledged these methods of learning by revealing that they equipped them with practical know-how, which they found easy to implement on their farms.

The villagers also stated that they learned a lot through observation, with respect to how their neighbours, friends or even strangers practised farming. One respondent explained that she was accustomed to learning from her friends how to grow vegetables on her garden. She said that this happened whenever she made an excursion within or outside the village, and chanced to see a good vegetable farm. In such a case, she said, she would seek the permission of the owner to see the farm. In the course of observation, the respondent indicated that she asked the owner how he or she managed the garden. After such learning, the respondent said that she went back to her farm and practised what she had observed or been advised.

5.2.2.4 Reading Practice

With respect to reading, the interviews demonstrated that there were significant cases of readers among the villagers. The findings should throw caution to some scholars inclination to generalise the case of poor literacy practices to all Kenyans, as mentioned in chapter 1. However, most of the reading was found to be either religious or agricultural-based. One respondent put her reading practice as follows:

---

[44] See subsection 3.6.1

I read magazines and Theology Education by Extension (TEE). In TEE, there are theology books which one must read everyday. There are a total of eight books. Each book has five lessons and each lesson is supposed to be covered in a week. After every lesson, we sit for the tests which are done on weekly basis. We mark the tests ourselves because there are answers that are brought alongside the books. […] When you are through with all the lessons in the eight books, you sit the final examination, which is marked in Nairobi. Right now we are studying Book 5, which is called The Church History. We started with the Old Testament and we are now studying the New Testament, in which we have already covered the books of Mark and Mathew. This is a diploma course, after which we will take lessons in preaching, before sitting the final examination.
(S.N.20)

Further reading was found to involve fiction, though as earlier mentioned, this was a rare practice. One interviewee cited some works that he had read in the immediate past as *A Grain of Wheat, Truphena the City Nurse* and *The Concubine*.[45] This informant was even proud to share some of the stories that he had read in these novels with the interviewer. It was also established that some parents read their children's textbooks. One such parent indicated that she read "funny" or topical issues like HIV/AIDS in her daughter's textbooks. Another parent cited examples of *The Face of Earth* and *Betrayal in the City*,[46] as some of the works he had read because his daughters who were in high school were studying them. The interviews also revealed that there was regular reading of smaller documents like letters, which villagers received sporadically. Letters came from schools, politicians, groups of people or from various committees.

---

[45] Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1978) *A Grain of Wheat*. Nairobi: Heinemann Books.
Hunter, Cynthia (1966) *Truphena the City Nurse*. Nairobi: East African Publishing House.
Amadi, Elechi (1991) *The Concubine*. Nairobi: Heinemann.

[46] Imbuga, Francis (1987) *Betrayal in the City*. Nairobi: East Africa Educational Publishers.
Face of the Earth (referential details unclear)

With regard to newspapers, the study found out that the informants re-read old ones as a result of economic constraints. The respondents were unanimous that there was dearth of reading materials in the village. This was demonstrated by the fact that they could only access newspapers, magazines or novels in urban centres. Some other villagers cited economics as the militating factor against their reading. They indicated that it was difficult to buy reading materials when there were more pressing needs. This observation somewhat corroborates Chakava's (1988) observation that pressing financial needs impede good reading habits in Kenya. The research further demonstrated that there was no public library in the whole administrative district, a further explanation as to why spirited fiction reading could be wanting among informants.

5.2.2.5 The Writing Practice

Another common mode of literacy practice that was found to be in the villages was writing. The interviews ascertained that writing was widely used by the villagers, and for various reasons. Shuman (2003) demonstrates that writing can be face-to-face (proximate) or mediated (distant). Nonetheless, in Murugi villages, three types of writing were fleshed out all in concordance with Shuman's argument. There was direct writing which was done by individuals themselves, proximate-mediated writing which was done on behalf of a person in a one-on-one situation, and distant-mediated such as in the filling up of health forms, whose instructions were written by distant or even unknown authors.

5.2.2.5.1 Direct Writing

Interviews made bare the fact that direct writing was done for personal interests. This type of writing was done by a person directly without any mediation by a second person. A case in point is the informant who stated that she listened to music on the radio and transcribed it if she deemed it interesting. She stated that she wrote the music by bits whenever it was on air until the full song was complete.

> *I have had a lot of interest in music for long. Whenever I hear a nice song*
> *on the radio, I start writing and practising it. This is because I am mainly*

here alone. Considering that good music is played repeatedly on air, especially the hits which they present as 'the song of the week,' and I chance to like it, I take an exercise book or a piece of paper to write down, one item after another. I begin writing the chorus because it is easier to master. Sometimes I write the songs with my house-help. When I finish writing, I sing it alone or with other people whenever an opportunity arises.

(S.N. 20)

The interviews also unearthed that direct writing took place when some parents got involved in the counselling of school pupils, particularly adolescents. One such counsellor revealed that before engaging in a guidance session, she had to make a written plan. In this case, the writing was directly done by the counsellor as opposed to mediated writing. The counsellor explained that she first liaised with the class teacher to agree on what items to address in the advising session. To facilitate this, she confirmed that she wrote notes with regard to the type of instruction that she was expected administer. She then shared this information with the class pupils or with parents during school meetings. However, it was found out that such counselling was not borne of any formal training, but was a result of experience accrued over time.

The interviews also demonstrated that the villagers involved themselves in direct writing when they prepared for shopping. This happened when they wrote shopping lists before going to the market themselves or before sending somebody else with the lists. The lists were acknowledged as handy when people did bulk shopping such as for weddings, get-togethers or for church functions. In a like token, there was proof of direct writing when people did their weekly or monthly budgets. The budgets helped in establishing what and how much was consumed within a given period of time, and at what costs. The respondents stated that the writing down of budget was a good guide to finding out whether one was thrifty or extravagant.

5.2.2.5.2 Proximate-Mediated Writing

An example of proximate writing is that of the written report in the police office at Chogoria, following the mugging of a couple. One victim of the mugging, who was an interviewee for this study, explained that when she and her husband went to the police station, they verbally gave an account of what transpired before, during and after the mugging; while the police officers did the transcription. Though this type of writing is proximate, it is nevertheless mediated in the sense that it is not the victims that did the writing, but the police officer. When the report was ready, it was read out to the victims, who confirmed it as valid, before appending their signatures to authenticate it. In this case, the only direct writing of the report by the victims was through their signatures. Besides the police officers and the victims, the sub-area, to whom the mugging was first reported, also went to the police station to record his report in proximate-mediated writing. Days later, the mugged couple went back to the police station to record a statement, whereby a similar process to that of report writing was followed.

The interviews brought to fore further evidence of proximate-mediated writing in the dispute settlement that was under the aegis of Njuri Ncheke elders, and which was mentioned earlier. Other disputes that were said to require written records were those between parents and schools administrations or those between siblings over land demarcation. In such disputes, there was writing of each party's statements, the questions and answers, and the rulings that were made. In these instances too, though the writing was proximate, it was also mediated in the sense that it is not the disputants themselves who wrote down their arguments, but a third party in the name of a secretary.

Similar records were documented when there occurred disputes between married people or, over refusal to clear debts. In the face of such disputes, it was revealed that the matter would be reported to the sub-area, who would arbitrate among disputants with the help of other leaders in the village, sub-location or location. The deliberations during such arbitration were recorded in writing, because differences could recur after

settlements, necessitating reference to the earlier cases. It was determined that some of these cases could end up in the modern court of law, triggering the need to refer to the history of the case just as it was recorded in writing. In view of this, it was evident that that such writings augment the modern legal system.

5.2.2.5.3 Distant-Mediated Writing

Interviews brought to fore distant-mediated writing in form of signatures of documents. For instance, when one respondent went to collect her daughter's school leaving certificate, she signed to verify that she had collected it. In this case, there was already a written document in form of a certificate, which also bore a slot for the collector's signature. Accordingly, all the informant did was to append her signature for authentication. This is distant-mediated writing because the informant did not even know who wrote the document, where or when, though she still entered her signature. Similar signatures were found to take place in the banks, in the school committees or when applying for farmers loans. For example, in the application for the farmers loans, it was disclosed that it was mandatory that the applicant must have guarantors and witnesses to sign application forms for him or her. Another good example of distant-mediated writing is that of the voluntary worker who filled health forms, a case which is treated in another subsection of this analysis.

5.2.2.6 Language use in Literacies

5.2.2.6.1 Multilingualism

For any literacy event to take place, language is a requirement whether in speech, writing or in signs. The interviews uncovered that language(s) was a prerequisite for literacies. It was established that the villagers practised literacy is in a multilingual aura, whereby four languages were involved. These are Meru, the mother tongue of the villagers and specifically the Mwimbi dialect; Kikuyu, a language of same family cluster with Meru, and used by their Kikuyu neighbours in Central Kenya; Kiswahili, Kenya's national and co-official language; and English, Kenya's other co-official

language. It was determined that each language was used in regard to a number of factors as discussed in the language analysis section. It would be prudent to take note of the fact that in plural societies, language can be emblematic of people's identity. Among the 24 interviews that were done with the villagers, 23 respondents opted to use Meru, 1 chose to use Kiswahili, and none chose English or Kikuyu as Figure 4 demonstrates.
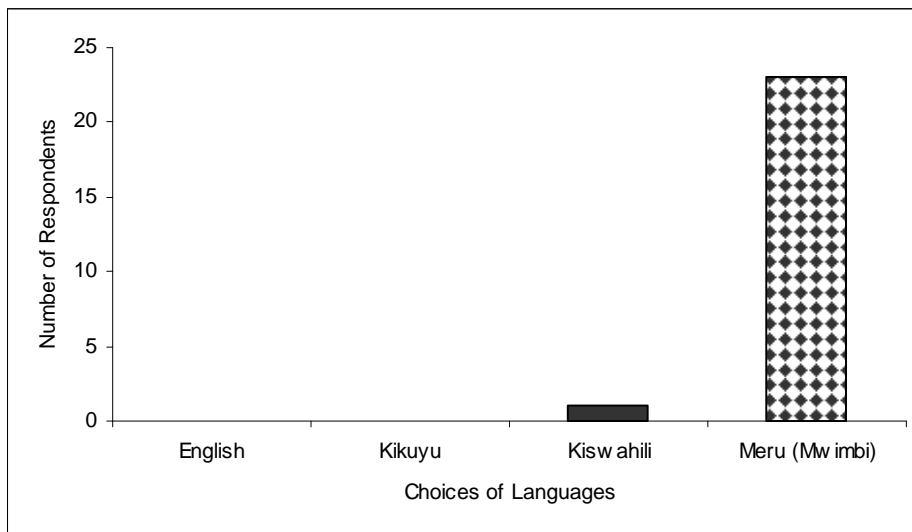
Figure 4: Language choices for Respondents Interviews

While Figure 4 shows the preference of the villagers to use Meru in the interviews was overwhelming, its preponderance is only in speech because the choices of languages for reading and writing show different results. For example, while the interviews were elaborate that the villagers language of choice in conversation was unequivocally Meru, they preferred reading and writing in Kiswahili or English as the diaries section reveals. Some respondents argued that they found Meru language imprecise, making it difficult for them to write or read it as evinced in the following quotation: "If I read a Meru or Kikuyu Bible to the people, I face difficulties. However, the English one is an easy read because it's the one that I'm used to on my eyes and lips. In this case, I prefer reading the English Bible." This can be validated by the fact that Mwimbi dialect, which is spoken in Murugi has not been standardised, an observation that has been treated elaborately in the diaries category.

5.2.2.6.2 History and Language Use

The interviews further revealed that in the church, Kikuyu Bible was read at the pulpit, though its explication was done in Meru, with tinges of Kikuyu. It transpired that this situation was partly informed by the languages that people used in school. The rich presence of Kikuyu in the area had a historical background, according to one respondent.

> *From the time I started Primary school, we learnt in Kikuyu which was treated as our mother tongue. The Bible and the songs were in Kikuyu and we also wrote in Kikuyu, examinations inclusive. Take the teaching of Science, for example. A good illustration would be when we were taught about stones say, the metamorphosis process. The teacher would write the topic, and below it, s/he would write the process in Kikuyu, for example, the way the stones wore away. […] You therefore find that the medium of instruction in schools was Kikuyu.*
> *(S.N. 18)*

The above quotation demonstrates why the older respondents showed preference for Kikuyu Bibles to those in other languages. Kikuyu was their language of education and is hitherto nothing strange to them. Considering that literacy material and teachers came from the Kikuyu country, it followed that they had to be taught in the language. Fortunately or unfortunately, and just as Grogan (2005) states, Mwimbi is not linguistically so dissimilar to Kikuyu and it is no wonder that Mwimbi people were able to understand it. One informant put it this way, "I am a Meru and it follows that I understand what a Kikuyu says because the language is almost the same." Kanogo (2005) reveals that the first Scottish missionary to start formal schooling at Chogoria (in Mwimbi) in 1922, Dr. Clive Irven, had come from Tumutumu in Nyeri, where Kikuyu was the mother tongue. Taking into consideration that Dr. Irven had a smattering of Kikuyu, he used it to communicate with the local people, who could understand a wide range of it as a result of its structural and lexical similarities with the Mwimbi dialect.

Further evidence showed that among the relatively younger generation, especially those who went to school in the 1970s; Meru, Kiswahili and English were more preferred to Kikuyu. This can be attributed to the post-independent language and education policies, which embraced a trilingual approach, though in disparate measures. This was unlike in the colonial era when the policy towards African languages was mainly amorphous and unenthusiastic, as was shown in Chapter 2. However, the research revealed that there was ambivalence as to why the Kikuyu Bible was still used by pastors in Murugi, as opposed to the Meru one. While some informants reckoned that they found that system in place and stuck to it, some were critical of the status. "This is because the people of Mwimbi [comprising also residents of Murugi] got colonized by the Kikuyu until they forgot their language," one respondent bluntly observed.

5.2.2.6.3 Language Augmentation

The interviews brought to light that in the wake of multilingualism, languages augment each other in literacies. For example, there was the case of one community worker who did not understand English, but was able to fill HIV/AIDS forms, which were in the language. This demanded that she be explained to in Meru what every number on the English form required. She mastered each number and its requisite material, and was able to tick all slots appropriately. She asserted:

> *I don't fill all the forms in Meru because some, like those of Pathfinder are in English. I am offered a piece of paper that has information regarding the status of my client, say whether she is pregnant or not, or whether she is breastfeeding. The paper is read to me in a translated version of Meru, including all the required information in numbers 1 to 16. I master all these numbers and all their requirements. A case in point is that I know number 15 seeks information on whether the patient is for support group, thus whether she has accepted that she is HIV positive. Number two asks whether she is antenatal [….]*
> *(S.N. 6)*

5.2.2.6.4 Code-switching

Alongside multilingualism, the interviews manifested that there is a lot of code-switching in the villagers speech. The switching ranged from two to three languages though Meru was overwhelmingly the basis as was seen in Figure 4. Suffice it to state that code-switching was more of the norm than the reserve in conversation. In the following example, there is code-switching between Meru and English.

> *[…] then the officials of LCC ta registrar, secretary, chairman na elders, bathulagwa na treasurer. Ni ndathulitwe ndi registrar wa church iu yetu. Ki each district, members of the church, o muntu e number, na ki districts, gwi karani, na secretary, ena book ilia andikaga mwothi ulia members balutaga. Liu wila wakwa as a registrar, when the secretaries have recorded the amount of collection of their members, nani nilio ndekodaga ki mbuku ingi, for each district, in the record book for all districts in the church.*

> *[…] then the officials of the LCC [Local Church Committee] like the registrar, secretary, chairman, treasurer or the elders are elected. I was elected the registrar of our church. In each district of the church, every member has a number. Since every district has a secretary, this official has a book in which he or she keeps the members offertory. When the districts secretaries have entered the records of their members, I then as a registrar enter all the districts records in my book.*
> *(S.N. 20)*

The interviews further brought to light the fact that there was also code-switching of Meru and Kiswahili, though more switching happened between Meru and English. Additionally, there were a few cases of switches between Meru and Kikuyu.

Interestingly, code-switching was not a preserve of the villagers only. This is because among the careerists who were used for comparative purposes, language switching was found to be common. However in this case, the switches were between English and Kiswahili as exemplified below.

[…] She said that she went to Kiambu na akapata huyo mtu ana acre moja na ni mama, a farmer, and has made good work out of that plot. Ako na ng'ombe, is doing zero grazing, ako na shamba kidogo, has planted vegetables, waru [viazi] na kadhalika.

[…] She said that she went to Kiambu and found that that person, a woman, had only one acre of land, but as a farmer, she has made use of it well. She rears animals, is doing zero grazing and has a garden of vegetables, potatoes and so forth.

(S.N. 28)

Code-switching certainly eased communication among respondents, besides playing other social roles, like exhibiting their expertise in bilingualism or multilingualism.

5.2.2.6.5 Code-mixing

Interviews also uncovered that there was also code-mixing of vocabulary from different languages. This was done by getting two different words from two different languages and blending them into one word. Considering that Meru language which belongs to the Bantu family of languages which are agglutinating, its speakers were found to borrow from English and Kiswahili vocabulary, which they then rendered into the agglutinating structure. The Meru-English vocabulary code-mixing was seen as is demonstrated in the following morphological analysis of the code-mixed vocabulary.

Table 1: Example 1 (Arifaiwa)

Arifaiwa *(*S/he was referred): 'refer' + Meru structure

A	rifa	i	wa
3rd person singular	root of refer	inflection/formative morph (reflexive of the recipient of the action)	aspectual marker/past complete action

Table 2: Example 2 (Aricibagwa)

Aricibagwa (S/he is usually received): 'receive' + Meru structure

A	ricib	a	gwa
3rd person singular	root of receive	formative morph/reflexive marker/ habitual marker	aspectual marker/past complete action

In the foregoing example, a-ricib-a-gwa is a corrupted form which has undergone some phonological process.

Table 3: Example 3 (Bantrain)

Bantrain (They trained me): 'train' +Meru structure

Ba	n	train
3rd person plural	indirect object	root of train

Table 4: Example 4 (Gatwafocithilwe)

Gatwafocithilwe (We were forced): 'force' + Meru structure

Ga	twa	foci	thi	lwe
Referent tense morph/plural	first person plural/ tense marker/we	root of force	inflection/formative	aspectual marker/past complete action

Table 5: Example 5 (Jiaproceswa)

Jiaproceswa (They were processed): 'process' + Meru structure

Ji	a	proces	wa
Referent morph plural	reflexive/referent noun	root of process	aspectual/past complete action

Table 6: Example 6 (Guikochi)

Guikochi (to coach them e.g teams): 'coach' + Meru structure

Gu	i	koch	i
Referent morph plural	reflexive	root of coach	verb ending vowel

Table 7: Example 7 (Nkibasabaga)

Nkibasabaga (while I usually serve them): 'serve' + Meru structure

N	ki	ba	sab	a	ga
1st person singular	aspectual marker of non complete action	3rd person plural	root of serve	inflection/formative morph	perfect mood

Table 8: Example 8 (Tuinvovaga)

Tuinvovaga (We involve): 'involve' + Meru structure

Tu	invov	a		ga
2ndperson plural/subject	root of involve	inflection/ formative morph		habitual morph

Table 9: Example 9 (Utiafodi)

Utiafodi *(*you cannot afford) 'afford' + Meru structure

U	ti	afod	i
2nd person singular	negation/future tense marker	afford (the root)	perfect mood marker/ verb ending

There was also evidence of Meru – Kiswahili code-mixing as demonstrated on tables 10 to 12.

Table 10: Example 10 (Getegemeaga)

Getegemeaga (It depends) 'tegemea' + Meru structure

Ge	tegeme	a	ga
Referent habitual morph	root of tegemea	inflection/formative morph	habitual morph

Table 11: Example 11 (Gentatizaga)

Gentatizaga (it bothers me): 'tatiza' + Meru structure

Ge	n	tat	iz	a	ga
Referent habitual morph	1st person sing.	root of tata	inflection morph	inflection/formative morph	habitual morph

Table 12: Example 12 (Nitwavamiilwe)

Nitwavamiilwe (we were attacked): 'vamia' + Meru structure

Ni	twa	vami	i	lwe
Tense marker morph	first person marker plural	root of vamia	inflection/ formative	aspectul marker/past complete action

It is arguable that the bloating of Meru with English and Kiswahili vocabulary can be explained as a deficiency of lexicon on the part of Meru. Thus, it fails to explain concepts in culture, science and technology adequately. However, one thing that can be deduced from both code-switching and code-mixing is that they ease conversation. It could also be accommodation on the part of the speaker in a bid to be understood well. This is because in situations where there is lacuna in Meru vocabulary, English and Kiswahili vocabularies are handy in filling up the gap. This was evident from the flow of conversations in the course of the interviews.

Such constructions are not a preserve of Meru though. Bogonko (1996:255) demonstrates that English has done the same to such words as Japanese 'taikun' for 'tycoon,' 'geography' from Greek's 'geo' (earth) and 'graphin' or 'theology' from Greek's 'theos' (God) and 'logos' (discourse). In the case of Meru, English and

Kiswahili appear to enrich the language, contrary to Phillipson's (1992) assertion that English is causing linguicism to some languages.[47] This can be explained by the fact that Meru language, just like many other languages, showed capacity to borrow and domesticate vocabulary from other languages, facilitating people's conversation.

However, while this blending could be welcome, it appears to pose a challenge. Considering that the Mwimbi dialect, which is used in Murugi is not yet standardised, especially as far as orthography is concerned, how would the blended vocabulary be rendered in writing? This question is imperative bearing in mind that code-mixing, as has been illustrated, requires some grammatical rules to render it appropriately. For example, sound /v/ as apparent in the word 'tuinvovaga' is non-existent in Meru, making it unclear as to whether it should be written with character /v/ or /b/, probably the closest sound to it in Meru. It is no wonder that the majority of the respondents indicated that they were not keen to write or read Meru (Mwimbi). This problem can only be sorted out by providing orthography for the language.

5.2.2.6.6 Borrowing of Vocabulary

The interviews showed that there was significant use of borrowed vocabulary in instances where there were no Meru equivalents. It is for this reason that English titles like Network, Greenbelt, General Assembly, Community Policy, Young Generation or Kenya African Preliminary Examination were found to be in use. Other English phrases and vocabulary included 'pre-unit' and 'get- together,' or 'starter' and 'finisher' among poultry feeds. There were also 'praise and worship team,' 'catechism', 'district elder' or "deacon' in the religious circles. These examples demonstrate that English has penetrated Meru language, but as already been stated, this seems to pose no danger considering that the language users have a way of appropriating non-native languages to their advantage. However, Meru's intercourse with English and Kiswahili will certainly

---

[47] Phillipson (1995:55) argues that linguicism involves representation of dominant language, to which good attributes are made for purposes of inclusion; and for the dominated languages, for exclusion purposes. The term is ideologically loaded in that it shows dominant languages working alongside other forces to effect and maintain unequal allocation of power and resources.

cause language change, just as is happening to many languages, English inclusive (Aitchison 1991, Schendl 2001).

5.2.3 Pegging Literacies on Gains

In regard to research question 3 as to whether the literacies are pegged on gains, the interviews demonstrated that literacies are never tailored to benefits since they are not the priority, but are only a means to a gain. Instead, it was found out that it is the socioeconomic activities that are pegged on benefits. It would be in order to postulate that Murugi villagers would hardly engage in any literacy practice if it did not assure them some gain at the end of the day. On the face value, this appears as commercialization of literacies, but in the real, it is a reflection of the commercial nature of the daily activities of the people. Use of literacy as a means to gains could partly be deriving from formal education, where pupils are exhorted to work hard in order to accrue benefits after schooling. It has been argued that this education is tailored towards students acquisition of white collar jobs after schooling (Altbach 1992). Except for media and leisure literacy, the interviews showed that all other literacies facilitated socioeconomic endeavours with particular gains as the target. Among the gains that were expected from the social and economic activities of the people were divine bounties, financial returns, business profits, good health, improved professionalism and rarely, recreation.

5.2.3.1 Literacy for Auditing

A recurrent subject matter was that the villagers used literacies as a means of auditing their economic enterprises. Among the informants was a farmer whom the researcher found rearing chicken and was categorical that she weighed chicken feeds for assessment purposes.

> *I weigh my chicken feed regularly to know how much the birds will have*
> *consumed by the end of the month. This way, I am able to know how much*
> *money I have spent on them. Therefore, when you want me to sell one*
> *chicken to you, I must take stock to find out how much I spent on it. So, if*

in one month I chance to spend 200 [Kenya shillings] on five chickens,
and you fail to produce 150 to buy one, then I won't sell it to you. This is
because the chicken has cost me a lot in feeding it. [...] In other words, if I
don't weigh the feeds, it may turn out that my work was useless when it
comes to the sales.
(S.N. 6)

Further auditing was verified as taking place in soil husbandry. This happened especially in the farming of maize or beans, where farmers invested manure and fertilizers in order to reap good benefits. During harvest, the farmers were found to carry out an assessment to establish whether the returns were profitable in view of the labour and money. They stated that if they realised that they were making losses, they would opt to abandon the venture rather than incur further loses. Similar stocktaking was indicated as occurring in the weighing of the tea leaves that were harvested by employees in order to ensure that employers paid them in accordance with their labour. Animal feeds rations were also found to be weighed in a bid to carry out an appraisal of whether the animals were giving profitable returns and to ensure that they were fed as per the veterinary advice.

Literacy for auditing purposes was further determined as taking place in culinary chores. Cooks, who were mainly women, were documented as measuring foodstuffs lest they cooked more or less than was required. Similar reasons were found to inform measurements that took place when people were buying products like maize and beans. The yields were sold in special containers of different sizes. The measurements were done to ensure that the price paid was consummerate with the sold product.

5.2.3.2 Literacy for Inspiration

Literacy was further found to be a means to self motivation or to inspiring other people. For example, interviews made it clear that the Bible was read with the objectives of receiving spiritual nourishment, helping people to live in harmony and as a source of

comfort. "I have conviction that the Bible soothes and comforts one, and that's why I read it. This can happen, for example, when you read about Ayub (Job), who underwent many tribulations, but afterwards, got so many blessings," one informant said. Yet another respondent stated that the Bible guided him to live while observing the Ten Commandments to ensure that he led a good life in the world. There was also an interviewee who indicated that he read in order to motivate his children, whom he wanted to fare better in education, unlike himself who was forced to drop out for being an orphan. He also read crime fiction to help him study people's behaviour, going by his vocation as a night watchman.

5.2.3.3 Literacy for Good Health

It has already been mentioned that multiple literacies were used as a means to attaining good health. The interviews revealed that literacy was used to aid in child delivery, in nutrition and in the prevention and management of diseases. In a like vein, it was manifest that literacy was used to realise sound healthcare for livestock. One informant indicated that he engaged in the agriculture strand of literacy in order to know how he could avert animal diseases like mastitis or East Coast Fever. He claimed that such knowledge was helpful in ensuring that the livestock remained healthy in order to continue accruing benefits from them. This is further evidence that multiple literacies were employed as tools towards the realisation of particular societal gains, and in this case, they were never the driving force from the word go.

5.2.4 The Domains of literacies

Contrary to formal education which takes place in schools, the interviews revealed that villagers literacies were informal and had no particular domains. Incidentally, this finding was corroborated by the rest of the research corpus deriving from the diaries, field documents, field notes and participant observation. In view of this, the findings which are spelt out in this section regarding the domains of literacies are treated as representative of the rest of the corpus.

The findings answer research question 4, which was concerned with whether multiple literacies were founded on particular domains. The interviews showed that literacies had no clear-cut settings, but occurred eclectically with regard to the prevailing interests of the villagers at any given time and place. To this end, literacies could take place in the home, in the church, by the roadside, at the edge of the forest, in the tea and coffee selling centres, in the police station or in a watchman's shed. Additionally, villagers could engage in literacies any time within the 24 hours of the day. For example, when carriers were late in collecting tea from the buying centres, farmers would wait until they arrived, sometimes in the wee hours of the morning. This is the time that they would engage in literacy practices as they sold their crop. The indeterminate domains of villagers literacies are definitely incongruent with school literacy which is founded on established institutions with the physical space like the main office, classrooms, compound and so forth; which are supervised through procedural time scheduling and defined teacher-pupil interactions.

Nonetheless, there is need to note that there were particular domains which appeared as more tailored for specific literacies. A case in point is the church that was identified as the main domain of communal literacy, specifically the strand of Christianity. Literacy was found to take place when congregants read the Bible or listened to the sermon, especially on Sundays. In these domains, literacy sometimes assumed further social ramifications as was exemplified by the different clothes worn by different church groups such as the Woman's Guild or the Boys Brigade in the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA). There was further reference to the church as a domain for literacy in cases where there were seminars or special education. For example, sex education was cited as one of the teachings that took place in the church. One organiser of such literacy practices had this to say:

> *When we decide to teach them [the youth], we invite them to church for seminar. When they come, we advise them on a number of things. We teach unmarried, young ladies ways of good living and how to make sensible plans in their lives. When it comes to the girls, we teach them how*

they need to take care of themselves, and matters to do with discipline so

that they can live well.

(S.N. 9)

In a nutshell, while the church's main task is to evangelise in the name of Christianity, it was also ascertained as the launching pad for other strands of literacies. However, such a fact remains invisible, and can only be unearthed through an empirical inquiry.

5.3. LITERACY DIARIES

Diaries were administered to respondents to fill in literacy practices that they engaged in on a daily basis. According to the results, villagers literacies, just like in some of the interviews findings, ranged from arithmetic, reading and writing. From a total of 24 diaries that were distributed, 23 were filled up. Some diaries were fully filled, while others were scantily entered. There were also various styles adopted in the filling of the diaries. Several issues emerged from the analysis that was done in view of the research questions.

5.3.1 Literacies in the Villages

Just as was found out about the interviews in connection with research question 1, the diaries demonstrated that there were multiple literacies in the villages, which were however situated on socioeconomic activities. The diaries showed that literacies were not the villagers priorities, but were only a means to engaging in activities that yielded gains. In this connection, the diaries corroborated the interviews findings that literacies were used as channels for attaining given ends.

Just like the interviews, the diaries manifested communal literacy with strands like culinary, health, familial, legal, the religious and self-help. There was also economic literacy comprising of agriculture, business and shopping strands; and leisure and media literacy with their own strands. However, while categories like agriculture, religious and business demonstrated almost similar figures with those of the interviews, there was notable discrepancy in some strands such as the legal, media and familial. The

discrepancy can be explained by the fact that the respondents were supposed to fill in literacy practices that they engaged in on a daily basis. In this regard, what they entered on the diaries was what they understood as literacy, implying that they could leave out other literacy practices which they never deemed as belonging.[48] However, such practices were easily unearthed in the interviews, which entailed detailed accounts. Figure 5 shows involvement in different types of literacies, according to the diaries.
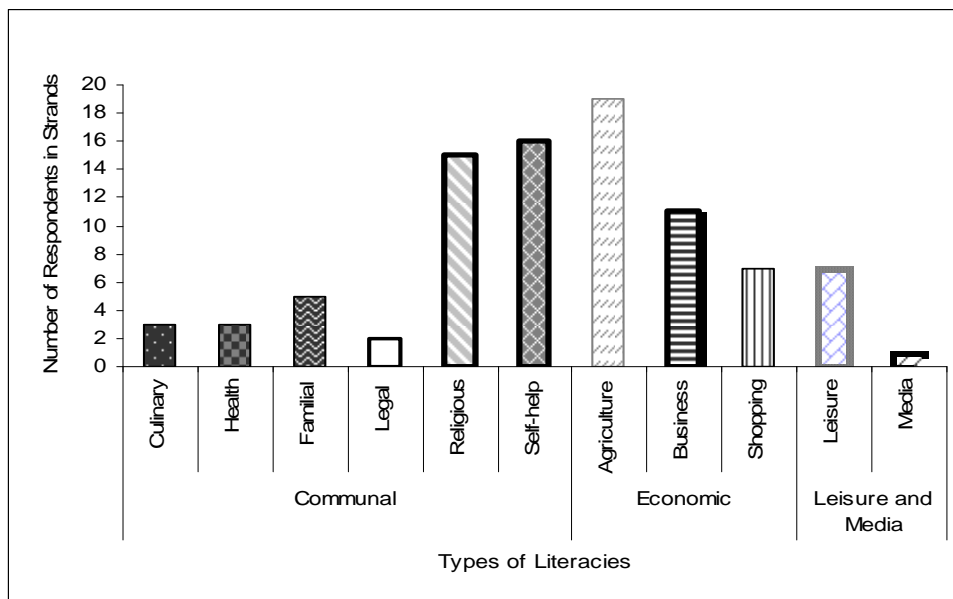
Figure 5: Literacies and their strands as per the diaries

Figure 5 shows that according to the diaries, the agriculture strand of economic literacy scores substantially high at 19, followed by self-help and religious strands of communal literacy whose scores are 16 and 15 respectively, out of 23 respondents. However, culinary, health and legal strands of communal literacy and the leisure strand score remarkably low. While the scores show some variance with those of the interviews, which were gathered through prodding by the researcher, they point out to an interesting disclosure. Villagers give priority to the literacy strands that are certain to give them

---

[48] Going by what the villagers entered on the diaries, literacy entails reading, writing and arithmetic. While this is incontrovertible from some angles, it should be borne in mind that the diaries revealed that the respondents engaged in more practices attendant to their conceptualisation of literacy such as oralisation of written works, but for reasons which could be emanating from formal schooling, they never deemed them as literacy.

some definite gain such as agriculture and religion, while showing little commitment to threads like the leisure and legal, which do not assure them of such gains immediately.

5.3.2 Ways of Practising Literacies

The diaries also answered research question 2, which was interested in establishing whether there were several ways of practising literacies, in the affirmative. However, unlike the interviews which provided detailed information about each mode of literacy practice after probing, the diaries provided scanty information on the types of literacies in accordance with each informant's understanding. While Figure 6 shows how 23 respondents indicated the modes of literacies that they participated in, the chart cannot be said to be foolproof.
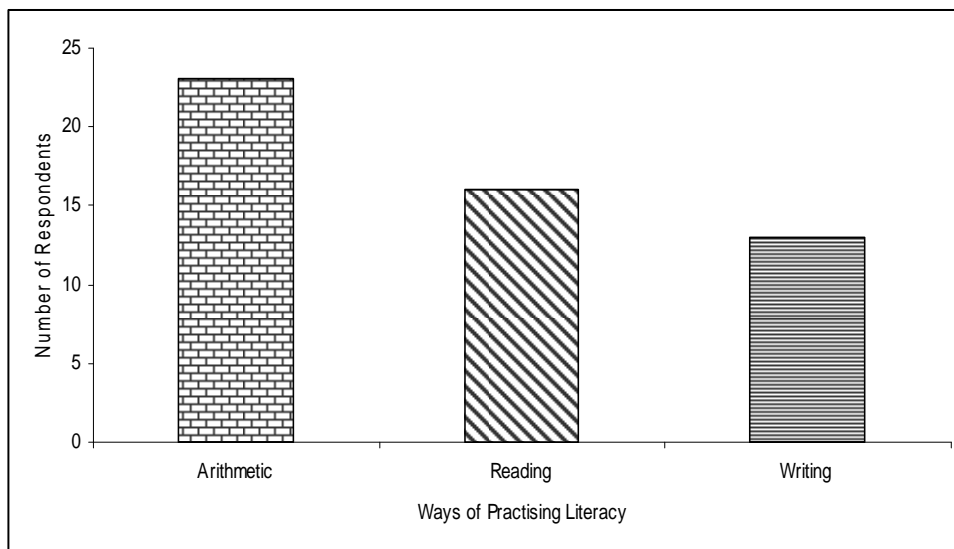
Figure 6: Ways of practising literacies as per the diaries

Just as was observed about the interviews, there was evidence of much intertwining between reading, writing and arithmetic, especially in agriculture. For example, to record the kilos of sold milk on farmers sales cards demanded that reading, writing and arithmetic be used simultaneously, and therefore, it would be inappropriate to tease out only one mode of literacy from such an event, and ignore the rest. In view of this, Figure 6 does not reflect the complementarity between the various modes of using literacies, though it is indicative of what respondents entered on the diaries.

5.3.2.1 Choice of language

5.3.2.1.1 Language Switches

It was mentioned that diaries were clear that respondents were free to fill them in any of the following languages, which are in common use in the locality: Meru (Mwimbi), Kiswahili and English. They demonstrated that while there were respondents who chose to use one language to do the filling, others resulted to switches of two or more languages. There were instances where there were switches between the three languages, and at least in one instance, Kikuyu was also used. However, going by the choices of languages which respondents opted to use, Kiswahili was the most popular with a total of 14 respondents choosing it out of a total of 23. English was chosen by 5 respondents, while Meru was chosen by 4 respondents. The choices are illustrated in Figure 7.
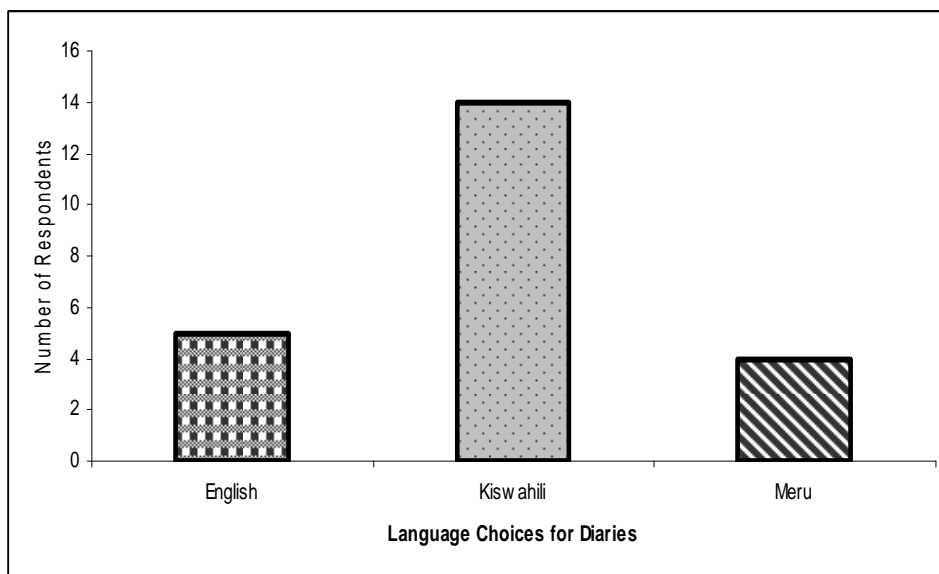
Figure 7: Language choice for diaries filling

Figure 7 shows that language choices that were made by the respondents to fill the diaries are worthy scrutiny. Foremost, though the choices cannot be said to be representative of the whole country, they are nevertheless at variance with the status of language policy in Kenya. In chapter 2, it was mentioned that English and Kiswahili are co-official languages in Kenya, but English is the medium of instruction in schools, except in the first three classes in rural areas. Considering that all the respondents had

attained primary education through which the medium of instruction was still English, this may raise questions as to the appropriateness of the medium as the language of instruction in the Kenyan schools. The preference to write the diaries in Kiswahili could be attributable to its egalitarian status. This is unlike English which tends to be elitist and an agent of social exclusion in Kenya (Mazrui and Mazrui 1995). Moreover, this could also be a pointer to the fact that English is still a difficult language to many Kenyans (Mazrui and Mazrui 1992, Muchiri 1999).

However, the choice to fill diaries mainly in Kiswahili is also inconsistent with the fact that the villagers showed preference to write minutes in English as discussed in the participant observation subsection. This can be explained by the fact that the culture of writing minutes is associated with official documents, most of which are written in English. Moreover, putting into consideration that English has already set precedence in the writing of minutes, villagers opted to use it rather than make new inventions in their mother tongue or Kiswahili. Otherwise, it would be rather ambitious to translate the various segments of minutes writing into the non-standardized Mwimbi dialect or even Kiswahili, in some kind of groundbreaking. Generally, minutes are written by the secretary who is expected to be knowledgeable in English, and who is able to render them in Meru for people's discussions.

5.3.2.1.2 Lack of Orthography in Mwimbi Dialect

Failure to have orthography in the Mwimbi dialect presented a number of problems to those who opted to fill the diaries in the language. There was strong evidence that the respondents were not sure of how to write vocabulary. For example, there was indication of disparity between the pronounced word and its written form as tables 13 and 14 demonstrate, as derived from Serial Numbers 1 and 4 respectively.

Table 13: Disparity between the pronounced word and its written form (S.N.1)

Written form	Word as pronounced	English Meaning
Cubi	cumbi	salt
karamu	kalamu	pen
thambuni	thabuni	soap
nidathomire	nindathomile	I read

Table 14: Disparity between the pronounced word and its written form (S.N.4)

Written form	Word as pronounced	English Meaning
mbeba	mbemba	maize
mutu	muntu	person
mwicho	mwico	end
mbarua	balua	a letter

Similar difficulties were found to characterise writing by respondents when they wrote borrowed words. This is because for lack of orthography, they were not sure of how to write particular words, as illustrated on tables 15 and 16, as sourced from Serial Numbers 4 and 9 respectively.

Table 15: Uncertainty in writing borrowed vocabulary in Meru (S.N.4)

Word as pronounced in Meru (Mwimbi)	Source language	Substantive Meru (Mwimbi) Pronunciation	English meaning
begi	English/Kiswahili	bengi	bank
cibitaari	Kiswahili/English	thibitali	hospital
maryngoround	English	Not clear	merry-go-round

Table 16: Uncertainty in writing borrowed vocabulary in Meru (S.N.9)

Word as pronounced in Meru (Mwimbi)	Source language	Substantive Meru (Mwimbi) pronunciation	English meaning
mahoya	Kikuyu	maoya	prayers
mucii	Kikuyu	mujii	home
mazani	Meru/Kiswahili	majani	tea
kahawa	Kiswahili	kaua	coffee
sukari	Meru/Kiswahili	sukali	sugar

Failure to have orthography in the Mwimbi dialect as a result of lack of language standardization may explain why several respondents were reluctant to use it for diary-filling. This can be viewed in contradistinction with interviews (speech), in which case only 1 out of 24 respondents, opted to use Kiswahili instead of Meru. Yet in this one case, there was justification for the choice of Kiswahili instead of Meru, taking into

account that the respondent was not conversant with latter, having been married into the area from the Rift Valley of Kenya only years before.

While speech does not exhibit problems arising from lack of orthography in a language as deducible from the case of Mwimbi, writing makes them conspicuous as the illustrated cases indicate. Street (1994:15) states that "where a local language variation, whether a regional dialect or a creole, is being taught, it is also appropriate to use a script or writing system that reflects local pronunciation and vocabulary." This advice is sound, but in the face of hundreds of dialects that are not standardized in countries like Kenya, there must be political will and availability of adequate resources to realise such a feat as argued in chapter 6.

5.3.2.1.3 Grammar in Diary Entries

While the writing of Mwimbi dialect cannot be put to a grammatical test for lack of standardization and orthography, the same is not true about Kiswahili and English. It is for this reason that it is prudent to highlight a few issues regarding the respondents use of grammar in these languages. While the diary entries done in English and Kiswahili were communicative, it emerged that they could not pass a grammatical assessment of the two languages. This demonstrates that though the villagers can use these languages, arguably they do not use them as effectively as they would possibly use their mother tongue if it was standardized. In other words, the choices of either Kiswahili or English in the filling of diaries were expediential, instead of using Mwimbi, whose orthography they were not sure about. Diaries showed a lot of disparity in the mastery of the two languages. While some diaries showed near competence in either of the languages, others revealed only a smattering of the languages as Figure 8 shows.

Figure 8: Written language in diary filling

However, in New Literacy Studies, caution should be taken lest such writing is viewed as non-standard or deviant, when in the real it is an expression of the literacy situation on the ground. Camitta (1993) argues that such linguistic manifestations could be meaningful and important literacy skills and resources that are disconnected somewhat from the official or standard literacy, and from the way it is conducted. This argument is related to the definition of literacies as seen in Chapter 1.

It can be surmised that though the villagers are left with the options of using English and Kiswahili mainly, their competence in the two languages is by and large average, implying that in some cases; the languages can impede involvement in viable literacy activities such as reading. However, the importance of Mwimbi dialect in literacy can only be discerned if the language was standardised, to the point of being accorded

orthography. The diaries revealed evidence of 'mistakes' in regard to spelling, grammar and punctuation, as is exemplified in tables 17, 18 and 19 as sourced from Serial Numbers 3, 13 and 16 respectively.

Table 17: Non-standard English spelling by villagers (S.N.3)

'Incorrect spelling'	'Correct spelling'
wachman	watchman
pancial	punctual
Sanday service	Sunday service
withdrow	withdraw

Table 18: Non-standard Kiswahili spelling by villagers (S.N.13)

'Incorrect spelling'	'Correct spelling'	English meaning
natayalisha	natayarisha	I am preparing
napika	nafika	I arrive
esabu	hesabu	calculations/mathematics
alafu	halafu	afterwards
hasubuhi	asubuhi	morning
kuzipanga	kujipanga	to self prepare

Table 19: Non-standard Kiswahili spelling by villagers (S.N.16)

'Incorrect spelling'	'Correct spelling'	English meaning
niriamka	niliamka	I woke up
pade	pande	some places
hirikuwa	ilikuwa	It was
nikeda	nikaenda	I went
alaf	halafu	afterwards
nikahoga	nikaoga	I bathed
kukaha	kukaa	to stay
mbahoo	mbao	timber

In several cases, failure to conform to the standard grammar can be attributed to mother tongue interference. This is evident in the writing of sounds that are alien to Mwimbi dialect since they are presented by use of sounds that are closer to them in Mwimbi. A

good example is in [h] sound which does not exist in Mwimbi, and is therefore elided in some cases, in written form. Alternatively, where there are supposed to be vowels, there is tendency to include the [h] sound, which in this case can be viewed as the allophone of the vowels in use. Though the villagers seemed to have no problem with the prevailing state of the Mwimbi tongue vis-à-vis other languages, for linguists this is something of concern as discussed in the conclusion Chapter.

Blommaert (2008) argues that non-standard literacy works pretty well in spite of a high degree of indeterminacy and freedom. He argues that such writing has liberating elements from the standard rules. Conversely, he argues that it can also be constraining, and is not an opportunity as such, since it is only locally liberating as outside its locale, it can be both oppressive and disempowering. Meanwhile, Pardoe (1994:162-63) cautions that to create a symmetry of 'right' or 'wrong' is falling into the trap of dominant literacy, which explains the 'wrong' in regard to the social and psychological reasons. He argues that in the face of such 'unsuccessful' writing, it would be prudent to resort to the implicit and explicit connections between positions as regards 'right' or 'wrong'. Just as Street (1993) states, such non-standard usage of language cannot simply be dismissed as incorrect, because it could be a pointer to the marginal literacies posing a challenge to the dominant or standard literacy.

If such 'incorrect' usage can be deemed as a challenge to the dominance of English and Kiswahili, it could prove that the people are after all appropriating the dominant practices for their own situation. Achebe (1996) suggested that instead of avoiding the use of the dominant languages like English, the way Ngugi wa Thiongo did when he shifted from writing in English to Kikuyu his mother tongue, people could adulterate English for their own, easy communication. Going by these arguments, one can deduce that the 'incorrect' writings by the villagers could after all be a way of drawing from the dominant Kiswahili and English, to express themselves with ease. Nonetheless, Pardoe (1994) cautions that the standpoint on 'incorrect' grammar has been challenged for being relativistic and for tending to romanticise failure. While this criticism cannot be taken for granted, Pardoe's stance shows how people who are not engaged in dominant

literacy such as ex-students can draw on such conventions and knowledge to attain socioeconomic needs. There is need to take cognisance of the fact that in other cases however, such literacies should not be viewed in a uni-dimensional plane since they are also capable of reproducing and buttressing the dominant literacy.

5.3.2.1.4 Language Switches in Diaries

The diaries revealed that respondents engaged in language switching in their entries. Generally, switching entailed three languages; Meru, English and Kiswahili; though there were rare cases of switches between Meru and Kikuyu. Table 20 shows evidence of switching between Meru, Kikuyu Kiswahili and English on the diary, as sourced from S.N.9

Table 20: Language switching in diaries filling (S.N.9)

Examples of language switching in diaries	English meaning	Languages involved
mahoya na kuthoma Bible	prayer and Bible reading	Kikuyu- Meru-English
gukama iria 5kg	milking 5kgs	Meru-English
preparing b/fast	preparing breakfast	English
guketha kahawa	harvesting coffee	Meru- Kiswahili
kuuza duka	shopkeeping	Kiswahili
watering kitchen garden	ditto	English
preparing supper	ditto	English
Kula chakula	eat food	Kiswahili
kuomba kabla ya kulala	praying before sleeping	Kiswahili

Arnfast et al. (2003) demonstrate that such switches take place for a number of reasons. From the foregoing example, it is arguable that they were employed to ease communication, if not to showcase competence in multilingualism. Diary fillers appeared at ease in using any language at their disposal, and even in making decision as to which one to use when, and for what item.

However, unlike in interviews where code-mixing was found to take place a great deal, diary-filling exhibited no evidence of such at all. It is deducible that code-mixing is a

conversational or speech phenomenon, which hardly occurs in writing among the villagers. It could have its origin in the school system where code-mixing was discouraged, especially in writing. Contrary to the school where the mother tongue was forbidden as spelt out in chapter 2, villagers were free to use all languages at their disposal, explaining the prevalence of language switching. Similarly, code-mixing in writing could prove a big challenge as evinced by the diary entries and the transcription of the interviews, in comparison to speech. In order to avoid such challenges, it is arguable that diary fillers opted to use language in a way that they were sure would put their messages across with ease.

5.3.3 Literacies and Gains

With respect to question 3 which was concerned with whether multiple literacies were pegged on gains, diaries produced negative results. Instead, there was a revelation that literacies were never pegged on gains since they were not the priority just as was unearthed by the interviews. In other words, Murugi villagers only engaged in literacy activities as a means to realising some socioeconomic gain. Thus, for a particular gain to be attained, literacies became handy indicating that they were used as an expedient. It is for this reason that the literacies were adjudged as situated, and hardly appearing on the surface in contradistinction to formal schooling.

In the final analysis, the diaries showed that literacies were used to access monetary, individual, social or communal gains. They showed that monetary gains could be accrued when villagers indulged in money-generating activities. For example, it was uncovered that they sold milk, tea or coffee, and kept written records for every sale made. They also made computation of the cumulative as a way of cross-checking, before receiving payments. Moreover, the diaries revealed that communal gains were realised in communal ventures such as tree planting projects, which were sometimes run as self help ventures. Plate 2 shows a tree nursery at the edge of Mt.Kenya Forest, Kirigi section. For the nursery to be made and be maintained, the diaries showed that various modes of literacy were called into use.

163

Plate 2: A tree nursery at the edge of Mt. Kenya Forest

Diaries indicated that members of the Network Self Help Group, which was behind the tree nurseries had to count the number of seedlings awake to the fact that some of them could wither away. They also did the counting in regard to the species of the trees that they planted because there were several varieties. They were found to keep records of the number of seedlings on each nursery, the age of the seedlings and the species of trees. Respondents also showed knowledge of the trees that were best suited for reforestation either in the villages or in the forest. Literacy was also found to come handy in the minutes that the self help group did to plan projects, draw budgets, and in designing the planting or sales of the seedlings.

The diaries pointed out to the use of literacies for attaining individual gains such as spiritual nourishment as accrued from the Christian thread. They revealed that villagers engaged in literacy practices for several reasons as Figure 9 illustrates. From a total of 23 diary fillers, 22 voiced monetary gain as the highest driving force. 9 respondents identified motivational reasons, 8 the societal gain, while 1 cited health.
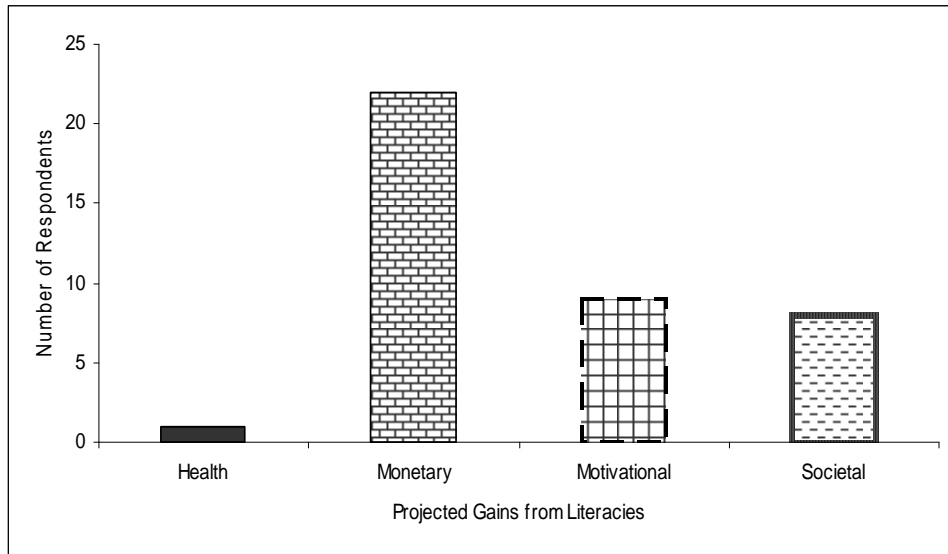
Figure 9: Projected gains from literacy practices

From Figure 9, it is evident that there are several benefits that are behind the villagers literacy practices, and one can hypothesise that if these could be realised money without participating in literacies, then the latter would be divested. While there could be other gains expected from involvement in literacy, the diaries did not indicate them as evident in Figure 9.

5.4 FIELD DOCUMENTS

5.4.1 Types of Field Documents

In regard to research question 1, field documents revealed that villagers practised multiple literacies. The documents also showed that the literacies were situated on socioeconomic activities such that they could pass as non-existent to an ordinary eye. Among the documents that were collected during field work were letters, meetings-minutes, invitation cards to various functions and utility texts. There were also health registers, personal diaries and farmers sales cards. Though there were several types of pieces in each document category, this analysis took a single piece as representative of each class.

5.4.1.1 Farmers Sales Cards

Literacy in form of reading and writing was discerned from farmers milk and tea sales cards. In the case of the tea sales card, there were slots for entering several pieces of information. It had a slot for the tea grower's name, the grower's number, the Kenya Tea Development Authority Centre (K.T.D.A), as well as the serial number. The card also required information on the date of sale, the registered number, cumulative of sales in kilos, the page number and the buyer's signature.[49] The cards showed that these slots had to be filled whenever there was a sale. It emerged that once the buyer entered the latest kilos and cumulative, the farmers counterchecked all the details to ensure that there were no mistakes. The cards were said to be important not only for records, but also in ensuring that the tallying of the kilos between the buyer and the seller was always correct.

5.4.1.2 Health Forms

More writing for record keeping was verified as taking place in the health register forms. A case in point was the Prevention of Mother To Child Transmission (PMTCT) register. The register was used by Community Health Workers (CHWs) to enter information on their daily activities within the community. The information that the CHW was required to fill was specified in a separate sheet. The register showed that the client should never be allowed to see the information that was being entered by the CHW. The register also had slots for entering various pieces of information about the client such as the name, the date when one was served, sex, whether the client was new and in case of women; whether one was pregnant, and one's HIV status. The forms had also dockets for entering information on whether the client had been advised on Nevirapine,[50] counselled on infant feeding, family planning or on self nutrition. Furthermore, the form required information in regard to whether the client had been referred to the PMTCT, support group or other services.[51] This wide ranging information was a strong pointer to the on-going communal literacy in the village in

---

[49] See appendix 7 and 8
[50] Nevaripine is a type of medicine administered to HIV/AIDS patients
[51] See appendix 9

regard to the health thread, not only on the part of the CWH workers, but also on the part of the villagers themselves as clients.

5.4.1.3 Invitations

Other field documents that were found to be in use for literacy purposes were invitation cards to social events like fundraisers. Such cards bore the name(s) of the person or group that was doing the invitation, a slot for the invitee with his or her title, and the date of the function. The card also showed the purpose of the invitation, the presiding guests at the function, the master(s) of ceremonies and the person on whose courtesy the card had been sent. The invitation card was structured in such a way that it communicated an array of information threads, its size notwithstanding.[52] It followed that the recipient of the card had to read it in order to digest its information, and act accordingly. Such documents were further evidence of the fact that the literacies involved in the production of the cards or in their reading were not the priority, but only a means to an end, since the priority was the socioeconomic event at hand, and in this case, the fundraiser.

5.4.1.4 Letters

Among the letters that were collected, two involved communication between members of one clan and the Njuri Ncheke elders, over the alleged case of impregnation and denial, which was related to earlier in the interviews. The letters demonstrated that writing and reading were common in the villages as they were a communication channel. The letter by the clan for example, showed evidence of receiving, reading and understanding the Njuri Ncheke letter; which had earlier been sent to the clan. The letter had demanded that the defendant goes before the jury to make a vow, as a way to resolving the matter. The clan's letter was a response to the one of Njuri. It objected to the decision by Njuri elders that the defendant goes to make a vow over the dispute, and instead proposed that the dispute be settled through a DNA test, as had earlier been ruled by the Children's Welfare Department.

---

[52] See appendix 10

5.4.1.5 Meetings-minutes

Minutes were found to be a common phenomenon among the villagers. These were found to be written or printed for record purposes. Minutes holders explained that this was necessitated by the fact that some issues arising in subsequent meetings could demand a revisit of matters that were raised in previous meetings. Minutes were written in several types of meetings ranging from self help groups, wedding committees to the settlement of various disputes. However, it was established that there were differences in the ways various secretaries wrote down minutes. While some attempted to stick to official conventions where minutes were itemized from the point of calling the meeting to order to the point of its adjournment, others were written in a narrative form, in temporal sequence.

One example of the minutes collected came from a farmers self help group. The minutes showed strong evidence that they were meant for record keeping as a result of several factors. For example, the following sequence was filtered out as having been followed: The opening prayers which were recorded as the first minute; members present, apologies, agenda and matters arising. Besides that sequence, the same document minuted items like members loans, artificial insemination services, animal feeds, milk clotting and the closing prayers. The ending also indicated who confirmed and seconded the minutes.[53] However in this case, the records were neither signed by the secretary nor the chairman, as is normally the case in the more bureaucratic set ups.

5.4.1.6 Notebooks

Other evidence of recording through writing was found in personal notebooks. It was revealed that some villagers kept notebooks in which they wrote various types of material. For example, a notebook which was collected from one villager contained minutes of some group meeting, seminar notes on HIV/AIDS, scriptural notes and herbal medicine information. The notebook had dates on when each type of material was entered, and in some instances, at which venue. For instance, regarding the Chinese

---

[53] See appendix 11

herbal medicine, there were details in connection to what nutrients and chemicals a person's body required to build up bones and teeth. There was also scriptural reading as evinced by references to the various books in the Bible, as well as to the highlights of several sermons.[54]

5.4.1.7 Utility texts

Fieldwork also unearthed wide usage of utility texts among villagers. The materials were found to be common to farmers especially when they were instructed on the application of chemicals like acaricides or herbicides. Farmers had to read and understand instructions in order to use the chemicals appropriately. In one utility text on the use of an acaricide, there was information that the chemical was effective against ticks, lice and mange-mites of livestock. The instructions had the following subsections: precautions, environmental hazards, storage, methods of disposal, symptoms of poisoning and antidote in case of ingestion. There was also information on the animal withdrawal symptoms after application, the sellers guarantee and a notice to the user.[55] Considering that such chemicals were found to be in wide use among the farmers, and taking into account that new chemicals were being produced and introduced to them sporadically, it suffices to state that farmers had to engage in reading of these documents in order to realise the targeted economic gains.

5.4.1.8 Special Letter

A special document that was collected during research was a letter to the editor. The letter is treated as special because it was not among the field documents, which were targeted by the research as such. Instead, it was forwarded to the researcher, who was believed to be living in Nairobi, so that he could deliver it to a newspaper editor on return to the city. Several interesting issues emerged from the handwritten letter. The 'author' of the letter, a former freedom fighter during Kenya's struggle for independence was said to be non-literate. However, on presenting the English letter to

---

[54] See appendix 12
[55] See appendix 13

the researcher, he explained why he had elected to write it, touching on all issues in the letter in Meru.[56]

The letter was written to the Kenyan Prime Minister challenging him to consider the plight of the old, ex- freedom fighters, just as he had promised to take up the issue of the Kenyan youth. It also raised concern as to when the country's freedom fighters would ever be compensated. It stated: "Please Hon. Prime Minister, can you look on that. When your father asks you for a kilo of meat, will you take it to him when he has already died?" The letter also requested the Prime Minister to acknowledge receipt of the letter by sending the author a mobile phone so that it could ease communication between them. The letter bore the name and address of the 'writer.' While it was clear that the 'author' could not write Meru, let alone English; the letter has important factors to do with literacy in the village. Just as was found about minutes writing in meetings, this letter provided more evidence of the symbiotic relationship between orality and literacy. It pointed out to a literacy practice by use of amanuensis. In this case, the freedom fighter dictated his sentiments to a person who was literate in English, who in turn rendered it into writing.

While this research was limited to literate ex-students, the letter provided evidence of how the non-literates immerse themselves into village literacies as they lay down what is to be written for them, to the point of making their concerns national issues by for instance, sending letters to the editors of the Kenyan newspapers. The letter is also evidence of how the non-literate can involve the literate in literacy practices, showing that the latter are not a reserve of the literate alone. Street (1995:111) reveals that similar situations were found to occur in America whereby a person with the requisite literacy skills could offer help in filling out forms or in writing letters, in exchange for a different skill such as the mending of a car apparatus. The author also cautions against reifying written language over orality in the face of literacy.

---

[56] See appendix 14

5.4.2 Ways of Practising Literacies

In view of research question 2, the field documents revealed that there were several ways employed in practising literacy in the village. Among the modes that were found to be common were writing, reading, arithmetic and participant observation. These modes of practices were not found to be so dissimilar to those of the interviews and diaries, implying that this subsection presents only what might have appeared distinct to avoid repetition. Similarly, these modes could overlap, and in this case, they should not be viewed as independent or totally separate. It was also established that most of the literature that the villagers used was in English, with a few Kiswahili translations, though it has already been stated that their everyday language of interaction was Meru.

5.4.2.1 Writing

The field documents, as was earlier observed, indicated that villagers participated in writing quite a great deal. Just as was stated about Shuman's (2003) observation earlier, the writing was either proximate (direct or mediated) or distant-mediated. Both types of writing were found in the community, and it emerged that face to-face writing was preferred when villagers were together for example, in meetings. However, distant-mediated writing was common for distant communication or when there was need to reach out to as many people as possible. While Shuman (2003) argues that the distance between authors and readers could be a pointer to differentiation in regard to status, time and space in temporal distance; this cannot be said to be necessarily the case in the villages, though it cannot be ruled out in formal schooling, especially in cases where there is need to spread some type of hegemony.

Just as Barton (1994a) observes, it emerged that there was creative or writer-generated type of writing, and constrained writing, which demanded that the writer follows an already laid-down set of rules. The villagers were found to write minutes, invitation cards, personal notes or shopping lists. Writing in several cases showed communal and discursive processes for instance, in the production of materials like invitation cards. Putting into account that the cards were finely printed and decorated, in spite of the fact

that computer services were generally available outside the villages, the discursive process involved in their production was discernible. Several steps preceded any card's production. Foremost, there were discussions at a steering committee or sub-committee level with regard to how the card should appear, the drafting of the card, typesetting it on computer, printing it out for revision, before the final printout and copies were made. All these steps involved several literacy practices in writing, reading, proofreading and the final hand writing of the card to the invitees.

Similar discursive process was found to take place in the compilation of groups meetings-minutes. While some minutes were left in handwritten forms, others were forwarded for typesetting, a further step in collaborative writing. After typesetting at the commercial centre, the secretary read through them in order to make corrections, before the final printout was made. Some photocopies of the printout were then made in readiness for the subsequent meeting, whereby the secretary read them out before they were confirmed as true documents. However, while some writing was found to be collaborative, personal documents were found to be privately and singularly written. Good examples of these were the sermons or seminar notes.

5.4.2.2 Language

It has already been stated that the availability of field documents in English was a surfeit, in comparison with Kiswahili or Meru. It was interesting to find out that while there were English documents whose origin were not the villages, the villagers themselves produced substantial English material. This was seen in documents like meetings minutes, personal notes and invitations cards. The prevalence of English in writing of documents points out to some linguistic problems that have already been mentioned. The research demonstrated that the writing craft was learnt in formal schooling and therefore, villagers tend to continue writing in the language which was their mode of instruction in schools.

In a like token, it was determined that generally, most of the writing took place in offices, and considering that English was the co-official language alongside Kiswahili, it was used more because of lingo-historical factors that favoured it. For example, Chapter 2 outlined how English was privileged over Kiswahili and other African languages materially, professionally and politically. Yet, its status could only be boosted by lack of standardization of the local languages and dialects as the case of Mwimbi proved. Accordingly, educated villagers opted to write in English, which they considered as a language of prestige and vogue.

Nonetheless, some invitation cards had translations in Meru or Kikuyu, while invitations to weddings were also done in either of them, or in a blending of the two languages. While the strong presence of English in field documents was found to be outstanding, it should be noted that some documents messages proved difficult to decipher. This was not only because of the non-standard languages that were used to write them, but also because some writings were done in a register that was only decipherable to the villagers alone. A case in point was in the writing of minutes where there was such vocabulary as 'A.I services,' for 'artificial insemination services,' 'feeds' for 'animal feeds,' 'N.H.I.F' for 'National Health Insurance Fund' or *pandikas* for 'cans for ferrying milk.' In the face of such usage, the researcher was forced to seek the full meanings of the words.

5.4.2.3 Reading

Field documents pointed out that a further mode of literacy was reading. The documents showed evidence of literacy in view of the fact that they were tailored towards a particular readership. A good example was the utility texts which bore instructions on the proper application of farming chemicals. Such materials were detailed, and were written in both English and Kiswahili. It was established that it was incumbent upon farmers to read them in order to use the products appropriately. Failure to do so, it emerged, could lead to the usage of chemicals inappropriately, impacting negatively on the animals or plants on to which the chemicals were applied. In cases where the reading

material was unfathomable to some villagers, the research uncovered that it was normal to consult fellow villagers for the best use, some further evidence of collaboration in literacy practices.

Further collaborative reading was found to take place for example, in minutes-writing. While the minutes were written in English by the secretary, he or she would read them out to members in Meru as already mentioned, an arrangement that Street (1995) dubs as oral-literate continuum. Such reading was found to be vital lest some members disowned minutes which they had earlier passed. Group reading was also found to take place in communal letters such as the one that was related to earlier, having been dispatched to one clan by Njuri Ncheke. In such a case, it was discerned that when the secretary to the clan received the letter, he liaised with his chairman to convene a meeting. In the meeting, the agenda was spelt out as the received letter, and the secretary read it out to members in an oralised Meru version. This helped all clan members to get a grasp of the purpose and content of the letter through this communal type of reading.

Reading was also found to take place when recipients read invitation cards and letters to weddings. It has already been stated that villagers were found to read these documents to discern the purpose of the invitation, the addresser, the date of the function and so forth. Similar reading was evident on personal notebooks, especially scriptural material. Some notebooks showed materials that had been written down following events like sermons. Respondents indicated that they read such materials regularly for the deeper understanding of the Bible, and for their spiritual nourishment. In view of this, the field documents also demonstrated that villagers were involved in literacy through reading, a fact that could miss the eye of a surface viewer, because it was etched on other societal functions.

5.4.3. Field Documents and Gains

In view of research question 3, the field documents also confirmed that the villagers' literacies were not pegged on particular gains, but were only used as channels towards these goals. This once again implies that literacies were not the priority of the villagers, but the socioeconomic target which would offer a gain. Field documents showed that literacies were used for communication, record keeping and for carrying out calculations to realise gains in form of money, parity and health.

5.4.3.1 Quantification for Good Yields and Money

Literacy in form of quantification was found to be a stepping stone towards the realisation of good returns in agriculture. Measurements and written records took place when farmers wanted to spray their animals with pesticides. They measured the chemicals that they needed to mix with water according to the size of knapsack sprayers. This ensured that they stuck to the provided instructions in order to spray the animals in the appropriate manner. More quantification was found to take place when the villagers were involved in crop planting. For example, during maize planting, farmers were found to read label packages of the product, which provided instructions on how to plant the cereals not only in the holes, but also spatially from one hole to another. The measurements ensured that villagers grew and reared healthy animals in order to realise good yields, and consequently reap good monetary gains upon selling.

5.4.3.2 Literacy, Communication and Benefits

Literacy was further found to be used for communication in order to make money. A good example was the writing and reading of farming utility texts that farmers were found to engage in. When farmers read the texts on the application of acaricides or herbicides, they were engaged in communication between themselves and the writers. Reading was therefore ascertained as a means to ensuring that the chemicals were used well, to accrue good returns from animal and soil husbandry. In other words, it was never the objective of the farmers to read these documents from the word go, but circumstances forced them to read them in order to realise good, economic yields. Good

use of the chemicals assured them of good farm produce, which in turn ensured that they had food on their tables. In other cases, the farm produce was sold enabling the farmers to make money. In this case, literacy and communication proved to be tools towards the attainment of some economic goals.

Another example is that of an invitation card to a funds-drive. Its authors did not write and print the card for the sake of literacy, but with a beneficial objective in mind. They produced it as a means to reaching out to many people so that they could be helped to raise funds for the church construction. The recipients who received the invitations engaged in communication with the author(s) to understand the purpose of the card. In this regard, the objective of producing the card was a socioeconomic venture, and literacy facilitated this goal through communication. To construct the church, villagers required money, and that is why they came up with the objective of conducting a fundraiser. To actualise this venture, literacy proved a prerequisite in writing invitations, which were followed by the printing and dissemination of cards.

5.4.3.3 Socioeconomic Parity

Field documents further brought to fore the fact that literacies were used to facilitate communication with socioeconomic parity as the targeted gain. Take the letters between Njuri Ncheke and the clan over the case of alleged impregnation and denial which were mentioned earlier. Writing and reading of the letters was done to facilitate communication. However, the purpose of this communication was to settle the dispute between the plaintiff and the defendant, which had however ramified into a disputation between the clan and Njuri Ncheke. Accordingly, literacy facilitated communication between the disputing parties, consequently aiding in the settlement of a social dispute.

Arithmetic was also found to be used for purposes of fairness for instance, in the timber industry, which was an occupation of some villagers, thereby ensuring parity in several levels. A case in point is when people used power saws to cut logs of wood into the timber sizes that were required. Calculations were done to certify that timber was

meticulously cut as per the requirements. This meant that there was parity between demand and supply of the required material, guaranteeing that the material produced was neither in shortfall nor in excess. While the actual sawing of the timber into the required sizes was not indicative of any calculations, the preceding steps involved mathematics and budgeting to check any possible mistakes. Measurements proved beneficial to the villagers in ensuring that there was procuring of the correct sizes of timber as construction material. Additionally, the measurements ensured that the workers payment was consummerate with their labour. To this end, such work proved to be a source of employment for some villagers. Plate 3 shows sawing of timber, which on the surface obscures arithmetic that precedes it.

Plate 3: Timber sawing in the villages

5.4.3.4 Health

Field documents disclosed that another objective of Murugi villagers literacies was good health, as demonstrable from the filling of health forms by community health workers. The goal of the CHW and their sponsors was to maintain a healthy, rural populace. In order to realise this, it was earlier stated that the CHWs were trained to facilitate this objective. The training of the CHWs involved literacy, and so did their community

services such as in filling forms on their clients health conditions. In such cases, literacy became a means towards realising good health, providing evidence that literacy in itself was not the goal.

In a similar vein, there was evidence of written records, which involved health services in the villages. The research found out that children were weighed regularly by community service workers. Their weights were entered onto weight cards, which parents were supposed to take with them when they went to the antenatal clinic or to hospital for treatment. This way, community health workers were able to determine whether children were growing well or not. This information was corroborated by mothers who took their children to health centres. Additionally, HIV/AIDS patients information was found to be recorded on health forms by the same community workers. The forms indicated which medicine had been administered, the time of its administration and the patients physical reactions after taking it. However, it was determined that this information was a top secret between patients and workers, because HIV/AIDS patients were stigmatised in some quarters in the country.

5.5 FIELD NOTES

Field notes were made by the researcher in the course of field investigation. They corroborated most of the findings which have already been presented in the analysis of interviews, literacy diaries and field documents, though they bear some fresh insights which were not captured by the research. The notes were important because they aided in documenting the profiles of the respondents, the scenarios during data collection, and all issues that required clarification. This information was crucial in the drawing up of the summary display chart and matrices as was outlined in Chapter 4.

5.5.1 Villagers Views on Literacies

An intriguing observation about Murugi villagers was that they do not acknowledge or conceive their literacy practices as literacy. Their understanding is that literacy takes place in formal schooling. This observation was demonstrable from the critiques made

on both interviews and the diaries, which respondents were allowed to put forward after interviewing sessions. A substantial number of them complained that the research had forced them to engage in literacy (filling up diaries), something that they stopped years back. This points out to a worrying blot that could be emanating from the country's education system where learners are accustomed into believing that literacy is a reserve of the school set up. This is a shortcoming because formal education should be a preparation for lifelong education, yet villagers ex-students gleefully claimed that they stopped literacy.

Nonetheless, the research unearthed that some of the villagers could actually be engaging in hyper-literacy. A good example was that of a villager who had within two weeks of diary filling engaged in multiple writings of letters and minutes. He was also involved in other literacies involving soil and animal husbandry. It would therefore suffice to state that some of the literacies engaged in by the villagers are sound, and can keep them intellectually active, just as formal literacy is documented to do (Carson 1992). However, this is a fact that is yet to be acknowledged by some scholars, agents and even the government, going by the country's education system.

5.5.2 Formal Schooling and Rural Literacies

It emerged from field notes that villagers attach a high premium to formal education, which they are persuaded is a prerequisite for successes in life. In this case, they hold that those who are successful in village life must have attained some substantial level of education. All modes of practising literacies such as writing, reading, participant observation, written-texts oralisation and arithmetic proved successful in village literacies when one had already some grounding in formal schooling. It was ascertained that villagers accorded positions of responsibility to people who had demonstrated success in formal education.

The finding that multiple literacies were not the villagers priority but a means to an end notwithstanding, it transpired that those who used literacies well had some appreciable

success in formal schooling as well as in village life. Several parents were clear that they wanted their children to excel in education, unlike themselves, in order to lead better lives in the future. This suggests that though there is tendency to treat formal education in Kenya as mainly an avenue for seeking knowledge, occasionally education is itself a means to an end, in that it is tailored towards acquiring white collar employment, to invoke Chakava's (1998) assertion.

5.5.3 Priorities of the Villagers

So far, research findings have revealed that villagers multiple literacies are not the priority, but a means to some socioeconomic goals. The big question is; what are their priorities? The field notes made it succinct that the villagers priorities were mainly twofold: Food and money. One villager was clear that this study was a bother to them since it ate into their precious time, yet it could not ensure bread on their tables unlike other socioeconomic activities in which they engaged. This corroborates Djoleto's (1992) statement that in Africa, people may fail to engage in literacy owing to the fact that they have more pressing needs, especially economical ones. However, it was mentioned that this research uncovered that villagers practised multiple literacies and used them as means to some benefits.

5.5.4 Collaboration in Literacies

The field notes demonstrated that literacies among villagers were largely communal activities, and rarely individual. This finding is at variance with formal schooling in which the social aspect of literacy takes place only in the classroom, while the students are left to work mainly on their own. It should not be forgotten that in formal schooling, the examination is tackled individually with the aim of producing the best from the group or from the whole nation. In a like vein, activities like reading, especially for upper classes in primary and secondary schools up to the university, are invariably personal initiatives and ventures.

However, in the villagers literacy events such as meetings, it was noted that it was only the secretary who recorded minutes in writing, though all members present contributed to the ideas on how each minute should appear. This was possible considering that the secretary read each minute to members so that they could validate or amend it. An advantage of this collaborative writing is that it displaces the power of single-person-authorship. As Besnier (1989) states, such writing backgrounds the private aspects of the self while foregrounding those of the community as far as identity is concerned. It was interesting to find that all the writing was communal or public, which however does not rule out the existence of secret private writings as can be argued about covert letters or private deals.

The villagers communality in literacies is definitely based on African socialism.[57] Literacy practices were found to be organized around group projects like the self help, religious activities, agricultural ventures or the social welfare of the people. Djoleto (1992) and Chakava (1998) allude to this when they state that Africans are predisposed to engaging in communal activities like dancing, singing and conversation, while tending to find book reading rather lonely and asocial. While this research would not wish to appear to subscribe to the notion of homogeneity of the Africans or even Kenyans in regard to communal activities, Chakava and Djoleto's observations might nonetheless explain why book-reading is liable for bottom rung among villagers literacies as was mentioned earlier. It should not be forgotten that Ngugi (1978) states that his widely selling novel, *Caitani Mutharabaini* (Devil on the Cross)[58] was read communally among Kikuyu villagers gatherings, in a situation where there would be only one reader, while the rest of the villagers provided the audience. In other words,

---

[57] Bogonko (1996:269) holds that African socialism culturally means everyone caring for the other. It also implies respect for every human being, common ownership of basic goods and means of production, and obligation of all society members to work. Its origin was Kwame Nkrumah, who saw it as communalism based on egalitarianism, as informed by African principles. To this end, African socialism is living in brotherhood and sisterhood as a community, while supporting each other. This is in contrast to leading individualistic life. For example, a child for a long time belonged to the community and could be taken care of or reprimanded by any adult in the society, though such values are drastically changing as people become more self-centred, as a result of out-of-Africa influences.

[58] Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1978) *Devil on the Cross*. Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers.

while the Kikuyu villagers could read the novel on their own, they opted to read it communally at village assemblies.

5.5.5 Identity

Literacies revealed that people were exhibiting various identities. One person could be a Christian, a farmer, a cook, a parent or a clan member. In the light of this, the villager should be viewed as a person with multiple identities, all falling under the rubric of Murugi villagers or Meru community. The multiplicity of identities is in concordance with multiple literacies, and demonstrates why the reification and spread of one form of literacy worldwide tends to be questionable. Aspects to do with the villagers identity were garnered through abstraction of certain recurring themes in the course of the interviews. They were also fleshed out at individual and communal levels by use of pronouns 'I' or 'we.' This was further evidence of the social nature of the villagers literacies, further proving that the literacies are embedded in societal events.

5.6. PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

Participant observation was another method used in fieldwork. It entailed participating and observing the villagers in their daily chores, particularly those involving literacies. The method was employed in the whole research from the stage of piloting to the conclusion of the interviews. Observation proved a handy tool in providing a concrete view of the situation on the ground. Observation was supplemented by picture-taking by use of a camera. While there was a lot of material that was observed, some of it has already been treated in the various sections of this analysis. For this reason, this section focuses on observed material, which is bound to offer new perceptions.

5.6.1 Living conditions and Literacy

It was observed that living conditions of the villagers might not be conducive for some types of literacies such as reading in the evenings. This is as a result of the fact that the area was not covered with electricity, and in most cases, the residents were using

paraffin lamps to light their houses. However, it was observed that paraffin itself was an expensive commodity in the villagers living standards and therefore, its use was limited to very necessary activities such as the studies of school-going children. In several instances during interviews, the researcher found it difficult to read questions or write field notes as a result of darkness. In a similar instance, a night watchman was found reading in a smoky shed, which was poorly lit by a makeshift paraffin lamp, as illustrated in Plate 4.

Plate 4: A night watchman reads in his shed using a makeshift lamp

The watchman in Plate 4 indicated that he was conscious of the fact that he ought to use paraffin frugally, and for that reason, his reading was only limited to a short time, whenever possible. The living conditions also forced the researcher to make do with a torch in the course of the fieldwork, after experiencing lighting difficulties in the first days. In view of this, it would be difficult to expect the villagers to engage in substantial literacy practices in the evenings, as a result of such infrastructural and economic constraints.

In a number of houses however, there was evidence of use of the solar batteries for lighting. While these could facilitate reading, there is need to note that solar batteries

rely on sunlight and therefore, people could only light houses for a limited number of hours. The same solar energy was observed as being used to run electrical gadgets like the radio and television, posing more power challenges putting into perspective that the solar batteries that were affordable to majority of the villagers were of low wattage. Additionally, when the days were not sunny, the reliability of solar lighting would also prove difficult. These findings tally with Chakava's (1998) observation that living conditions of the people can militate against their reading. In this regard, villagers could only engage effectively in literacy practices like reading in daylight, yet this is the time that they were also engaged in other urgent chores for their socioeconomic ends.

5.6.2 Literacies and Socioeconomic Activities

Another factor that was observed was how people used literacies in their everyday lives. It was possible to observe how farmers dug holes, counted them and measured spacing in the planting of maize, kales or tree nurseries. Farmers were also observed during the sales of farm produce like milk and tea. In the case of milk, farmers carried it in metallic gallons to various points by the road, just before the scheduled arrival of the milk buyer. On arrival, the buyer would weigh the product by use of a litre cup. After weighing, he would enter the kilos sold on the farmers' sales card. In some cases, the buyer could opt to measure the quality of the milk by use of ethanol. A similar process would be repeated in the afternoons for those who still sold the product this time. Plate 5 shows a literacy event as a milkman buys the product by the road, after testing its quality by use of ethanol.

Plate 5: A milkman buying the product by the roadside

Tea cutting was also witnessed during the research. While to a passing observer the exercise would be no more than just the trimming of top branches, an in-depth observation showed that there was use of literacy practice. It was revealed that farmers were taught to trim the crop to particular lengths according to the age of the plants. In other words, while among the younger plants trimming was limited to only a few inches, this was found to be different in the cutting of the older plants since their height could demand that they be reduced by more inches. While the farmers never appeared to measure the lengths of the plants that they were cutting, it transpired that they were so used to the exercise that it was normal for them to cut them to the required sizes without taking any measurements. However, one can still postulate that during such cutting, some measuring skills were flouted, though it was not immediately clear how this could affect the growth or yields from the tea plant.

5.6.3 Language Use

It was ascertained that documents like minutes were written in English by the session's secretary, but were oralised and discussed in Meru. The reason given for this situation was that English was easier to write, but difficult to speak. Additionally, during

meetings, it was observed that many people were not well-conversant with English, demanding that all the readings and deliberations be done in Meru. The research disclosed that each language was used in specific situations, as far as multiple literacies were concerned. Meru was used for all oral communication, except when there were non-Meru speakers, in which case Kiswahili could be used. English was used for writing minutes in gatherings or in the reading of the Bible, but mainly by those with secondary school education, a factor that receives detailed treatment on the subsection of literacies and levels of education.

5.6.4 Day-Tasks Fatigue and Literacies

It was observed that during the day, the villagers were too occupied in socioeconomic activities to be able to engage in literacy practices like reading at 'rest' time in the evenings. The average waking time for most farmers was 5.00 a.m., from which one would engage in tasks like milking and selling, fetching livestock feeds, tea or coffee harvesting, and their selling. Other tasks included the manual cultivation of the small scale farms, planting, cooking and attending to the needs of the children. In the face of all these, many villagers were too tired to engage in exercises like reading fiction after dusk, its entertainment value notwithstanding. Plate 6 shows a woman repacking maize into a sack for the night after threshing and airing it, only moments after travelling several kilometres to look for animal feeds, only to mention two of her many daily chores.

Plate 6: A woman repacks aired maize for the night

When people were so tired, it emerged that it was far much easier for them, especially men, to imbue brew in the local bars, while chatting with friends rather than take the onus of reading the written word, safe for the Bible. This observation contradicts Mbae (2004), who argues that Kenyans fail to read as a result of laziness due to the fact that they still found time to indulge in social activities like drinking. Though it is not clear where Mbae had sourced his argument, it was vividly observed that villagers in Murugi were not lazy and that there were other factors that militated against their reading during free time in the evenings.

5.6.5 Sunday Afternoons

During research, it was interesting to find that some villagers took time to read available materials on Sunday afternoons. This was the only type of literacy which was not embedded in socioeconomic activities. Sunday afternoons proved to be largely free times, especially after attending to morning chores and going to church. While there was no exact timing in the distribution of the research diaries or in the conducting of interviews, respondents were occasionally found reading newspapers or writing

notebooks, when the researcher made impromptu appearances on Sunday afternoons. This showed that displaced literacy in the village was allotted very little time, if at all.

5.6.6 Hierarchisation of Villagers Literacies

In both familial and self-help threads of communal literacy, it was established that generally there were those who were in charge of the literacy practice at hand, and who involved the rest of the people in it through explications or discussions. Besides minutes-writing in weddings or fund-drives meetings, there were written programmes that detailed all activities that were to take place during such functions. Such programmes were only in the hands of a few people and the rest of the gathering followed the schedule through public announcements. Additionally, hierarchisation of literacy was found to take place in the church between the clergy and the laity such as in the reading of the holy writ. This was a pointer to the exercise of power relations in some of the villagers literacies. In such cases, power was vested in those who controlled the written word such as the Bible, and who were to lead the rest.

Hierarchisation was also found to be premised on other factors like education whereby those with higher levels of schooling were allocated more positions of responsibility as is spelt out in the subsection on literacies and education levels. However, these power relations were determined as being different from those of the teacher-student in formal schooling, in which the teacher appears as a reservoir of knowledge, which he or she disseminates to mainly passive students. Despite the hierarchisation of villagers literacies, there was evidence of much integration between various participants. It emerged that for instance, the clergy had to be supported by the church's leadership at various levels, to the point where some leaders played some of the priest's responsibilities. Additionally, the position of the clergy was found to be rather decentralised in view of the fact that preaching was not the reserve of the pastors alone, but could include various people in the leadership of the church.

5.6.7 Communication in the Villages

It was observed that communication could be public or private. Private communication about functions like weddings or fund-drives was done by use of letters or cards to invitees as has already been stated. However, some written communication was supposed to be for public consumption for example, from the provincial administration. In such cases, the letter would be read out or simply paraphrased in public announcements in the church or in the school. In rare cases however, some notices were put up on tree stems at the roadsides for public reading. A case in point would be the warning notices which were made to suspects like thieves to return the stolen items within some stipulated timeframe, lest they faced the wrath of witches. Trees were found to be the appropriate channels for such literature because many people and institutions would find it unethical to be associated with matters like witchcraft.

5.7 LITERACY PRACTICES AND VARIABLES

5.7.1 Literacy Practices and People's Age

Age was found to be an important variable in this study. Since it would have been impolite to ask the respondents to state their actual ages, the ages were categorised in five brackets making it easy for people to identify the age categories in which they belonged. The five categories were as follows: 21-30, 31-40, 41-50, 51-60, and above 60. This categorization was reasonable in view of the fact that the research targeted ex-students. Considering that most students completed primary and secondary education before they were 20, categorization of ages starting from 21 was found rational. The research findings from both interviews and diaries revealed that a person's age was an important factor in determining how active or not one was in regard to literacy. However, there was some discrepancy which was deemed to be of little importance between the findings of the interviews and diaries as far as age and involvement in literacies were concerned.

Interviews showed that the people who were the most active in literacies were in the age brackets of 31-40 and 41-50, contrary to the diaries which showed that 41-50 and 51-60 were the most active age brackets, as exemplified in Figure 10.
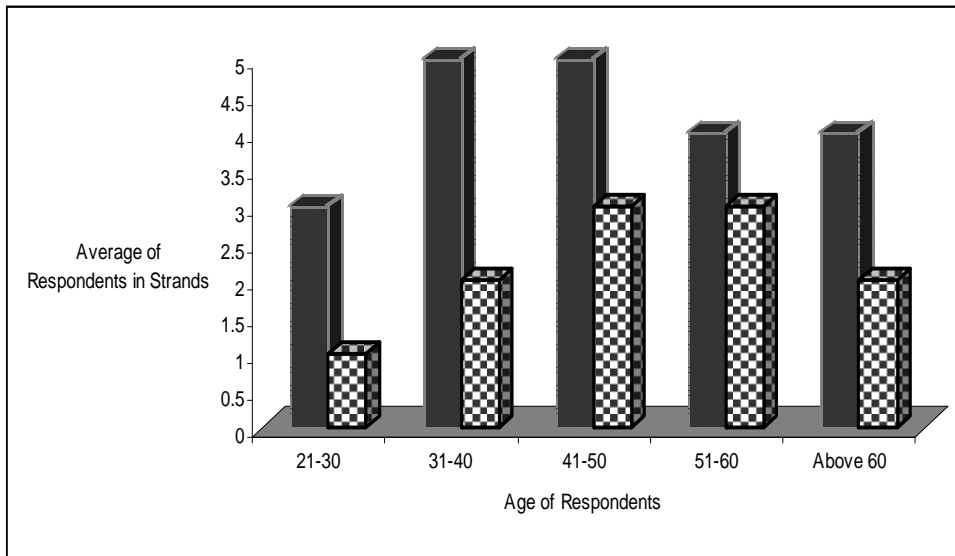
Figure 10: Average participation in literacies strands in relation to age

The figure was realised after getting the aggregate of the different strands of literacies among people of the same age bracket, and dividing it by the number of respondents in that particular category. In this case, the highest average rate with respect to the interviews was 5, while the lowest was 3. In the diaries, the highest average rate stood at 3, while the lowest was at 1. Figure 10 shows that the most active age group in literacies is that of 41-50, but this activity can oscillate between ages 31-40 or 51-60. This is because in these age brackets, people tend to have more responsibilities than others. Yet, the more the responsibilities, it was established, the higher the literacies involvement. For example, it was found out that these age brackets comprised of mainly married people who had children in school, implying that they helped them with assignments. These are the groups that also had to fend for their families, suggesting that they had more chances of participating in literacy in events such as the school committees and agriculture.

It was also established that these were the age brackets, which were normally allocated responsibilities in functions like weddings, fundraisers, self-help committees, or in civil service positions like those of sub-areas, activities that demanded them to engage in more literacy practices. It also emerged that people in these age groups were allocated such responsibilities because of their maturity, energy and experience; attributes that made them more preferable to those who were either much older or much younger. In a nutshell, it was disclosed that the more responsibilities in the family and in the community, the higher the chances of participating in more literacies.

Age brackets of 21-30 and above 60, scored lower than the rest in both interviews and diaries. This can be explained by the fact that people in both age brackets did not have many responsibilities at both the familial and community levels. This is because at above 60 age bracket, generally people did not have responsibilities for children, with respect to such tasks as home works taking into account that most of their offsprings were grown ups. However, the same age bracket got more responsibilities in social places such as the church. Considering that they did not have many familial responsibilities, they were thought to be the most suited for religious responsibilities, which demanded substantial commitment. Arguably, these responsibilities made them engage in several literacies.

However, the group in the age bracket of 21-30, was at the bottom in literacies engagement because most of them had few responsibilities. Generally, some people in this category were single, young and inexperienced; implying that they were not allocated positions of responsibility in welfare events or in the church. This age bracket was found to engage in literacy only when its interests such as knowledge about health matters or self welfare were the subject. However, their role as people engaging in multiple literacies was not particularly conspicuous, unlike in other age groups. In this regard, it would pay off to conduct a similar research some years to come to find out whether the status of this group's participation in literacies will have changed after assuming more responsibilities in society. The findings revealed that the older one gets

beginning from the age of 20, the more the literacy practices, but these tend to diminish from the age bracket of 51-60 and onwards.

There is however, a caveat to make about Figure 10 taking into consideration that it may not be fully representative of the literacies per the age brackets. This is because in a thread like agriculture, a villager could be engaged in several literacies, yet the chart reflects this as a single literacy activity. Likewise, a person who might have had no children at home because they were in boarding schools at the time of the research may still engage in homework with the children when school is closed. Nonetheless, the figure is a good overview of how villagers engage in literacies in regard to their ages.

5.7.2 Literacies and Educational Levels

With respect to the respondents levels of education, it emerged that this too had a bearing on how people engaged in literacies. It was revealed that the higher the level of education, the higher the chances of engaging in more literacy practices. This could be explained by the fact that those with high levels of education were expected to participate in more social activities, and consequently engage in more literacies at both individual and collective levels. A case in point is in all committee meetings, where it was established that secretaries were graduates of secondary four or even higher education. They were expected to write committee minutes in English and oralise them in Meru during meetings, a feat that could not be easily done by villagers of lower educational levels.

It was also discerned that villagers who were elected to hold senior positions in the church, civil service or in self help groups, were people with some appreciable level of education, which made them expedite their tasks. This implies that while those with only primary education were also found to engage in literacies, their level of engagement was definitely lower than that of those with higher education in both colonial and independent Kenya education systems. Furthermore, former professionals

like retired teachers or clerks exhibited more engagement in literacies than people who had little formal education.

Going by this, it is remarkable that villagers accorded formal education a high value, just as has already been stated elsewhere in this chapter. They held that whoever engaged in village literacies effectively must have gone through formal schooling, and the higher the level of education, the better the person was placed to engage in community activities, which entailed literacies. For this reason, leaders in different fields within the villages were elected after considering their educational level. This was demonstrable from the selection of leaders in the low cadres of the provincial administration, in the church, in clan positions, in self help groups or in school committees. Figure 11 shows involvement in literacies in view of five educational levels as obtained from interviews and diaries: pre-independence primary and secondary; independence primary, secondary and post-secondary. It is noteworthy that there was also the post-secondary level in pre-independence education, but among respondents, none had reached this stage.
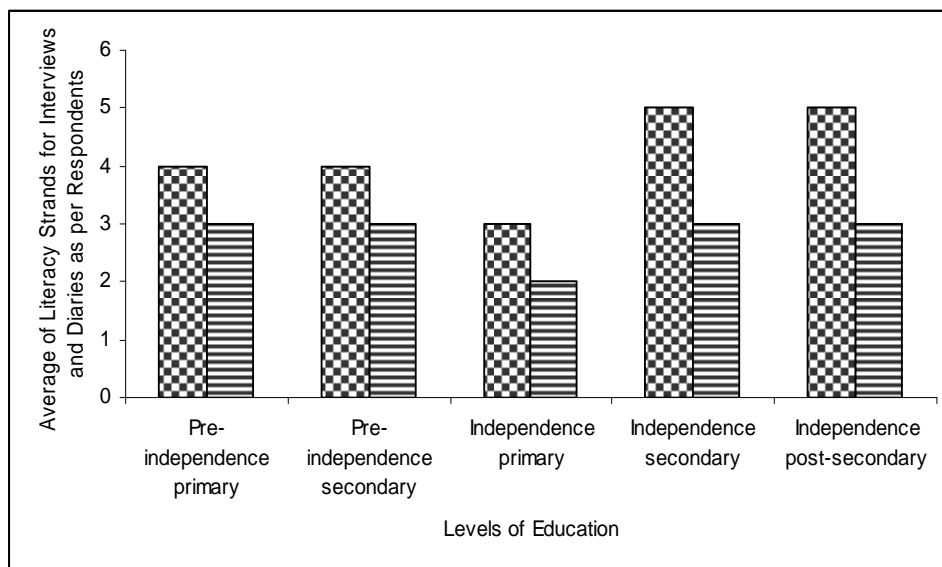
Figure 11: Correlation between literacies and levels of education

It should however be noted that among the villagers, there was no university graduate who was available for this study. This can be explained by the fact that most university graduates work outside the villages, more so, in urban areas.

In both interviews and diaries, those who had attained secondary and post secondary education appeared to engage in village literacies more than people of lower levels of education. However, there is a strong correlation between the age of respondents and their levels of education. For example, respondents with independence secondary education appear to engage in more literacies than their counterparts with the same education in the pre-independence category. The independence secondary respondents were obviously younger than their pre-independence secondary counterparts, yet it was established that the older one gets from age 50 onwards, the less the engagement in literacies. Nonetheless, there is a tally in the cohort of pre-independence primary and secondary. This can be attributed to the fact that respondents in these categories were among the oldest, implying that their engagement in literacies could be similar. However, respondents who had attained pre-independence primary education exhibited more engagement in literacies than their counterparts who had attained independence primary education. This can be explained by the fact that those in the cohort of pre-independence primary were older than those in the independence primary education system, yet it has already be shown that the older one is among people in middle ages, the more the responsibilities, and the higher the chances of being involved in more literacies.

Regarding language, as would be expected, the higher the educational level of the respondents, the more the mastery of the language of choice for diary filling, and conversely, the lower the level of education, the lower the grasp of the language of choice. It also emerged that code-switching between Meru and English was quite common among those who had attained high education such as secondary four. In religion, it also became apparent that respondents who reached secondary four mainly used English Bibles, while the category of pre-independence primary preferred to use Kikuyu Bibles. However, in a few isolated cases, there were respondents who claimed to

use Meru (Imenti dialect) Bible too. Preference of English reading can also be attributed to the formal education system, in which case it is the English Bible that was found to be used in schools, such as in Religious Studies. This also alludes to hierarchisation of village literacies, though this is not as dichotomous as in formal education, where more education implies inclusion, and less education means exclusion (Cope and Kalantzis 2003).

5.7.3 Literacy Practices and Gender

It was interesting to note that with regard to the gender variable, literacy practices were egalitarian, unlike in formal schooling where education is documented to be tilted in favour of male students in most of the Kenyan provinces (Suda 2002). For example, in social events which call for literacy input like self help groups, church activities or farming; the distribution of gender was found to be in equilibrium. Nonetheless, as a result of the Meru traditions, there were spheres in which women were found to be left out. Cases in point include Njuri Ncheke activities, some senior positions in the church or in clans functions. This can be accounted for by the fact that traditionally, leadership positions and the court system were domains of men in the Meru patriarchal society and therefore, women were yet to be fully integrated into the spheres. However, women were also found to engage in events which involved literacy, and which were exclusively for them. Among these was the Woman's Guild in the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA) or the women prayers. Plate 7 shows a Woman's Guild meeting on a week day.

Plate 7: PCEA's Woman's Guild meeting in one of the villages

5.8 FINDINGS FROM CAREERISTS

5.8.1 The Question of Literacies

It was earlier mentioned that careerists in the book industry, and who were living in urban centres, were interviewed for comparative reasons. It became bare that their position as regards the subject of multiple literacies was ambivalent. This can be a bit unsettling considering that it is such experts who inform Kenya's education policy. One respondent was categorical that people in rural areas read a lot. She unfortunately said that it was a pity because the material that was available for reading by these people was either too sophisticated in language or irrelevant to them. It is for this reason that she said that she had started the vocation of simplifying research that was written, and which she deemed could be beneficial to them. She affirmed:

> *[…] I also simplify research. This is because there are people who do research in places like North Eastern and publish it, but people on the ground do not understand hard stuff. But if it is material that I consider important for such people, and which I deem can improve certain areas of their lives, I do proposals suggesting that the material is good, but requires simplification for some target group. […] You see, the people*

196

who do research are you and I. Our levels of understanding and language are different. Let's say that your research was on goat farming in Meru. You end up coming with a very good book on the topic. This is something that you and I, and anybody else at our level can understand, but what of the goat farmer in Meru? Is he able to understand that concept the way you have explained it? So you want to simplify that language to the level of primary 8 or even lower classes. Just take what is important from that research and put it down in very simple language so that that goat farmer can read it himself or if he never went to school, the grandchild can read it for him. I have verified that villagers are enlightened people who keep on learning for example, through seminars.
(S.N. 25)

The above views were expressed by a person who previously worked as a senior manager with a vibrant publishing firm, and one can deduce that her argument is sound. This is especially so when one considers that the farmers who were interviewed showed clearly that they engaged in literacies as far as they were of benefit to them. This suggests that some professionals would want farmers to read materials like fiction, yet their reading interests are different. In view of this, one can conclude that the publishers have not met these needs. In this connection, the ball is more in the court of specialists like publishers, rather than in that of ordinary Kenyans, particularly those living in rural areas, as far as the case of reading habits is concerned. The same respondent validated this when she argued:

> *[…] Thirdly, publishers are not publishing as per the requirements of their clientele because they publish for money. That is anything that can sell through the system. They don't target individuals. So if you are not a student in primary, secondary or university; you might not fit very well in their publishing programme.*
> *(S.N.25)*

One publisher confessed that they received many manuscripts for assessment, but maintained that Kenyans have poor reading habits. This observation is rather contradictory as it suggests that many Kenyans are apt to write, but not to read. It should not be forgotten that writing itself is a type of literacy. This points out to the fact that there are professionals in Kenya, who view literacy in a constricted perspective, as if it simply meant reading. This of course is understandable considering that such a standpoint obtains from the single-literacy model, which views reading as only beneficial to people's cognition, while ignoring its social parameters.

5.8.2 Literacy Campaigns and Children

The study brought to the fore the fact that careerists only promoted reading habits among children. They did this through weekly reading tents for example, during holidays. Their views can be summed up by a librarian who expressed her role in promoting reading culture as follows:

> *I was involved in promotion of reading habits before I became a student, but I'm now less involved. We organised reading weeks in Egerton [university]. We got school children competing in writing poems and reading, and then awarded them. We also had talks with other people from the academia. Some teachers picked up the idea of libraries, while some confessed that they never had libraries in their schools. We brainstormed and soon, some were talking about starting libraries. I have also talked with teachers on the need to start libraries in their schools, not exactly the modern ones, but at least on the need to set up some structures as a resource.*
>
> *(S.N. 26)*

The foregoing quotation shows that specialists are wont to promote reading, while ignoring other modes of literacies like writing, arithmetic, written texts-oralisation and participant observation, which were found to be common among Murugi villagers literacies.

In the meantime, a senior editor with a publishing firm confirmed that their target audience in the publishing firm were mainly students. ''So when we publish, we know whether we are publishing for pupils in the lower primary school, pupils in upper primary school, or whether we are publishing for adolescents, so it's guided by market research.'' The irony is that it is the same scholars who claim that there is dearth of reading habits in Kenya as far as adults are concerned. This was also found to be the case with an initiator of one library in a village in rural Kenya. While he justified his idea by claiming that he wanted children to have a book collection close to them, unlike in his childhood when he used to walk for 10 kilometres to town to look for books, the fact is that adults have still been cut out by his initiative. Plate 8 shows village children participating in a reading competition in a makeshift rural library, which pioneered through studying on canoes in Lake Victoria, an initiative of one the careerists who was interviewed.

Plate 8: Children in a reading competition in a makeshift library

The research found out that in such an event, adults were only observers as a result of some improper mentality that literacy is a children or students affair, while adults are only supposed to give support. This is a serious matter with regard to literacy in Kenya, where there is tendency to promote it solely among children, thus pupils and students in

educational institutions. This ties very well with Murugi villagers argument that they did not practise literacy since it was a matter of formal schooling.

5.8.3 The National Book Week

Some promoters of reading habits were critical of the annual National Book Week, which they claimed was elitist. This implies that reading is somewhat classified as an urban and elitist undertaking as was evinced by events that took place in the 2007 Book Week in Kenya. This point was supported by a careerist, who doubles as a fiction writer.

> *The Nairobi book fair has a bigger attendance than similar fairs in the country. It is well publicized, people get to know it, and it attracts the international audience, who go to see what has been produced in the last one year because other people may have more value for books than the local audience. They also have managed to create activities around it […] they have talks on books, book readings, poetry recitals, dances and songs around this. The Sarit Centre [where the fair is normally held in Nairobi] has dining halls, coffee places, restaurants, hotels, and therefore, it is quite a catchment area. […] Yes, it is elitist. First, Nairobi as the capital of this country is elitist since it is far from most of the people of this country. Even the schools attending are elitist and are generally high cost, hardly do you find pupils from Kibera or Korogocho [slums] coming to the fair. How do we solve this? We don't take book fairs to the rural areas where we have people who should be encouraged to read.*
> *(S.N. 30)*

In a like vein, it emerged that that the Book Week which is geared towards the promotion of reading habits in Kenya is a lacklustre activity. During the National Book Week in September 2007, there was nothing conspicuous about book promotion for example, in some major towns in Kenya. This was a pale shadow of the type of advertisements and promotion material that would have littered the towns had there been

a political rally, gospel crusade or pop music extravaganza. In one book fair in a major town, there were stands for publishers who exhibited their books. However, there was no particular activity geared towards literacy except for some speeches, which were delivered by personnel from the Ministry of Education. Intriguingly, there was a lot of entertainment by school children and other performing artists, though there was elaborate failure to reconcile the entertainment component with the reading theme. Plate 9 shows some of the entertainments that were in the repertoire during the National Book Week in 2007 in some towns, and which never tied with the theme of the book fair.

Plate 9: Entertainment at a Book Fair in September, 2007

It also emerged that some of those who went to offer entertainment in the fair were lured with tokens, yet the motivation to promote reading should have come out of people's own volition. Though some organisers argued that there was a link between the activities that took place and book-reading; from an observer's point of view, there was definitely no relationship. Additionally, the Book Week was expected to serve members of the public, whose attendance was however, only a fraction. It was a disgrace to find staff in one public library being called upon to beef up the audience for the fair in one town in

2007. The organisers however, attributed all this to lack of funds, an explanation that left a lot to be desired.

The same organisers appeared to contradict themselves when they were unanimous that the Book Week had achieved very little since its inception in that particular locality. One of the respondents had this to say about the Book Week.

> *We have a book fair in Njoro, which is called the reading week, very poorly attended. I attended it last week when the Nairobi Book Fair was going on, and found it disturbing. I'm asking whether our book fairs are the appropriate forum for exposing our books. People don't just come to look at books; you have to generate activities on books that will attract audience. The book fair here is only a display of books, followed by a ceremony that is characterised by boring speeches purporting to encourage people to read, but hardly do we get to the nitty-gritty of reading. I don't see reading taking place, we may have some songs here and there by primary school kids, and that is it. So we need to reinvent this book fair if we need to create activities that will attract an audience. How we are going to do this, I don't know.*
> *(S.N. 30)*

5.8.4 Careerists on Literacies

Faced with the fact that fieldwork had shown that villagers read such literature as religious material unlike fiction, some careerists asserted that that was shallow reading. They also branded it as literacy of convenience which does not help much.

> *But reading of convenience makes us so linear, we are not diversified, it is narrow. We are not informed about events in other areas. We are not competent enough to comment on them or handle them. And even when we get information from other areas, we ignore it. That's reading of convenience, but it is very common today.*
> *(S.N.26)*

Another professional also argued that the religious strand of literacy, which is prevalent among the villages is only read from a narrow perspective. The research unearthed that in view of careerists, reading was the beginning and the end of all literacy. It is for this reason that some of them were averse to the idea of New Literacy Studies approach, as captured in the term 'literacies.' "I would like to take this as a kind of academic mumbo jumbo. Well, I've been out of this for some time, but to draw such a dichotomy [between literacy and literacies] for me is a bit hazy. I just know literacy myself." Such comments indicate that careerists, who sometimes double as policy makers may have a blinkered perception of literacy, eliciting concern over their competence in advising for example, on the question of multiple literacies or education policy.

5.9 Conclusion

This chapter has focused on data analysis and offered a presentation of results in respect to research questions. It has revealed that multiple literacies were found to be in common use in Murugi villages. However, it has been reported that they were etched on socioeconomic activities and were somewhat invisible. It was reported that evidence of this was the farmers sales cards, health forms, invitation cards, letters, meetings-minutes or utility texts. The section has also reported that literacies are practised in a number of modes including arithmetic, oralisation of written material, participant observation, reading, writing, and in a multilingual ambience. It has been demonstrated that the domains of multiple literacies are indefinite unlike in formal schooling. It was further made bare that multiple literacies have a bearing on people's ages and levels of education. Finally, the chapter has dissected the views of careerists in relation to multiple literacies. An explanation was fronted that some of them do not recognize multiple literacies, suggesting that their view of literacy could be constricted. This has been fronted as a worrying standpoint, putting into account that professionals also double as government advisers in policymaking, occasionally.

CHAPTER 6

6.0 CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

In the conclusion chapter, several issues are raised. At the beginning, there is a summary of all the chapters of the dissertation. In view of this, the study's background, inspiration and objectives are recapitulated. Additionally, the study's relationship to the situation of language in Kenya, and the debate over literacy and literacies are also recapped. The section revisits the methodology that was used in the research and the results that were obtained, in a summary. Finally, there is an interpretation of the results and a proffering of recommendations, especially with a view to revitalising multiple literacies in the country.

6.2 Summary of the Chapters

In chapter 1, it was clarified that after Kenya became independent in 1963, it mounted serious literacy campaigns to make the people literate. This objective was in tandem with UNESCO's (1953) purpose of eliminating illiteracy, which was deemed as an index of poverty. It was elucidated that while the government efforts have proved fruitful in literacy education, scholars have expressed fears to the effect that the literate could ossify into illiterates, for failure to continue reading after formal schooling. It was highlighted that such fears are borne of the single-model of literacy, which holds that there is a causative link between literacy and psychosocial development. The chapter raised the argument that such a standpoint fails to acknowledge the fact that people who are out of formal schooling could be involved in other literacy practices, which may be somewhat different from those of the school. This contention brought to fore the question of literacies as espoused in New Literacy Studies by the likes of Street (1988), Barton (1991) or Lankshear and Knobel (2006).

It was demonstrated that the concept of literacies denotes a departure from the school literacy paradigmatically and ontologically. In view of this, it was spelt out that there is a

shift in the understanding of literacy from that which is solely school-based, to that which is premised on an array of social realms. Additionally, it was mentioned that there is a shift in the ways of practising literacies in contradistinction with the practices of the formal literacy. It was revealed that in the New Literacy Approach, literacy is not simply reading and writing, but instead it is what people do with a range of text-related components such as at the community level. The chapter made it clear that it is by taking cognisance of the multiple approaches to literacy that there was inspiration to investigate usage of literacies in Murugi village, in rural Kenya. The objective was to find out whether ex-student villagers practised multiple literacies, and if so, how the practices were carried out, their goals, as well as their domains.

Chapter 2 addressed language policy in Kenya. It mentioned that the policy is integral to the study of literacy and literacies. It was explained that Kenya is both multilingual and multinational, whereby there are dominant and minor languages. The dominant languages were distinguished as English and Kiswahili, plus other local languages with high populations of users. As for English and Kiswahili, their preponderance was said to be accentuated by their status as co-official languages, not to forget that English was documented to be the medium of instructions in schools. Minor languages were manifested as those used exclusively by people comprising of low populations. The question of dominant versus minor languages was revealed as tallying quite well with the concepts of literacy and literacies, considering that one of the definitions of literacies captures minor or invented languages.

The language situation in the country was shown to have a basis in history. This was attributed to several important epochs such as the Arab reign in the East African Coast, the British colonial era and the post-colonial era. The Arab reign was presented as having had a bearing on the spread of Kiswahili in East Africa, while the British colonial period was pointed out as the genesis of the fluid language policy hitherto prevalent in Kenya. The chapter demonstrated that language and dialect enumeration in Kenya remains a hazy and controversial issue. This is as a result of political, inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic persuasions. These factors were also fronted as some of the issues that

militated against a clear language policy, alongside multilingualism and the spatial distribution of people in the country.

It was elaborated that as a result of the unclear language policy, the arms of government, arts and media tend to be a disservice to the majority of the people. It was clarified that the organs are tilted in favour of English, a language that is barely understood by a quarter of the population (Ogechi 2002). In spite of this situation, the chapter aptly demonstrated that Kenyans have not passively acquiesced to the disparate language situation. It was shown that they negotiate with dominant languages through linguistic configurations like code-switching, code-mixing or through evolution of argots like Sheng and Engsh. The negotiation between languages was pointed out as corresponding to the type of mediation that was documented as taking place between formal literacy and multiple literacies in chapter 3.

Chapter 3 reviewed literature that was relevant to the study. It focused on the contentions of the exponents of single-literacy and multiple literacies models. The single-literacy model was shown to be premised on behaviourism paradigm, in which case literacy is espoused as having a causative link to psychology. Conversely, it was explained that the multiple literacies model is hinged on a social and multifaceted approach to literacy, whereby literacy is best viewed as a variety of practices. It was evinced how exponents of the multiple literacies model contest the causative link between literacy and development, through the argument that other corollaries play an important role. It was reported that it is in view of this that proponents of the multiple-literacy model elect that literacy is an enabling factor, and not a causative one to development.

The literacies proponents were also presented as arguing that even the single-literacy model is social in the sense that it is couched in political and ideological underpinnings, and that it is an agent of inequality between those who are successful or not, in it. In view of this, it was argued that the single-literacy and multiple-literacy models can be considered in the matrix of dominant and marginal literacies. It was articulated that unlike in the debate between the proponents of the two models, among villagers there

was mediation of the two versions since formal literacy informed villagers literacies in a strong way. The chapter also offered a historical review of this debate from the documented differences between humans and anthropoids brains, the literate and non-literate, orality and literacy, and the correlation between literacy and psychosocial developments.

The debate notwithstanding, it was mentioned that it is the single-model of literacy that has informed education policies in most of the world, Kenya inclusive; since multiple literacies are ignored or remain invisible. The chapter also highlighted the views of Kenyan scholars on how the literate are bound to relapse into illiteracy for failure to continue reading after formal schooling. It was argued that such scholars criticism of poor reading habits among ex-students are borne of the fact that the earlier could be oblivious to the fact that ex-students involve themselves in other literacies, which could be different from book-reading. The chapter made it elaborate that there is a connection between literacy and literacies putting into account that formal literacy was voiced as a prerequisite for ex-students literacies.

Chapter 4 gave an account of the methodology that was used during fieldwork. It explained that the research, which was ethnographic was conducted in Murugi location, Maara district, Kenya. It was demonstrated that it involved triangulation whereby several research methods were used. These included in-depth interviews, literacy diaries, field notes, field documents and participant observation. It was clarified that data was organised, coded and subjected to data summary charts and thematic matrices to capture it in relation to the methods that were used to source it. It was explained that there was also discounting of data, after which a storyline was garnered, ultimately laying the ground for data analysis.

Chapter 5 presented data analysis and results. It showed that data analysis also involved triangulation in terms of various data corpuses, qualitative and quantitative methods, and in regard to respondents as either villagers or careerists in urban centres. In view of research question 1, the chapter brought to light the existence of multiple literacies in the

villages, which were however documented as being invisible to the government, educational agents and scholars. The chapter presented communal, economic, leisure and media literacies and their strands as prevalent in the villages. The evidence of these literacies was elicited from letters, invitations, meetings-minutes, health forms, personal notebooks, farmers sales cards and utility texts.

Regarding research question 2, the chapter showed that there were several ways of practising literacies. These included arithmetic, participant observation, reading, writing, and written-texts oralisation. The section also presented the finding that the literacies were done in a multilingual ambience, whereby Meru, Kikuyu, Kiswahili and English were used. Nonetheless, it was revealed that use of language was faced with challenges like lack of orthography in some cases, which by extension presented problems pertaining to pronunciation and writing. In cases where Kiswahili and English were used for writing, there was evidence of 'incorrect' grammar, which was deduced to be either a deficiency or a challenge to the dominant languages by the minor languages.

With respect to question 3, the chapter reported that literacies were not used with any targeted gain. Instead, they were used as a means to achieving some benefits, and in this case, they were never the villagers priority from the outset. The results showed that literacies were used as means to carry out audit and to realise individual or communal gains such as money, good health or spiritual fulfilment. In connecton to research question 4, the chapter revealed that villagers literacies had no particular domains, but were practised hither and thither in the home, church, roadside, farm, forest edge, police station or in the watchman's shed.

The chapter also revealed that the villagers claimed that they did not practise literacy putting into consideration that it was the preserve of formal schooling. It was reported that literacies were found to be invariably egalitarian and non-competitive unlike in formal schooling. Nonetheless, the chapter brought to light that the literacies were challenged by a number of factors such as humble living conditions and people's energy-drain for engaging heavily in socioeconomic activities. The section further reported

some outcomes with respect to literacies and variables. It articulated that those in the middle ages engaged more in literacies than the older or younger lot. Likewise, it was documented that the higher the educational level, the more the engagement in literacies among the villagers. This was found to be the case because villagers tended to award formal education a high premium, especially in literacy activities such as oralisation of English material to Meru. However as regards gender and literacies, it was explained that there was equilibrium.

Chapter 5 also presented the findings from the careerists. It showed that their position in regard to the question of multiple literacies was ambivalent. While some of them acknowledged the presence of literacies in some sections of the country, others were scornful and dismissive of them. The section reported that some careerists indicted policy makers for giving multiple literacies a short shrift for instance, in the promotion of reading which targeted students alone. The publishers were also charged for the bias of churning out students books at the expense of non-students.

6.3 Interpretation of the Results and Recommendations

6.3.1 Literacy and Literacies

Deriving from the findings of the research were several deductions, which necessitated some recommendations. Foremost, the research revealed that former students among the villagers continue with multiple literacies. This disproves some scholars contention that all former students in Kenya are bound to reverse into illiteracy for failure to continue reading. In this case, it emerged that Murugi villagers literacy standards were not declining after formal schooling, but were diversifying, a factor that is yet to be appreciated by many people. The standpoint of the critics of poor reading habits after formal schooling shows that they inadvertently or willingly fail to acknowledge the existence of multiple literacies, which could be specific to given contexts as the case of Murugi reveals, while generalising poor literacy practices for the whole Kenya. This position smacks of an insular perception of literacy in which case it is taken as reading of some particular literature, unfortunately a premise that is empirically anomalous.

This dissertation recommends that all the people and agencies involved in literacy activities in Kenya reconceptualise their understanding of literacy. Just as Graff (1987) states, there is need to reconstruct literacy in order to highlight how, when, where, why, and to whom it is transmitted. This way, it will be possible to acknowledge and support multiple literacies as important basis of knowledge, just as formal schooling is. While taking into consideration Pardoe's (2000) caution that the concept of literacies could be viewed as being rather relativistic, there is need to tease out what is important in this relativism. This will go a long way in helping to theorize and understand knowledge from an emic point of view, rather than wait for packages on education from some regions of the world on a top-down axis. This way, it will be possible to conceptualise literacy from specific communities repertoire amid alien parameters that are used as the standard.

By recognizing literacies as valuable tasks also, it will be possible to harness and revitalise creativity and home-grown innovations, which are otherwise trashed when the earlier are ignored. Examples of such inventions were outlined as Osmaniya's type of writing in Somali or the writings of Nigeria's Joshua Oshitelu. It is possible to take cue from orature which was scorned for a long time as unimportant, but was later incorporated in literary studies, consequently providing a valuable epistemological resource. Through it, it became possible to harness people's oral literary exploits, enriching the field of literature in a wide range.

There is need to take into consideration the fact that New Literacy Studies does not interrogate the traditional mode of literacy just for the sake of opposition, but to make bare the value of what this model has ignored through its universalization approach. Granted, it is such interrogation that will provide relevant literacy practices to some countries, especially in the developing world. While the single-literacy model has been in place from colonial times, its fruits are yet to be yielded by the masses (Bogonko 1992). However, going by the findings from Murugi villagers, the multiple-literacy model could prove the sure way to go in providing relevant education to people, deriving from their circumstances, while also embracing relevant models from the rest

of the world. So far, institutionalisation of education in Kenya has failed to harness community practices which impinge on lifelong learning, and unless this is done, the perspective of Kenyan education could remain linear.

Interrogation of hegemonic and prevalent order is now more of the rule than the reserve. For example, English has been the language of instruction in many countries, but today, the world is questioning the case of Standard English amid regional 'Englishes' (Jenkins, Modiano, Seidlhofer 2001). Accordingly, the concern becomes 'which English for our situation?' Kalantzis and Cope (2000) and Nakata (2000) also show that pedagogical issues are receiving a shift. By addressing the phenomenon of multiple literacies, scholars are interrogating the current pedagogical systems and proffering that there is need for change in order to reflect and keep abreast with the contemporary world. A shift in formal literacy whereby multiple literacies are taken on board is long overdue in Kenya, going by the findings of the research.

It would pay dividends to acknowledge multiple literacies as a way of checking dependency syndrome. It was observed that Mazrui and Mazrui (1995) argue that reliance on European languages for African values accentuates the dependency condition. To date, Kenya continues to rely on foreign aid in spite of efforts to make the country self sustaining economically, socially and politically. In view of this, one can argue that continued reliance on Western packages such as of literacy, while feigning a blind eye to people-centric literacies, can only accelerate the rate of dependency. This is both inimical and anomalous putting into account that lay people such as Murugi villagers could be attempting to check such dependency knowingly or unknowingly, efforts which are nonetheless spurned as inconsequential vernacular.

Contrariwise, evolving education packages from the West are treated as the standard and the quintessential. This is a pointer to failure to believe in local potentiality and prowess in the face of foreign products, definitely a worrying mentality. Street (1995) convincingly argues that instead of holding onto the cliché regarding how literacy affects people, it would be prudent to take a different tack and ask how people affect

literacy. In view of this, it is incumbent upon the Kenyan government and agents to find the confluence between literacies and formal literacy, and allocate each its due and appropriate status. The subsequent section proposes some measures for realising this.

It behoves researchers, scholars, agencies and policy makers to acknowledge literacies because they are the ones that seem to propagate lifelong learning even after formal education. This would broaden the perception of literacy into a more contemporary and broader perspective as captured in its social theory, rather than perceive it in a clichéd and narrow ambience. After all, the findings showed that multiple literacies are a forum for continued learning. For example, it was mentioned that while many villagers in Murugi left school without the knowledge of writing meetings-minutes, they ended up learning this from fellow villagers. One respondent even stated that she was engaged in teaching members of her self help group to record all their activities in minutes.

The results showed that in spite of the single-literacy model being a colonial legacy in Kenya, it has a lot to do with bodies like UNESCO which have tendered it as a method of checking poverty. While the efforts and nobility of such bodies cannot be gainsaid, it is incumbent on them to rethink their position as regards education, especially in countries where formal literacy has proved a success. To this end, they need to consider broadening their scope of literacy to incorporate evolving trends in the realm. Thus, agencies like UNESCO can cause a turn around in multiple literacies if they embraced them as complementary to school literacy, consequently helping in harnessing ex-students learning resources in their daily circumstances. Such efforts would further see to it that literacies are recognised and boosted, and freed from their marginalisation status.

This research unearthed the practice of multiple literacies in villages in a section of rural Kenya, which were however documented as being ignored by the government and all agents involved in education in the country. This is understandable as it has already been shown that there is a proclivity to reify school-based learning at the expense of out-of-literacies. By recognising literacies, agencies and policy makers can help to sustain and

maintain literacy skills acquired during schooling for their usage in out-of-school situations. It is no longer enough to mount literacy campaigns among non-literates only to ignore the skills of the newly literate as this would prove a defeatist cause.

6.3.2 Literacy and Education Policies

The findings of the research show that there is a limitation with the Kenyan education policy, whereby formal literacy is reified as one, and the only way of learning. For example, Murugi villagers do not appreciate their multiple literacies as any form of literacy since they are indoctrinated that literacy can only take place in a formal school set up. This is a drawback because they cannot develop their local literacies much, holding that they are inferior to dominant literacy. This is a glaring weakness in the country's education system, whereby important learning activities are marginalised.

Additionally, the education system is wanting for treating formal literacy as a means to an end. Taking cue from this line of reasoning, it can be surmised that students are sent to school, but once they are through, literacy is deemed to stop. This philosophy has been internalised by teachers, students and parents, in which case students are in a hurry to finish schooling in order to acquire plum jobs. The thinking that is propagated through this education system is that when one is out of school or when one has started working, it is tantamount to bidding farewell to literacy. No wonder respondents criticised the research claiming that it had forced them to engage in literacy for example, in the filling up of diaries. However, the results were at variance with such claims as they showed that ex-student villagers participated in multiple literacies.

Taking cognisance of the fact that the formal Kenyan education has some limitations, it would be prudent to offer that it calls for a review. One can only agree with Street (1994) and Hornberger (1994) assertions that there is need to think about literacy policy, just as the question of language policy is treated in most countries. The implications of each policy need to be clearly distinguished and made explicit. In this case, there is need to have a broad-based education policy which will include literacy and language

policies. Accordingly, the government ought to continue to support formal education, but at the same time recognize and support multiple literacies that could be in existence in the country. The literacy policy calls for support rhetorically, politically and financially. To this end, multiple literacies can be recognized and could prove a boon for those who are through with formal schooling, and who are not likely to continue with book-reading.

Going by the findings in Murugi also, a broad-based literacy policy is urgent to check the undue attention that is sometimes made over wanting reading habits, while ignoring other equally important literacies. It therefore becomes crucial to tap from both Western and indigenous-based types of education in order to a have a hybrid of the two. The two should exist in a symbiotic relationship, where Western education is emphasised in formal schooling as is the case today, while multiple literacies are underscored in their various contexts, especially after formal schooling as a way of ensuring lifelong learning. This needs to be captured and stressed in both education and literacy policies. To achieve this, it is essential that further research on the types of literacies that could be common among ex-students in various parts of the country be conducted as a way of coming up with a comprehensive and context-specific literacy policy.

Education, literacy and language policies require points of convergence and divergence. While education policy could handle the school curriculum mainly, the literacy and language policies could tackle literacy matters in and out- of- school. The literacy policy would have the advantage of considering cultural, social, economic, political and historical contexts of the literacies being developed. This way, it will be possible to flesh out which literacy is being resourced and for what purposes. For instance, instead of continuing to approach literacy from the traditional psychological approaches alone, it would pay off to bring on board more contemporary theories such as the social theory of literacy.

It would be advisable to make the literacy policy broad enough to include the emerging technological trends in the literacies realm. Lankshear and Knobel (2006) were

referenced as showing that one way of understanding literacies has to do with the dynamic and rapidly evolving technological arena. In the light of this, it would be prudent for the literacy policy to take on board computer technology with all its literacy manifestations such as the email, surfing, blogging, twitter, skype and so forth. Alongside these, it is imperative to consider more use of the video or film, which the research showed were useful in villagers literacies, especially in the dissemination of knowledge on health matters such as HIV/AIDS.

While some schools in Kenya have embraced computer technology in their curriculum, this cannot be said to have been informed by any governmental policy as such. This is because there are many schools particularly in rural Kenya that are yet to own a computer, let alone use it for studies. However, the findings indicated that computer literacy is occasionally part and parcel of the villagers literacies since they use it to process materials like meetings-minutes, letters or invitation cards. It would therefore be practical to consider the evolving technology in a newly-formulated literacy policy in order to improve both school and out-of-school literacies, rather than leave the technology as a further exclusionist tool between those who have it and those who do not have it.

Such a policy could further be designed in such a way that services and facilities like computers, printing machines, libraries, simulated farms or agricultural shows are brought closer to the people, consequently ridding them of their prevailing status as reserves of urban and district headquarters. The facilities require regularisation and good programming so that rural people can benefit from them often. A case in point would be the regularisation of agricultural education through simulated farms, field trips or agricultural shows. These could be buttressed by technological literacy such as films and videos, which disseminate knowledge on soil and animal husbandry or health education. Otherwise, the research results showed that such facilities were irregular and detached from the villagers in regard to spatial distribution.

This will be a step in the right direction in making the education system in the country truly people-centric, rather than an agent of inequality between the successful and the non-successful in school, as the research established. Such a measure will be consistent with the educational objectives of the post-independent Kenya as is discernible from several commissions which were instituted after self rule to find out the wishes of the people for the education sector. However, as mentioned earlier, the recommendations of such commissions have only been implemented half-heartedly considering that Kenyan education remains a 'foreign' imposition in view of many students realities. It should not be forgotten that multiple literacies at the community level build up on the dignity and cultural awareness of the people, leading to their empowerment.

The research findings revealed that people do not practise literacy such as reading for the sake of it, but as a means to realising something else. In this case, for people to continue to engage in lifelong literacy after formal schooling, the literacy policy needs to be modelled in such a way that literacies are recognized as means to achieving socioeconomic benefits in agriculture, health, spirituality or in a nutshell, the needs of the people. Their reading, writing, arithmetic, participant observation and text-oralisations call for configuration around these literacy practices. This way, the interests of lay people could be taken on board in literacy programmes as well as in indigenous methods of knowledge production. This is exactly where emphasis should be laid rather than urge people to keep practising literacy activities such as reading fiction, which apparently do not add immediate value to their socioeconomic realities.

While this study was not hinged on school-based learning, it has also interrogated incessant calls to ex-students to inculcate a reading culture, whose authors however fail to explore and understand the types of literacies that would be relevant for the earlier. The findings showed that the government and policymakers have little room for multiple literacies as their perception of literacy is hinged on the single-literacy model. This research exhorts the need to correct the misleading metaphors and representations of literacy that have so far been dominant in the Kenyan education system. The research results showed that there are learning ways which derive from out-of-school systems,

and which do not rely on the school curriculum. These comprise of an array of activities that people acquire in their daily lives, out of their own experiences, and which are in tandem with their needs and aspirations.

It was earlier stated that the Kenyan education system has since independence obtained from the single-literacy model. However, this literacy seems to foster inequality in access to education, in wealth distribution and between the successful and the non-successful (Bogonko 1992). It is arguable that the 8-4-4 education system which was started in 1985 had one of its goals as ridding school-based learning its uneven nature, though this became a cropper when politics undermined it. In spite of its objective to make it tally with the realities of the country's pupils, it left a lot to be desired. The system continues to engender disproportionate status between the elite and the masses, and between the successful students and the non-successful ones. By extension, the imbalance continues to be reflected between the developed countries and the developing ones.

In addition, a reference was earlier made to Chakava (1988), who asserted that the Western type of education which was imposed in many developing countries was individualistic, yet for situations like those of Africa, people tended to prefer communal-centred activities. The communality of literacies was validated by the research when it was found out that Murugi villagers participated in them on societal basis such as in agriculture, church or health ventures. In this connection, multiple literacies were found to be not only anchored on people's daily realities, but also classless. In view of this, recognition of multiple literacies through a governmental policy will be one sure way of redressing the imbalance that is propagated by formal literacy. After all, the findings revealed that literacies are domestic and egalitarian among the villagers just as the songs, dances or the art of narration.

It was also mentioned that Ngugi wa Thiong'o states that his novel *Caitani Mutharabaini* (Devil on the Cross) was read communally, where one person read it out to groups of listeners at workers lunch breaks or in drinking bars. Putting this into

perspective, a literacy policy can be a further way of checking disparity that is engendered by the current education policy by clipping it its exclusionist status. However, there is need to note that if multiple literacies are not used with a clear, salvaging objective, they can fail to break the education lopsidedness by continuing to buttress the dominant ideology, just as formal literacy can do.

6.4 Reconciliation of Literacy and Literacies Models

While there has been polarity between the exponents of the single and multiple-literacy models, for Kenya; such polarity will not yield good results. Accordingly, there is need to reconcile the two models in order to realise benefits from both. A good case in point of such reconciliation was pointed out in the disputation that involved Njuri Ncheke. The institution was found to reconcile indigenous knowledge and modern science when Njuri elders allowed that the parentage of the child under dispute be determined through DNA, instead of using the traditional method of the vow ritual. Similar negotiation was reported as taking place between orality and literacy such as in the church or in communal functions. Such reconciliations stand to offer a total synergy for the good of the people and country.

It was also found out that the minutes were written in English by one person, though their contributions were made by all members orally. Additionally, the same minutes were oralised to the members and discussed in Meru in the subsequent meetings. Such negotiation between school and village literacies should be promoted and strengthened as it is bound to yield a hybrid of results from both, instead of giving the latter a short shrift. In any case, realms such as dominant and minor languages or literacy and literacies showed a strong mediation among themselves, and all this can only be boosted by formulating an official policy for literacies as already recommended.

Just was revealed about the question of reading, writing and language usage in general; it is common not to stick to any laid down conventions in multiple literacies. Using the standard literacy model, this can be adjudged as failure. However, it was mentioned that

scholars also advise that defiance of the norm be seen either as mediation or contestation against the dominant. If the multiple literacies model is harnessed in the proposed literacy policy, such negotiation may prove a boon. Instead of pigeonholing people to follow a set criterion in view of the single-literacy model as is the case in schools, such negotiation may prove handy in both creativity and invention. It would enhance the adaptation of Western education to local situations, consequently enriching people's identities and epistemologies in an isomorphic arrangement.

6.5 Literacy Campaigns

Results revealed that there is tendency to promote literacy among school going students, while ignoring adults who are out of school. This promotion was shown to be done by the government through the Ministry of Education, publishers, librarians, non-governmental organisations or even by individual initiatives of such people like scholars in the annual National Book Week, reading tents or seasonal reading festivals. The findings showed that such promotion was wanting as it failed to reach out to adults who would be role models for children. The question is this: why have all these players ignored the adults?

There could be a sound argument that children are the future readers and therefore, they are the ones who should be targeted by reading campaigns. This is however, anomalous because adults need to be incorporated in the realm of lifelong education if a good literacy culture is to be realised in Kenya. Role-modelling for children as far as literacy is concerned would best be demonstrated by parents and other adults, but if this was lacking, children might not have very good reasons for engaging in literacy practices when they are out of school. It was reported that an ex-publisher indicted publishers for not catering for the interests of the people who were outside the school system in their programming.

At the same time, literacy promotion activities like the National Book Week could be made more relevant and focused in objective. One can only agree with an interviewee

who observed that the Book Week requires reinvention. Instead of restricting book fairs to urban centres as the research established, it would pay off to avail them to people in rural areas also. To add to this, the results showed that such promotions become irrelevant as the carnival of songs, dances and administrators speeches steal the show. It was reported that in a number of cases, they do not capture the theme of literacy promotion, while participants were found unable to reconcile the fanfare with literacy. The literacy campaigns need to be made broad enough to incorporate multiple literacies among ex-students, while making them more relevant in objective. Additionally, the relevance of the material being promoted requires rethinking. For example, there is tendency to promote school texts and fiction for a particular class of people, while ignoring the interests of people like the rural folk in subjects like farming, religion and health.

6.6 Professionals

It has already been stated that it is professionals who inform both language and educational policies in Kenya. Going by the views of the careerists who were interviewed for comparative purposes in the research, it would be correct to claim that their position regarding literacy in the country is a cause for concern. Foremost and with all due respect, some of the professionals views characterised them as people who live in ivory towers with little knowledge of practices of literacy in such places as villages in rural Kenya. They for example, stated that Kenyans have poor reading habits, a postulation that was proved to be a gross generalization by this research. This can be understood because they tended to view literacy from a psychological perspective just as in formal schooling. It is no wonder that some of them heaped scorn on the idea of multiple literacies. Such careerists require a reorientation of their standpoints to at least keep abreast with evolving trends of education not only in Kenya, but in the world at large. This is the only way they can remain relevant advisers to government policies in their capacity as holders of past, contemporary and dynamic ideas.

The findings showed vividly that what might be noticeable among the villagers were social events like church activities, weddings, agricultural activities, land disputes or business. However, as was earlier articulated, when these activities were unpacked, they exhibited a rich resource of situated literacies. This is something that education policy makers in Kenya, the government and agents are yet to acknowledge as existing. This is a pointer to the fact that policy makers and professionals may be detached from the realities on the ground as far as the question of multiple literacies is concerned. Both government and its agencies require sensitization through a research like this to the effect that the realm of literacy transcends school education. It is only by acknowledging flaws with the prevailing conceptualisation of literacy that it is possible to expand the policy's latitude to capture multiple literacies too.

The careerists and similar agents approach to literacy is also questionable. It has already been shown that in their bid to promote good reading habits, they only target children and leave out adults. The professionals approach is academic and elitist as was evinced by the sophisticated book fairs. The findings are in concordance with Bassey (1994), who argues that Western education in Africa is divisionary as far as the highly learned and the masses are concerned. It is therefore important that the gap between professionals and lay people with respect to literacy be bridged by recognising multiple literacies in their contexts for the benefit of both, and the nation of Kenya at large. This can be realised through acknowledgement of the existence of literacies by the professionals, which they could in turn support through their literacy campaign programmes.

The government, and by extension policy makers, should also broaden their thinking and understanding of the concept of literacy. There is need to acknowledge the fact that the monolithic view of literacy has been interrogated in the last few decades and found to be wanting. Accordingly, it would be in order to keep abreast with the evolving concepts of literacy in various contexts in the world. For a long time, the understanding of literacy has been limited to a single variable as informed by the single-model of literacy.

However, this research has vividly shown that literacy is not a single entity, but multiple entities as evinced by both formal literacy and multiple literacies.

6.7 Publishing

It has been observed that if the nation of Kenya is keen on coming up with an education system that is lifelong, it needs to bring on board literacies that are practised by ex-students in various contexts. This could be preceded by a survey that aims to show what type of literacies different people in various localities engage in so that they can be propped up. The findings revealed that while publishers would like all ex-students to continue reading fiction for example, this may be incongruent with the interests of the latter, which are instead based on fields like agriculture, Christianity or health matters. The publishers could redress this situation by producing relevant reading materials for various categories of readers, including those of ex-students who are involved in multiple literacies. It was mentioned that one of the former editors in a robust publishing firm in East Africa charged the publishing firms for failure to target non-students in their programmes. This is exclusionist publishing, and publishers worth their salt should crave to cater for various categories of clients, instead of publishing potboilers for students alone.

Publishers would promote literacy pretty well by broadening their audience through the production of relevant materials for multiple literacies. This would also be a welcome review of the publishers means to promote literacy whereby they can avoid imposing forms of school literacy on ex-students, in the name of cultivating good reading habits. The idea should not be to promote reading alone, but literacy in the broad sense. In this case, literacy promotion should capture all text-related activities like reading, writing, arithmetic, participant observation, oralisation of written texts and so forth, which are practised by the people in different contexts. This would also help allay fears that reading campaigns are driven by the interests of people in the book industry to solely create a market for their books, without taking stock of the interests of the supposed readers (Courts 1991).

While nobody can rule out the commercial target of publishers, to fail to expand their scope by capturing the interest of a diversity of clients smacks of growth in profits and expansion, but a constraint in readership diversification. This is as a result of the fact that they are not able to factor in the interests of various people in their programme. To this end, it would be important to come up with a publishing policy which is people-friendly as far as literacies are concerned, and hopefully capture and support the needs and interests of both students and non-students in various realities. This way, it can support literacies such as in the production of religious, health or agricultural literature in line with the needs of various people in different contexts. In other words, the programme needs to be partly people-centred and not solely an imposition of a type of school syllabus on them.

6.8 Socioeconomic Factors

The research findings revealed that literacies among villagers are affected by socioeconomic factors like poor housing, low income, logistics or the energy-sapping, income-generating chores of the people. It is also an established fact that these factors impinge negatively on formal literacy. This implies that there is a strong connection between economics, school literacy and multiple literacies. In the light of this, there is need to uplift the standards of the people. Right now, the government of Kenya is envisioning the country as an industrialised nation by 2030. It is incumbent upon the leadership to capture multiple literacies and empower them in the vision. Such a move and focus could go a long way in improving the living standards of the people. However, for such a vision to succeed, sectors like economy, health, education, politics and the social must be improved and safeguarded, lest they militate against the effort.

Regarding logistical problems, it emerged that for example, newspapers and magazines were only available in urban centres and that there were no libraries in the villages since they were erected in the major towns or near the highways. It is not enough to assume that all villagers cannot afford such literature for their low income. After all, it emerged that some of them buy it irregularly when they are in urban centres. For this reason, the

departments concerned ought to consider 'opening up' villages for literacies purposes. Such a move would ensure that reading materials are available in the villages, and as the research established, there is certainty that these can be read by several people through borrowing, which was found to be the norm. While it is acceptable that there can be potentiality of low purchases of articles like newspapers in the villages as a result of economic reasons, their accessibility should be encouraged such that anybody willing to buy them is not constrained by the 'closing up' of villages. Libraries can also be erected by agencies or the government, even in makeshift conditions. The library which pioneered through practices of literacies on canoes in Lake Victoria, before it earned a makeshift shelter, is a reliable leaf to buy from.

6.9 Language Policy

The findings revealed that language has a strong bearing on multiple literacies. It was explained that hitherto, Kenya suffers a clear language policy, a matter that impinges negatively on other sectors in the country. It is therefore necessary to philosophise anew about language policy in the country in order to come up with a desirable and pragmatic measure. For example, since most of the official literature is done in English, it is essential to ensure that the language is well understood and effectively used by the majority of the population. By doing so, it will rid it its exclusionist characteristics in institutions like the legislature, judiciary, executive or media; a flaw that was revealed by the research.

Considering that English has been the media of instruction in school since independence and continues to be the dividing symbol between the elite and the masses as Mazrui and Mazrui (1995) observe, it would pay off to investigate why it plays this role. In a like vein, there have been complaints by both linguists and employers about the falling standards of English language in Kenya, it supremacy in the school curriculum notwithstanding (Mazrui and Mazrui 1996, Muchiri 2002). If the language continues to fail the tests of cohesion between the elite and masses, and that of viability as a medium of instruction in the Kenyan schools, it is high time a bold move was made to accord a

language like Kiswahili more leverage in official dockets. The study showed that Kiswahili was not only egalitarian in the social cohesiveness of the people, but was a single language that was understood by majority of the population.

Where possible and if resources could allow, it would also be prudent to render important official documents like the constitution or government policies in local languages. This way, it will be possible to check linguistic alienation since the languages that most of the people are conversant with will be used for national issues. Further inquiry should be carried out to find out for example, whether making Kiswahili the medium of instruction in Kenyan schools would ensure better performance, while taking stock of the challenges of rendering the syllabus in the language. Such an investigation would also help in establishing whether the choice of Kiswahili as the language for learning in schools would clip education its elitist status, especially bearing in mind that the language is also a regional linguafranca.

The question of language policy in Kenya requires further exploration and reflection to find the importance of the mother tongue in the midst of English and Kiswahili. This is important lest there is continued marginalisation of people who do not use major languages. It was reported that Ngugi wa Thiong'o has been one of the avante garde in the use and articulation for the case of the mother tongue in writings such as of literary works, while Chinua Achebe has held the view that dominant languages like English be appropriated and used in non-standard ways in view of the African realities. UNESCO has also been crusading for usage of local languages, especially in the beginning classes of primary schooling. An inquiry into the case of the mother tongue in the country is urgent in a bid to accord it its appropriate status. It is reported elsewhere in this chapter that giving people's languages short shrifts could be recipe for the dependency syndrome.

One way of ensuring the growth and sustenance of a language besides its usage in conversation, is through writing. However, the findings of the research revealed that dialects such as Mwimbi, which was used by the respondents in the villages, and

comprising of thousands of speakers, are yet to be reduced to writing for lack of standardisation. It remains an axiom that all languages have the potential to be written down. A newly initiated literacy policy could provide resources to see to it that dialects are standardised and offered orthography. This would consequently render them viable for writing. Otherwise, just as Ngugi (1997) argues, continued indifference to such dialects could portend ill for the communities concerned since their values and heritage may fail to be well preserved for failure to record them in writing. Additionally, indigenous knowledge of the people could be endangered, yet dominant languages cannot preserve them because they are not the languages of daily use by the people.

Mazrui and Mazrui (1985) were referenced as stating that language dependency leads to a culture of reliance in other spheres, culminating in a dependency syndrome. This cannot be ruled out about the people whose dialects and languages have no written materials, and who have to depend on literature in other languages. Such dependency was found to occur in the music sector where the Meru radio stations were a surfeit of Kikuyu music just as were the Christian hymns and worship songs in a big section of the greater Meru.[59] Investigations revealed that generally, the Meru do not compose songs due to the fact that they can sing and listen to Kikuyu music. While this could be accepted as interculturalization, it becomes a problem when it is a one-way traffic. Thus, the Meru are invariably receiving from others, but are not contributing to other people's culture in turn. Such a status require remedy, otherwise it can lead to cultural degeneration and consequently, to the stultification of a people's genius.

In a like vein, lack of orthography in such dialects as Mwimbi portends ill for literacy among the people who use it. First and foremost, it was discernible that for example, there were only scanty written materials in Mwimbi dialect, implying that people are forced to read materials in other languages. A case in point was the revelation that with regard to the Bible, Murugi residents used a wide range of Bibles as far as language was concerned, ranging from English, Kiswahili, Kikuyu and Imenti. This showed that all

---

[59] Greater Meru comprises of seven districts in which the Meru people live. See chapter 4 for more information. .

the literature which is available to them is invariably in languages that they do not use in their everyday lives. This revealed that there is disparity between the language of orality and the languages of reading and writing, arguably a factor that impinges negatively on local literacies. While in some instances the case of multilingualism can be said to be a boon for the people concerned, lack of their everyday speech in writing can be a factor in stultifying literacies. This is especially so when there are people who are not well-conversant with English, Kiswahili, Kikuyu or the Imenti dialect; yet they cannot access reading material in their tongue. However, the respondents may not be conscious of such a problem, putting into perspective that they hold that literacy is school-based.

At a wider level, the situation could point out to one more factor that could be militating against a vibrant literacy culture in some sections of Kenya, bearing in mind that there are a substantial number of other languages that are not standardised. However, this is something that critics of poor reading culture among adults in the country are yet to acknowledge. It was reported that Njoroge (1990) alludes to this problem when he states that multilingualism has undermined a clear language policy in Kenya, especially in situations where differentiation of language and dialect is cumbersome. Faced with such uncertainties, the question of standardising and providing orthographies to all dialects in countries with an array of multilingual concerns appears the best way out, the challenges of such tasks notwithstanding.

In connection to Mwimbi dialect which is not standardised, it emerged that children in the locality are expected to read the Imenti dialect of Meru which is standardised in the first classes of schooling, and in which literature has already been written. However, it was shown that Mwimbi speakers preferred to read Kikuyu literature, particularly the Bible, while spurning the standardised Imenti dialect. This is a cause for concern putting into account that most of these speakers are not well conversant with Kikuyu. While it was earlier easier to ignore dialects like Mwimbi as regards standardisation for their small populations of speakers, this cannot be said to be the case any longer. The population of the dialect's speakers is growing, and it would be important to know how long such dialects should wait before they are standardised. In view of this, it is

imperative to come up with blueprints in order to standardise and reduce dialects with tens of thousands of speakers to writing. This could be a further shot in the arm for multiple literacies and lifelong reading.

6.10 Conclusion

This chapter has offered a summary of the dissertation, raised issues emerging from the results of the research and proffered some recommendations. It has exhorted that there is urgent need to recognize and reinvigorate multiple literacies in several ways. Foremost, it has been proffered that education policy should include literacy and language policies, with the functions of each being made explicit. To this end, it has been recommended that literacy and literacies need not be viewed in polarity, but as complementary since in the real, they exist in a symbiosis. In this case, it has been suggested that efforts be made to reconcile both in order to yield desirable gains from them. In addition, it has also been proffered that there is need to divest the tendency to treat school literacy as an end in itself or as an agent of the asymmetry between the successful and the non-successful. Accordingly, those who do not continue with careers that are not supported by formal schooling ought to be appreciated in regard to how they continue to use their literacy practices after formal schooling. This is important putting into view the finding that literacies facilitate lifelong learning after school.

The chapter has also advised that professionals who also double as government advisers need to reorient their position as regards literacy. This way, they will be able to recognize multiple literacies instead of continuing to pay allegiance to conventional literacy alone. Additionally, it has been suggested that publishers broaden their perspectives on literacy. In this case, they need to crave to meet the literacy needs of a variety of people, non-students inclusive; in order to cater for the interests of all, not only in publications but also in literacy campaigns.

The chapter pointed out that there is urgent need to make Kenya's language policy precise and focused. It was mentioned that this could go a long way in revitalising and

harnessing people's epistemologies and cultures, which are founded on various languages. Additionally, an elaborate and comprehensive language policy has been vouched as way of redressing linguistic alienation that is propagated by dominant languages. It has also been mentioned that for both school and out-of-school literacies to succeed, there is need to address socioeconomic hurdles that militate against them.

Robust literacy practices in Kenya have been emphasised as an important catalyst to Kenya's 2030 vision, when the country envisages attaining industrialisation status. Multiple literacies have been stressed as important in levelling exclusionist tendencies that are propagated by formal education in which case individual success is crucial, as opposed to multiple literacies where success is mainly measured in group or communal achievements. In a nutshell, the chapter has offered a summation of the dissertation amid emphasis that the government, agencies, teachers, students and parents need to take into consideration multiple literacies and buttress them for the good of the Kenyan nation, and the world at large. It is hastily added that the recommendations made are not prescriptive, fixed or ultimate; but are subject to critique and modification in order to come up with the best solutions.

REFERENCES

Abdulaziz, Mohamed and Osinde, Ken. 1997. *Sheng and Engsh in Nairobi. International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 125: 43-64.

Achebe, Chinua. 1996. "The African Writer and English Language." In: *Morning Yet on Creation Day*. Nairobi: Heinemann, 55-62.

Agar, Michael. 1992. *Speaking of Ethnography*. London: Sage Publications.

Agnihotri, Rama. 1994. "Campaign-based Literacy Programmes: The Case of Ambedkar Nagar Experiment in India." In: Barton, David (ed.) *Sustaining Local Literacies.* Clevedon: Multilingual Matters Ltd, 47-56.

Aitchison, Jean. 1991. *Language Change: Progress or Decay*? Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Altbach, Philip. 1992. "Publishing in the Third World: Issues and Trends for the 21st Century." In: Altbach, Philip (ed.) *Publishing and Development in the Third World.* Nairobi: Heinemann, 1-27.

Arnfast, Juni and Jorgensen, Norman. 2003. "Code-switching as a Communication, Learning, and Social Negotiation Strategy in First-Year Learners of Danish." In: Breivik, Leiv (ed.) *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*. Oxford: Blackwell, 23-53.

Ashcroft, Bill, Griffiths, Gareth and Tiffin, Helen. 1989. *The Empire Writes Back.* London: Routledge.

Bamgbose, Ayo. 1999. *Language and Exclusion-The Consequences of Language Policies in Africa.* London: Transaction Publishers.

Barton, David. 1991. "The Contribution of a social view of Literacy to promoting Literacy Among Adults." In: Verhoeven Ludo (ed.) *Attaining Functional Literacy.* Amsterdam: John Benjamin, Working Paper Series 30.

Barton, David. 1994a. *Literacy: An Introduction to the Ecology of Written Language*, Oxford: Blackwell.

Barton, David. 1994b. "Globalisation and Diversification: Two Opposing Influences on Local Literacies." In: Barton, David (ed.) *Sustaining Local Literacies*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 3-7.

Barton, David and Hamilton, Mary. 2000. "Literacy Practices." In: Barton, David, Hamilton, Mary and Ivanic, Roz (eds.) *Situated Literacies-Reading and Writing in Context.* London: Routledge, 7-15

Bassey, Magnus. 2004. *Western Education and Political Domination in Africa*. London: Bergin and Garvey.

Bataille, Leon. 1976. (ed.) *A Turning Point for Literacy*. Oxford: Pergamon Press.

BBC News. 2009. "Pedal Power for Kenya's Mobiles." BBC News July, 2009. http/news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/8166196.stm

BBC World Service Trust. 2008. "The Kenyan 2007 Elections and Their Aftermath: The Role of Media and Communication." In: *Policy Briefing* 1, London: April, 2008.

Bélanger, Paul. 1994. "Literacy and Literacies: Continuity and Discontinuity." In: Barton, David (ed.) *Sustaining Local Literacies*. Multilingual Matters: Clevedon, 87-94.

Beller-Hann, Idiko. 2005. *The Written and the Spoken. Literacy and Oral Transmission Among the Uyghur*. Berlin: Das Arabische Buch.

Besnier, Niko. 1989. *Literacy, Emotion and Authority*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Blommaert, Jan. 2008. *Grassroots Literacy. Writing, Identity and Voice in Central Africa*. London: Routledge.

Bogonko, Sorobea. 1992. *Reflections on Education in East Africa*. Nairobi: Oxford University Press.

Roland, J.-Breton. 2000. "Can English Be Dethroned?" In: *The UNESCO Courier*. Paris: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, April 2000, 23-24.

Brutt- Griffler, Janina. 2002. *World English. A Study of its Development*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Camitta, Miriam. 1993. "Vernacular Writing: Varieties of Literacy among Philadelphia High School Students." In: Street Brian (ed.) *Cross-cultural Approaches to Literacy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 228-246

Carson, Ben. 1992. *Think Big*. Michigan: Zondervan

Carter, Ronald. 1995. *Keywords in Language and Literacy*. London: Routledge.

Chakava, Henry. 1982. Books and Reading in Kenya. Paris: UNESCO.

Chakava, Henry. 1988. "Towards a Reading Society as a Factor in National Development." In: *Maktaba*, Journal of the Kenya National Library Association. National Book Development Seminar Report 12 (1), 61-70.

Chakava, Henry. 1998. "Book Distribution and Readership in Kenya Today." In: Buloga, A., Gitachu R., Musisi, J., Ng'ang'a, M., Weche P., and Were J. (eds.) Information for Sustainable Development in the 21st Century: Proceedings of the 13th Standing Conference of Eastern and Southern Africa Librarians. Nairobi: Kenya Library Association, 115-118.

Chimerah, Rocha. 1998. *Kiswahili- Past, Present and Future Horizons*. Nairobi: Nairobi University Press.

Classica, Studia and Burns Alfred. 1989. *The Power of the Written Word. The Role of Literacy in the History of Civilization.* New York: Peter Lang.

Collins, James and Blot, Richard. 2003. *Literacy and Literacies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Cope, Bill and Kalantzis, Mary. 2000. *Multiliteracies-Literacy Learning and the Design of Social Features*. London: Routledge.

Courts, Patrick. 1991. *Literacy and Empowerment-The Meaning Makers*. London: Bergin and Garvey.

Cunningham, Anne and Stanovitch, Keith. 1998. "What Reading Does for the Mind. In: American Educator/ American Federation of Teachers. Spring-Summer, 1-8.

Dey, Ian. 1993. *Qualitative Data Analysis*. London: Routledge.

Dione, Saer. 1984. "Place and Role of National Languages in Culture, Communication and Education." In: *Educafrica.* Bulletin of UNESCO Regional Office for Education in Africa 11, 177-205.

Djoleto, Amu. 1985. "Books and Reading in Ghana". *Studies on Books and Reading*. UNESCO.

Dubbeldam, Leo. 1994. "Towards a socio-cultural model of literacy education. In: Verhoeven, Ludo (ed.) *Functional Literacy. Theoretical Issues and Educational Implications*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 405-423.

Eastman, Carol. 1985. "Modern Swahili: Is there A Generational Gap?" in Parkin, D. and Maw, J. (eds.) *Swahili Language and Society*. Beiträge Zur Afrikanistik, Wien, 297-317.

EFA Global Monitoring Report 2008. "Education for All by 2015. Will We Make it?" EFA Global Monitoring Report.

Freire, Paul and Macedo, Donaldo (1987) *Literacy: Reading the Word and the World*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Gee, James. 1994. "The New Literacy Studies: From 'Socially Situated' to the Work of the Social." In: Barton, David, Hamilton, Mary and Ivanic, Roz (eds.) *Situated Literacies-Reading and Writing in Context*. London: Routledge, 180-196.

Giroux, Henry. 1987. "Literacy and the Pedagogy of Political Empowerment." In Freire, Paul and Macedo, Donaldo (eds.) Literacy*: Reading the Word and the World*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Goody, Jack and Watt, Ian. 1968. "The Consequences of Literacy." In: Goody, Jack (ed.) *Literacy in Traditional Societies*. London: Cambridge University Press.

Goody, Jack. 1977. *The Domestication of the Savage Mind*. London: Cambridge University Press.

Goody, Jack. 1986. *The Logic of Writing and Organization of Society*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Goody, Jack. 1993. *The Interface Between the Written and the Oral*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gordon, Raymond (ed.) 2005. Ethnologue: Languages of the World, Fifteenth Edition. Dallas, Tex.: SIL international. Online version: http:www.ethnologue.com/.

Gorman, Thomas. 1974. "The Development of Language Policy in Kenya with Particular Reference to Education System." In: Whiteley, Wilfred (ed.) *Language in Kenya*. Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 397-446.

Graff, Harvey. 1987. *The Labyrinths of Literacy-Reflections on Literacy Past and Present.* London: The Palmer Press, 1-70.

Graff, Harvey. 1987. *The Legacies of Literacy*. New York: Indiana University Press, 1-13 and 374-398.

Haggard, Rider. 1993. *King Solomons's Mines*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hamilton, Mary. 2000. "Expanding the new literacy studies: using photographs to explore literacy as a social practice." In: Barton, David, Hamilton, Mary and Ivanic, Roz (eds.) *Situated Literacies-Reading and Writing in Context.* London: Routledge, 16-34.

Havelock, Erick. 1963. *Preface to Plato. A History of Greek Mind*. London: Belknap Press of Harvard University.

Heine Bernd and Möhlig, Wilhelm. 1980. *Language and Dialect Atlas of Kenya*. Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag.

Hemphill, R. J. 1974. "Language Use and Language Teaching in the Primary Schools of Kenya." In: Whiteley, Wilfred (ed.) *Language in Kenya*. Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 455-479.

Holme, Randal. 2004. *Literacy. An Introduction*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Hornberger, Nancy. 1994. "Literacy and Language Planning." In: Barton, David (ed.) *Sustaining Local Literacies*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 75-86.

Hountondji, Pauline (1997) "Introduction: Recenring Africa." In: Hountondji, Paulin (ed.) *Endogenous Knowledge*. Dakar: CODESRIA, 1-39

Ivanic, Roz. 1998. *Writing and Identity-The Discoursal Construction of Identity in Academic Writing.* Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Jenkins, Jeniffer, Modiano, Marko, Seidlhofer, Barbara. 2001. *Euro-English. English Today*, 17(4), 13-19.

Jones, Kathryn. 1994. "Becoming Just Another Alphanumeric Code: Farmers' Encounters with the Literacy and Discourse Practices of Agricultural Bureaucracy at the Livestock Auction." In: Barton, David, Hamilton, Mary and Ivanic, Roz (eds.) *Situated Literacies-Reading and Writing in Context.* London: Routledge: London, 70-90.

Kagoda-Batuwa, Sarah. 1998. "Changes of Information and Communication in Consoldating Development of East African Cooperation in the Next Millennium." Information for Sustainable Development in the 21st Century: Proceedings of the 13th Standing Conference of Eastern and Southern African Librarians, 27-31st July, 1998. Nairobi: KLA, 15-25.

Kanogo, Tabitha. 2005. *African Woman in Colonial Kenya 1900–50*. East African Educational Publishers, Nairobi.

Kenya Bureau of Statistics 2008. Kenya National Literacy Survey Report. Nairobi: Kenya Bureau of Statistics.

Kenya Republic 1965. *African Socialism and its Application to Planning in Kenya.* Sessional Paper No. 10 of 1965. Nairobi: Government Printer.

Kenyatta, Jomo. 1979. *Facing Mount Kenya*. Nairobi: Heinemann Educational Books.

King'ei, Kitula and Kobia, John. 2007. "Lugha Kama Kitambulisho: Changamoto ya Sheng Nchini Kenya." *Nordic Journal of African Studies* 16(3): 320-332.

Kwesiga, Jassy. 1994. "Literacy and Language Question: Brief Experiences from Uganda." In: Barton, David (ed.), *Sustaining Local Literacies*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 57-63).

Lankshear, Colin and Knobel, Michele. 2006. *New Literacies. Everyday Practices and Classroom Learning.* Berkshire: Open University Press.

Lave, Jean and Wenger, Etienne. 1995. Situated Learning. *Legitimate Peripheral participation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Légere, Karsten. 1990. "Recent Development of Kiswahili: With a Particular Reference to Tanzania." In Légere, Karsten (ed.) *Baraza la Kiswahili la Taifa- The Role of Language in Literacy Programmes with Specific Reference to Kiswahili in Eastern Africa*. Bonn: German Foundation for International Development (DSE), 49-84.

Lewis, Ioan. 1993. "Literacy and Cultural Identity in the Horn of Africa: The Somali case." In: Street Brian (ed.) *Cross-cultural Approaches to Literacy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 143-155.

Luria, Alexander and Vygotsky, Lev (1992) *Ape, Primitive Man, and Child Behaviour: Essays in the History of Behaviour.* London: Harvester Wheatsheaf *(*Written in 1930)

Macedo, Donaldo. 1993. "Literacy for Stupidification: The Pedagogy of Big Lies." In: Harvard Educational Review. Cambridge: Mass, 63 (2), 185-206.

Mazrui, Ali and Mazrui Alamin. 1995. *Swahili State and Society*. East African Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers.

Mazrui, Ali and Mazrui, Alamin. 1996. "A Tale of Two Englishes: The imperial Language in the Post-colonial Kenya and Uganda." In: Fishman, Joshua, Conrad, Andrew and Lopez, Alma (eds.) *Post Imperial English.* Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 271-302.

Mazrui, Ali and Mazrui, Alamin. 1998. *The Power of Babel.* Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers.

Mbaabu, Ireri and Nzuga, Kibande. 2003. *Sheng-English Dictionary. Deciphering East Africa's Underworld Langauge.* Dares Salaam: TUKI, i-xvi.

Mbaabu, Ireri. 1990. "Jukumu la Kiswahili Katika Elimu ya Watu Wazima." In: Légere, Karsten (ed.) *The Role of Language in Literacy Programmes with Specific Reference to Kiswahili in Eastern Africa.* Bonn: German Foundation for International Development (DSE).

Mbaabu, Ireri. 1996. *Language Policy in East Africa*. Nairobi: Educational Research and Publications.

Mbae, Justus. 2004. "Kenya: A reading Nation?" in *Wajibu*. A Journal of Social and Religious Concern, 19 (1), 13-17.

Mberia, Kithaka. 1993. "Kitharaka Segmental Morphophonology with Special Reference to the Noun and the Verb." Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis: University of Nairobi.

Metinhoue, Goudjinou. 1997. "Methodological Issues in the Study of 'Traditional' Techniques and Know-How." In: Hountondji, Paulin (ed.) *Endogenous Knowledge*. Dakar: CODESRIA, 43-62.

Mikwa, Matombi. 1994. "An Investigation of Reading Habits in Public Libraries within Nairobi." Unpublished M.Ed. Thesis: Kenyatta University.

Miles, Mathew and Huberman, Michael. 1994. *Qualitative Data Analysis.* London: SAGE Publications.

Momanyi, Clara. 2009. "The Effects of 'Sheng' in the Teaching of Kiswahili in Kenyan Schools." *The Journal of Pan African Studies* 2(8), 127-138.

 Muchiri, Nyambura. 2002. "An Academic Writer in Kenya: The Transition from Secondary School to University." In: Foster, David and Russel David (eds.) *Writing and Learning in Cross-National Perspective. Transitions from Secondary to Higher Education.* New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 242-269.

Mutahi, Karega. 1977. "Sound Change and the Classification of Dialects of Southern Mt. Kenya." Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis: University of Nairobi.

Mutahi, Mwangi. 2000. "The Trials of a Gikuyu Writer." In: *The UNESCO Courier*. UNESCO, Paris: April 2000, 24-25.

Ngugi wa Thiong'o. 1978. *Homecoming.* Nairobi: Heinemann. 1- 21.

Ngugi wa Thiong'o. 1986. *Decolonising the Mind.* Nairobi: Heinemann.

Ngugi wa Thiong'o. 1997. *Writers in Politics*. Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers.

Njoroge, Kimani. 1990. "Multilingualism and Some of its Implications for Language Policy and Practices in Kenya." In Légere, Karsten (ed.) *Baraza la Kiswahili la Taifa-The Role of Language in Literacy Programmes with Specific Reference to Kiswahili in Eastern Africa.* Bonn: German Foundation for International Development (DSE), 249-270.

Ogechi, Nathan and and Bosire-Ogechi, Emily. 2002. "Education Publishing in African Languages, With a Focus on Swahili in Kenya." In: *Nordic Journal of African Studies* II (2), 167-184.

Ogechi, Nathan. 2002. "The Reality and Challenges of Publishing in Kiswahili in Kenya." In: *Utafiti wa Kiswahili*. Eldoret: Moi University Press, 25-35.

Ogechi, Nathan. 2005. *On Lexicalization in Sheng*. In: *Nordic Journal of African Studies*, 14(3), 334–335.

Ogola, Onyango. 2003. "The National Language Policy Implementation and Experience: The Case of Kiswahili in the Parliament of Kenya." Dissertation Zur Erlangung des Doktorgrades der Philosophie, Universitat Wien.

Olson, David. 1994. *The World on Paper*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ong, Walter. 1982. *Orality and Literacy*. London: Methuen.

Osawa, Bernard and Muchunku, Charles. 2006. "Energy Conflicts in the Meru Region." Participatory Watershed Management Plan, FWU, 5.

Pardoe, Simon. 2000. "Respect and the Pursuit of 'Symmetry' in Researching Literacy and Student Writing." In: Barton, David, Hamilton, Mary and Ivanic, Roz (eds.) *Situated Literacies-Reading and Writing in Context.* London: Routledge, 149-166.

Paulitzky, Christine. 2005. "High Reputation-Low Priority? Reading Habits in Multilingual Kenya. Dissertation zur Erlangung der Wurde des Doktors der Philosophier der Universitat Hamburg.

Phillipson, Robert. 1992. *Linguistic Imperialism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Probst, Peter. 1993. "The Letter and the Spirit: Literacy and Religious Authority in the History of the Aladura Movement in Western Nigeria." In: Street Brian (ed.) *Cross-cultural Approaches to Literacy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 198-219.

Rhoades, John. 1977. *Linguistic Diversity and Language Belief in Kenya: The Special Position of Swahili.* Maxwell School, Syracuse University.

Salinas, Pedro. 1990. "The new Illiterates." In: One Billion Illiterates- A Challenge for Our Time. *The UNESCO Courier,* Paris: July 1990, 42-45.

Schendl, Herbert. 2001. *Historical Linguistics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Scribner, Sylvia. and Cole Michael. 1988. "Unpackaging Literacy." In: Mercer, Neil (ed.) *Language and Literacy. From an Educational Perspective.* Language Studies. Philadelphia: Open University Press 1, 241-255.

Shuman, Amy. 1993. "Collaborative Writing: Appropriating Power or Reproducing Authority?" In: Street Brian (ed.) *Cross-cultural Approaches to Literacy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 247-271.

Silvain, Lowrie. 1990. "World Literacy: Where we Stand Today." In: One Billion Illiterates- A Challenge for Our Time. *The UNESCO Courier*, Paris: July 1990.

Street, Brian. 1988. *Literacy in Theory and Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Street, Brian. 1993. "Introduction: The New Literacy Studies." In: Street, Brian (ed.) *Cross-cultural Approaches to Literacy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1-21.

Street, Brian. 1994a. "What is meant by Local Literacies." In: Barton, David (ed.) *Sustaining Local Literacies*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 9-17.

Street, Brian. 1994b. "Cross-cultural Perspectives on Literacy." In: Verhoeven, Ludo (ed.) *Functional Literacy. Theoretical Issues and Educational Implications*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 95-111.

Street, Brian. 1995. *Social Literacies-Critical Approaches to Literacy in Development, Ethnography and Education.* Essex: Longman Group.

Suda, Colleta. 2002. "Gender Disparities in the Kenyan Labour Market: Implications for Poverty Reduction." In: *Nordic Journal of African Studies* 11, (3), 301-321.

Taylor, Steven and Bogdan, Robert. 1984. *Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods - The Search for Meaning.* New York: John Wiley and Sons.

UNESCO. 1953. *The Use of Vernacular Languages in Education*. Paris: UNESCO.

Verhoeven, Ludo. 1994. "Modelling and Promoting Functional Literacy." In: Verhoeven, Ludo (ed.) *Functional Literacy. Theoretical Issues and Educational Implications.* Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 3-34.

Whiteley, Wilfred. 1974. "The Classification and Distribution of Kenya's African Languages. In: Whiteley, Wilfred (ed.) *Language in Kenya*. Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 13-68.

APPENDICES
Appendix 1: Letter from the Ministry

MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Telegram: SCIENCE TECH", Nairobi
Telephone: Nairobi 318581
Email:psmst@education.go.ke
When replying please quote

JOGOO HOUSE "B"
HARAMBEE AVENUE
P.O. BOX 9583-00200
NAIROBI

Ref. MOST 13/001/ 37C 405/2

11th JULY 2007

For PERMANENT SECRETARY
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Wendo Nabea
Egerton University
P.O. Box 536
NJORO

Dear Sir

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following your application for authority to carry out research on, *'An Appraisal of Literacy Usage in Murugi Location, Meru South District'*

I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to carry out research in Meru South District for a period ending 30th June 2009.

You are advised to report to the District Commissioner and the District Education Officer Meru South District before embarking on your research project.

On completion of your research, you are expected to submit two copies of your research report to this office.

Yours faithfully

M. O. ONDIEKI
FOR: PERMANENT SECRETARY

Copy to:

The District Commissioner
Meru South District

The District Education Officer
Meru South District

Appendix 2: Sample of Interview Guide

(It offers an ideation of the interview questions, and not necessarily the flow of questions in any particular interview. The questions are a translation from Meru)

My name is _____ . This is a follow up to the diary that you filled for me regarding your literacy practices some time back. Kindly allow me time to interview you on your literacy practices.

Name: _____
Age: _____
Gender: _____
Village: _____
Level of Education: _____

1. I came here earlier in the morning, but I was told you went away. Where did you go?
2. On my way here, I saw some cows, tea and coffee. Tell me about your farming practice.
3. By the way, thanks a lot for filling up the diary. I see that you filled it in both Meru and Kiswahili, what inspired you to use the two languages?
4. Briefly tell me about yourself.
5. Give me an account of the things that you do, say on a daily basis, starting from the time you wake up till the time you sleep.
6. Tell me about your schooling life before settling down in the village.
7. Explain to me the case of language usage in the school when you were a student.
8. Explain to me whether you belong to any community organisations, and what you do in them.
9. In your diary you indicate that you attended a dispensary meeting. Explain to me the purpose of this meeting and the goings-on at the meeting.
10. You entered in the diary that you read the Bible regularly. Give me an account of your reading – place, time, books e.t.c.
11. Describe to me what exactly happened when you went for one would-be bride farewell party, going by your diary.
12. In your diary you indicate that you read, write, take measurements, do calculations. Describe to me what you do in each event, and why.
13. Thanks for detailing information on disputation involving the traditional law court of Njuri Ncheke. I would like also to know the role of women in this institution.
14. In view of your diary entries, you indicate that you occasionally read fiction. Briefly explain to me what you have read in the recent past.
15. I gather from your diary that you read and wrote several letters in the last two weeks. Give me more information on your reading and writing.

Appendix 3: Literacy Diary

TARIHE (DIARY) KUHUSU KUSOMA NA KUANDIKA KWA WANAKIJIJI KATIKA LOKESHENI YA MURUGI

Mimi ni Wendo Nabea, mwanafunzi katika Chuo Kikuu cha Vienna, Austria. Ninafanya utafiti kuhusu namna wanakijiji hutumia mbinu zao za kusoma na kuandika katika shughuli zao za kila siku, katika lokesheni ya Murugi, wilayani Meru Kusini. Hili litabaini vile wanakijiji hutumia mbinu hizi, na vile zinawiana au kutofautiana na kusoma shuleni. Hili litasaidia kupima miito ya baadhi ya watu kwa Wakenya, hasa kwa waliomaliza elimu rasmi, kuhusu uimarishaji wa desturi nzuri za kusoma. Tafadhali nifanyie hisani kwa kunijazia hii tarihi (diary), kuhusiana na shughuli zako za kila siku zinazofungamana na kusoma na kuandika. Tafadhali ijaze kila siku, kwa muda wa wiki mbili zijazo. Kuwa huru kuijaza kwa Kimeru au Kiswahili.

SIKU	ASUBUHI	MCHANA	JIONI	USIKU
JUMATATU	NASER+TREE SAVACE – WATER – TREE = 3000 FAIDA Bandi ya mie z tatu = 15000	BUSSINESS 10 kg o 8 meat	BUSSINESS	BUSSINESS Frofit 140x10=7oo Ba a de ya Kazi Kulala
JUMANNE	nimeamka Sasa na tayarisha chai ya asubuhi.	Sasa niko kazini ya nyumbani	Nae tetea otto gapsi? Kutafuta nyama yo Kubie Za.	NAfanya ESRbU ya nyama atasa pi- etetehe nymba n.
JUMATANO	No SAVACE niko stakare nyumbani	tuko na matatsiki zangu tum peana Habari Za wili Nang'ethe nis	Nabikea Kutoka nyumba n) Kuetekea mtaa n	NABudi Kutoka mtaa n.

Literacy Diary (page two)

ALHAMISI	Niliedna - ctogeni - kununua - nyama.	nitko barabagni. tutaka chogma.	nitko kaka blacShavea	~~PRESS~~ NAUZA mpunka uSiKU Na huotu ma maidi. faida = 300
IJUMAA	chai ya bafubuhu. kaz kido go nyumbani.	natama - kuzifanga mento. ctogoBia za k, ni - nipate mutigwa niokatwe bausikela	Nbutu dinutaa ctogwza nitawa babato ni nikafaka - kibwna.	OKURNA - kazi kuchoro mushoni. kuhasa.
JUMAMOSI	Ninnwa Sagen Mdwa lafiti - Yangu.	tuko pwafiri - Yunngu tunape- wnu abadizetu.	—	nikorywmbani nutanyakishaa chakula ya myumbani bewada ya chakula ni kutata.
JUMAPILI	Niliedna - mavuuni.	niikwa kazi uko.	nitkwa sagen kutora uko	Zioni nikanaksi- lena.

Asante kwa hisani yako, tutaonana tena nitakapokuja kukuhoji kuhusu shughuli zako za kusoma na kuandika. Kila la heri.

Appendix 4 : Summary Chart

Serial number	Data type	Time of sourcing	Sex	Village/ Office	Occup.	Level of education	Age	More study on
1.	Interview	38 m	F	Gantaraki	S/keeper	Secondary 4	45-55	
2.	Int.	38 m	F	Gantaraki	Farmer	College	45-55	
3.	Int.	43 m	M	Gantaraki	N/Guard	Primary 7	45-55	
4.	Int.	37 m	F	Gantaraki	Farmer	O primary	61-70	
5.	Int.	26 m	M	Gitombani	Farmer	O primary	61-70	
6.	Int.	54 m	F	Gantaraki	C/worker	O primary	61-70	Aids & literacy
7.	Int.	33 m	F	Gantaraki	Farmer	Secondary 4	31-40	
8.	Int.	35 m	F	Gitombani	Farmer	Secondary 4	41-50	
9.	Int.	38 m	F	Gitombani	Farmer	O primary	60-70	(2 speakers)
10.	Int.	33m	F	Gitombani	Farmer	Secondary 4	31-40	
11.	Int.	30 m	F	Gitombani	Farmer	Secondary 4	31-40	
12.	Int.	31 m	M	Gitombani	Farmer	Secondary 4	41-50	
13.	Int.	26 m	M	Gitombani	Farmer	Primary 8	21-30	
14.	Int.	27 m	M	Gantaraki	D/worker	Primary 8	21-30	
15.	Int.	46 m	M	Gantaraki	D/worker	Secondary 4	21-30	Sports & literacy
16.	Int.	27 m	M	Gitombani	Timber/d	Primary 7	21-30	
17.	Int.	37 m	M	Gitombani	A/chief	Secondary 4	45-55	
18.	Int.	49 m	M	Gantaraki	Farmer	Secondary 4	45-55	
19.	Int.	31 m	M	Gitombani	Farmer	Secondary 4	31-40	(2 speaker)
20.	Int.	37 m	F	Gitombani	Farmer	College	60-70	
21.	Int.	10 m	M	Gitombani	jobless	Primary 8	21-30	(No diary filling)
22.	Int.	52 m	M	Gitombani	Farmer	Secondary 4	41-50	Tea & literacy
23.	Int.	16 m	F	Gitombani	S/keeper	Primary 5	21-30	
24.	Int.	44 m	M	Gantaraki	Farmer	Secondary 4	51-60	
25.	Int.	58 m	F	Nairobi	Consult..	Masters	41-50	
26.	Int.	51 m	F	Nyahururu	Librarian	Student Ph.d.	41-50	Informal educu.
27.	Int.	43 m	M	Nairobi	Publisher	Masters	41-50	
28.	Int.	41 m	M	Nakuru	Librarian	College	51-60	
29.	Int.	33 m	F	Nakuru	Librarian	College	51-60	
30.	Int.	63 m	M	University	Writer	Masters	41-50	Osiri library

Appendix 5 : Njuri Ncheke Letter

Ref. NJm/ksc/ns/ck/028/07

NJURI NCHEKE YA AMERU
MERU REGION
LOWER SUPREME COURT
CHOGORIA / MERU
DATE 2.8/7/07

THE CHAIRMAN.
MUGUTHI CLAN,
BOX 65
CHOGORIA.

Dear Sir
REF:- REMINDER:-

Reference to a letter written to you on 14/7/07 (Ref:- NJm/ksc/ns/ck/024/07) requesting you to appear before the above elders court on 19/7/07 at Kianjafi chief's camp at 10.00 Am. You failed to appear for a reason this court can not establish.

This court now meet on thursday 9/8/07 at Kianjafi chief camp at 10.00 Am. You are now summoned and reminded to appear before them so as to help this court solve a saga between mrs Civiaka Kagendo - Plaintiff vs Minti Kaburu - Defendant.

Please be punctual and avail yourself.

Thank you.
ns. Clmme. (a.m. Nahie)
Court secretary.

248

Appendix 6 : Clan Letter

MUGUTHI CLAN
P.O BOX 65
CHOGORIA
8TH JULY 2007

CHAIRMAN,
NJURI NCEKE
MURUGI LOCATION
P.O BOX 65
CHOGORIA

Dear Sir,

REF: CHILD DISPUTE BETWEEN
MIRITI, KABURU AND KAGENDO

This is to let you be informed that
On 7/7/2007 the family of miriti Kaburu
elders, and the committee of muguthi clan
had met at their home to discuss the
issue of your demand calling miriti
Kaburu on 12/7/2007 to take oath of
rejecting the child of Kagendo.
Our Surprise is that this matter
was forwarded to the office of the
children welfare chuka, and they
agreed to pay Ksh 15,000/- fifteen
thousand only. So that the D.NA
can be done to get the truth
and know who is the real father
of the child. Now how it turned
to be in your office of Njuri
nceke is another Surprise because
they had even agreed of how
to Share the cost each 7,500/=
Seven thousand five hundred only.
Your office has Summed to mirit·

249

Clan Letter (Continuation)

Severally and now you are asking him (Miriti) to report (come) with his people to witness him taking the oath to reject the child on 12/7/2007. After discussing this matter keenly we objected him from taking the oath, and that is why we are writing to you requesting your office to refer the matter where it was before at the office of the children welfare chaka, So that the D.N.A can be done, because it would be done prophessonary and come out with plain truth who is the real father of the child.

We are also objecting the oath because the oath is to be taken by miriti only and not Kagendo, and even though they will be both the truth will not be hundred percent.

We remain waiting for your humble reply, but you will not wait for miriti on this day 12/7/07. Again we are telling you that we are parents and we want our children to Live in peace.

C C

ASS. chief, Kianjagi Sublocation.
Chairman, Njuri Ncheke Murugi Location.

Yours faithfully.
Secretary.
Michem Kirm

250

Appendix 7 : Farmers Sales Card I

DATE	REGISTERED NUMBER	KGS. GREEN LEAF		BUYING CENTRE	PAGE NUMBER	BUYER'S SIGNATURE
		LATEST	CUMULATIVE			
6/1	55	24	24	54	1726007	—
7/2	55	34	58	54	1706407	
9/2	55	13	71	54	1706060	—
12	55	12	83	54	1623577	
12	55	35½	89½	54	1623612	2
15/2	55	20	109½	54		65
15/2	55	10	119½	54	1703211	65
16/2	55	6	126½	54	1703224	W
19/2	55	17	143½	54	1705244	65
26/2	55	16	159½	54	1936533	W
26/2	55	8	167½	54	1956962	W
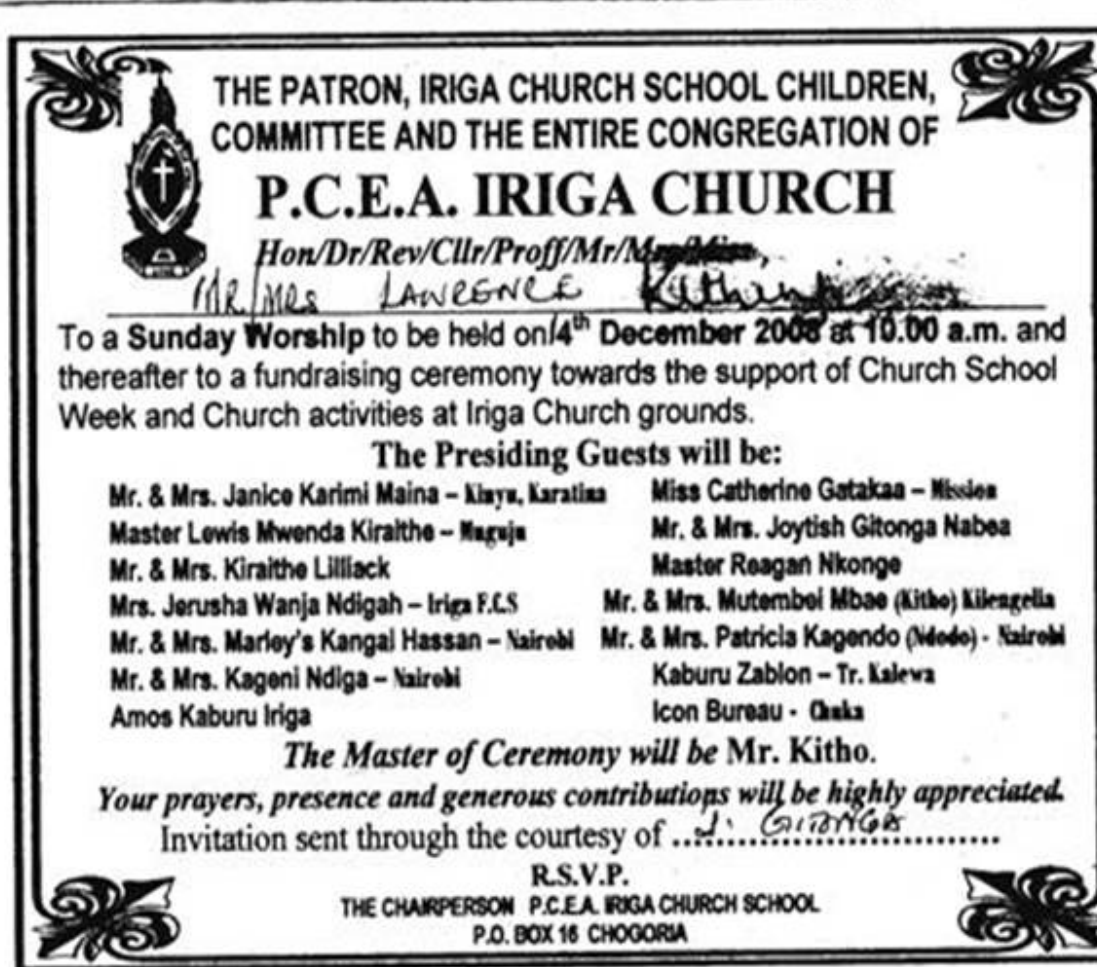
Appendix 8 : Farmers Sales Card II

		M. No.	

CO-OP. SOCIETY LTD
CC/ KALEWA DAIRY AND BREEDERS M.F   MONTH
NAME P . O . BOX   CHOGORIA   20
ADDRESS DATE ------------------------

MEMBER'S PRODUCE RECORD	A M KGS	MEMBER NO.	P M KGS	MEMBER NO.	Date
	7½	85			1
	9	85			2
	9	85			3
	9	85			4
	8	85			5
	9	85			6
	9	85	hersing low		7
	9	85			8
	9	85			9
	9	85			10
	9	85			11
	9	85			12
	9	85			13
	10	85			14
	9	85			15
		120		CARRIED FORWARD	

CR. LIMIT	DATE	AMOUNT	DATE	AMOUNT
CERTIFIED				

STANDARD A/C 25-1

Appendix 9 : PMPTC Register

PMTCT DAILY ACTIVITY REGISTER FOR COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS

CHW Name [ ]   Month/Year [ ]   Name of Focal Health Facility [ ]
CHW code [ ]   District

1	2	3	4	5	6	Counseling					Referrals			14	15	16
						7	8	9	10	11	12	13			
Date of Visit (DD/MM/YY)	Name of Client	Sex (Male/Female)	Visit (New/Revisit)	State (Antenatl/ Postnatal)	Mother's HIV status if declared (Pos/Neg/ Not known)	NVP (Y/N)	Infant Feeding (Y/N)	FP (Y/N)	Nutrition (Y/N)	PMTCT (Y/N)	To Support Group (Y/N)	Other (please specify) (Y/N)	Age of baby (in months)	Infant Feeding Method (EB/F/RF, MF)	Currently on any Family Planning method (Y/N)
Total		Males	New	Antenatal	Pos									EB/F	
		Females	Revisit	Postnatal	Neg ___ NK									RF ___ MF ___	

How many Condoms did you distribute this month _____

253

Appendix 10 : **Invitation Card**

THE PATRON, IRIGA CHURCH SCHOOL CHILDREN, COMMITTEE AND THE ENTIRE CONGREGATION OF

P.C.E.A. IRIGA CHURCH

Hon/Dr/Rev/Cllr/Proff/Mr/Mrs/Miss,

MR./MRS LAWRENCE Kithinkiooo

To a **Sunday Worship** to be held on 4th December 2008 at 10.00 a.m. and thereafter to a fundraising ceremony towards the support of Church School Week and Church activities at Iriga Church grounds.

The Presiding Guests will be:

Mr. & Mrs. Janice Karimi Maina – Kiayu, Karatina

Master Lewis Mwenda Kiraithe – Maguja

Mr. & Mrs. Kiraithe Lilliack

Mrs. Jerusha Wanja Ndigah – Iriga F.C.S

Mr. & Mrs. Marley's Kangai Hassan – Nairobi

Mr. & Mrs. Kageni Ndiga – Nairobi

Amos Kaburu Iriga

Miss Catherine Gatakaa – Mission

Mr. & Mrs. Joytish Gitonga Nabea

Master Reagan Nkonge

Mr. & Mrs. Mutembei Mbae (Kitho) Kileagelia

Mr. & Mrs. Patricia Kagendo (Ndodo) - Nairobi

Kaburu Zablon – Tr. Kalewa

Icon Bureau - Chuka

The Master of Ceremony will be Mr. Kitho.

Your prayers, presence and generous contributions will be highly appreciated.
Invitation sent through the courtesy of ....J. Gitonga............

R.S.V.P.
THE CHAIRPERSON P.C.E.A. IRIGA CHURCH SCHOOL.
P.O. BOX 16 CHOGORIA

Appendix 11 : Group minutes

MISSION SELF HELP GROUP

COMMITTEE MEETING ON 11\08\2007

MIN118 :**OPENING PRAYERS**

The meeting was opened with said by Mrs Muriithi.

Those who were present were:

1. John Gitonga
2. Michael Njoroge
3. Japhet Kinyua
4. Franklin Robert
5. Mrs Muriithi
6. Karani Ikingi
7. Alexander Mutegi
8. Mutembei Mukaraku
9. Mutwiri Nkuraru

APOLOGY

10. Micheni Burini
11. Kiplagat Kanampiu
12. Treasurers

ABSENT WITHOUT APOLOGIES

13. Gitonga Muhindi
14. Eric Mugambi
15. Colly Njeru

MIN 119\08\07 : **AGENDA**

1) LACTOMETRES
2) SALARIES
3) A.I SERVICES
4) N.H.I.F
5) FEEDS
6) A.O.B

MIN 120\08\07: It was agreed that every milk collection centre should be bought a Lactometer.

MIN 121\08\07:It was agreed that we increase salaries for our employees and those who are dealing with stores should get equal salaries e.g. Rose Nyambura & Gatakaa Njagi each Ksh 3000 from August 2007.Mawira Ksh 3500 also each Ksh 200 for tea.

MIN 122\08\07: It was noted that our expenses are rising up to Ksh 15,520(fifteen thousand five hundred twenty) every month.

MIN 123\08\07: Also it was noted that our income from 30 cts is Ksh 9,000 every month.

***MIN 124\08\07*:N.H.I.F.**It was agreed that from next year the group will be paying N.H.I.F. money for the employees.

MIN 125\08\07:The watchman will get an increment of Ksh 200 from the month of August and his total salary will be Ksh 1,900(one thousand nine hundred only) including two hundred for tea.

MIN 126\08\07:A.I SERVICES

We agreed that as from 1ˢᵗ September 2007 we will start A.I services. This project will be facilitated by our banker Meru South Farmers Sacco LTD.We will conduct an interview for the inseminators. But before to do thorough checking of the materials needed.

MIN 127\08\07:LOAN

It was agreed that we will take a loan of Ksh 350,000(Three hundred and fifty thousand only) for the A.I services project.

MIN 128\08\07:Kinyua Nkero

It was agreed that he be paid Ksh 1,500(one thousand five hundred only) for the long journey he makes every day from ,Marima to Giampapo every day for the journals.

MIN 129\08\07:FEEDS

It was agreed that in future we may start making our own feeds.

MIN130\08\07:MILK CLOTING

It was agreed that if milk clots it should be returned to the members at a cost of Ksh 2(two shillings) per kilo. And those members whom had weighed that milk should share between themselves.

MIN 131\08\07:CLOSING PRAYERS

The meeting was closed with a prayers by Mrs. Muriithi at 2:25 pm.
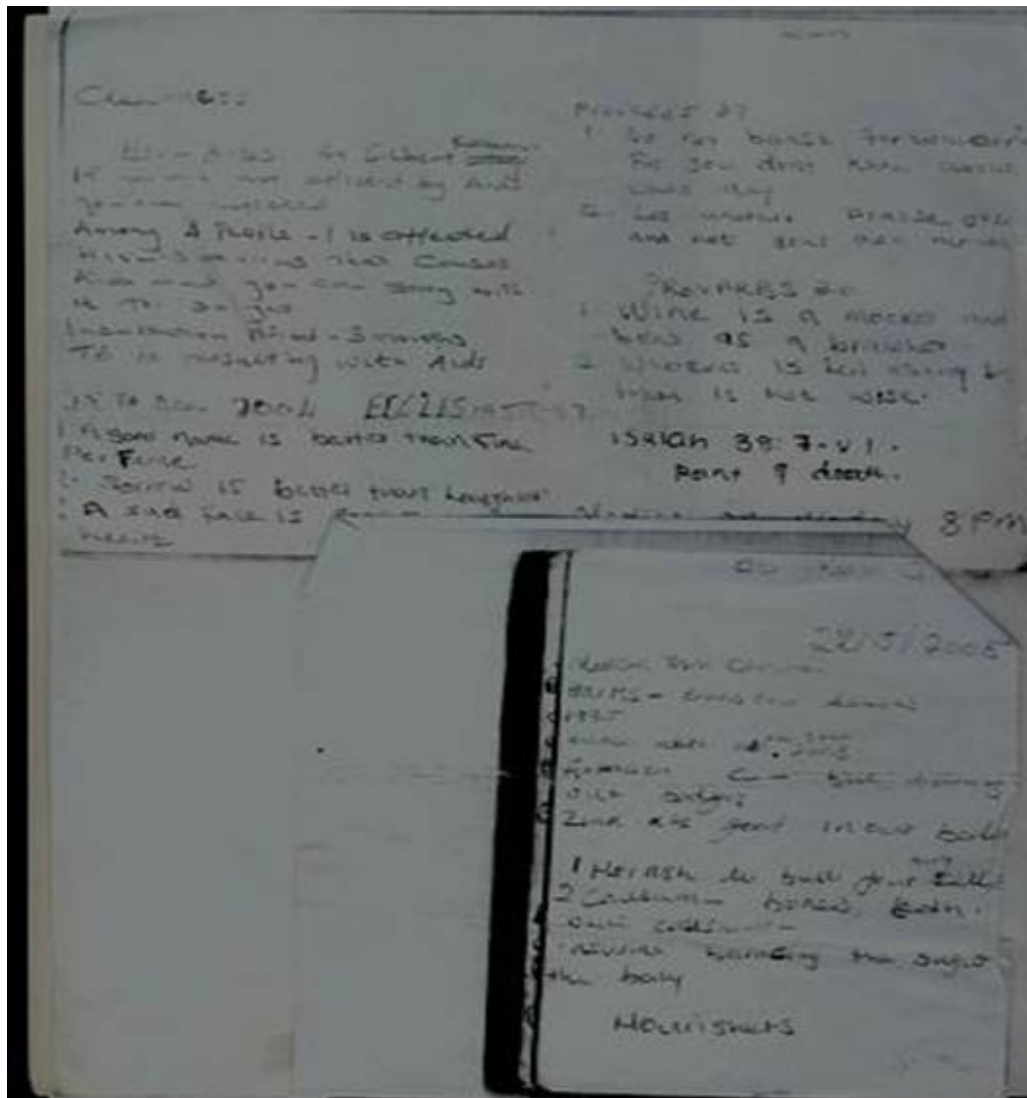
Recorded by Japhet Kinyua.
Confirmed by: Chairman.
Proposed by: Mputhia Kirangata
Seconded by: Michael Njoroge.

On 15\9\2007

Appendix 12 : **Note Book**

Appendix 13 : Utility Text

Uzuiru wa kwekwe kwa jumla/kunyunyiza visehemu vidogo vya kwekwe :

Kunyunyiza kwa jumla: Unapotaka kuzuia kwekwe kwa eneo lote nyunyiza dawa ukitumia bomba la nguvu la maji lililopimwa sawa sawa na kufanya kazi vyema.

Kunyunyiza visehemu vidogo : Kuzuia vikundi vikundi vya kwekwe tumia bomba la mgongo. "Knapsack" na mchanganyiko wa dawa wa asilimia mbili, 2% (200 ml Roundup katika lita 10 za maji). Usinyunyize dawa nyingi zaidi mpaka inatiririka juu ya majani na kumwagika kwani huo ni uharibifu tu. Kwekwe ndefu zaweza kupunguzwa na mchanganyiko wa Roundup 200 ml ndani ya maji 400 ml ukitumia chombo chenye utabi wa kupanguzia na mpini mrefu wa kushika "weed wipers" .

JINSI YA KUNYUNYIZA:

Bomba ya kufungia juu ya trakta au gari. Tumia vipimo vya maji vya kutoka lita 40 hadi 200 kwa hekta. Tumia midomo ya bomba aina ya kipepeo kwa mfano hardi 4110-10, 4110-12 unapotumia vipimo vidogo na 4110-14 kwa vipimo vya kadiri ya kati. Kipimo cha chini cha maji kinapendekezwa lakini maji lazima yawe masafi kabisa na pia utumie kichungio kizuri (wavu 80). Kichungio kijiochacho chenyewe ni cha manufaa. Tumia mkazo wa chini wa bomba (2.0 bars).

Bomba la mgongo (Knapsack): Tumia kiasi cha maji cha lita 70 hadi 200 kwa hekta. Kueneza dawa kwa kwekwe tumia mdomo wa bomba inayobubujika midomo mipana aina ya kipepeo kwa vile hazipeperushi dawa. Katika shamba la chai tumia mdomo uliyo na kinga ya mviringo kunyunyiza mahali penye kwekwe tu.

Ufundi wa kutumia kiasi cha chini cha maji

Inapendekezwa kutumia kiasi cha maji kutoka lita 70 hadi 100 kwa hekta ili kustawisha nguvu za dawa na utumiaji bora wa wafanya kazi. Eneo kubwa zaidi laweza kunyunyiziwa kwa sababu wakati unaopotezwa kujaza bomba mara nyingi umepunguzwa.

Chombo cha kupaka kwekwe dawa (Weed Wipers)

Hiki chombo kimetengenezwa na mpini mrefu na mrija wa kushika dawa. Pande moja imefungiwa utabi unaovuta dawa kutoka kwa mrija wa kupaka kwekwe. Changanya sehemu moja ya Roundup na sehemu mbili ya maji (mchanganyiko wa asilimia 33) kwa mfano Roundup 200 ml ndani ya maji 400ml. Osha vyombo kabisa baada ya matumizi.

Jinsi ya kutumia

Mimea	Kwekwe	Kipimo cha dawa:
Kahawa/Chai	Kwekwe za mwaka Kwekwe za miaka mingi Isipokuwa (Cypress rotundus) Nyasi ya maji Nyasi ya nyota (Cynodon dactylon)	Lita 2 kwa hekta moja Lita 3 kwa hekta moja Nyunyiza mara mbili Kwanza lita 6 ufuatilie na lita 3 kwa hekta Hadi lita 10 kwa hekta moja
Reduced tillage systems	Kikuyu grass	Lita 2 kwa hekta moja
Kumaliza nyasi ya malisho	Kikuyu grass	Lita 4 kwa hekta moja
Miwa	Kuua miche ya mwisho	Lita 10 kwa hekta moja (wacha miche ikue hadi urefu wa 60 cm kabla ya kunyunyiza)

Fununu : Roundup inaweza kunyunyizwa na maji kipimo cha lita 70 hadi lita 200 kwa hekta. Kiasi cha maji kinategemea aina ya bomba inayotumika na urefu wa kwekwe.

Hadhari:
1. Soma maelezo yote kabla ya kutumia.
2. Weka mbali na watoto.
3. Inaweza kusababisha muasho kwa macho na ngozi.
4. Vaa mavazi ya kujilinda ili usimwagikiwe na dawa.
5. Zuia pulizo la dawa kwenye mimea mingine (muhimu), itadhuru au kuharibu kabisa.
6. Usile chakula, usinywe maji wala kuvuta sigara unapotumia dawa.
7. Usiweke dawa karibu na vyakula.
8. Baada ya kazi, osha mikono, uso na sehemu za mwili zilizogusana na dawa ukitumia maji na sabuni kwa wingi.

Madhara kwa mazingira: Usichafue mito na visima na dawa, ila tu unapoua kwekwe za maji.

Hifadhi
1. Weka mbali na watoto na vyakula.
2. Weka dawa pahali palipofungwa na kufuli na penye baridi na mzunguko mzuri wa hewa.
3. Hifadhi dawa katika chombo cha asili kilichofungwa kikamilifu.

Utupaji wa vyombo tupu.

Usitumie vyombo vilivyo tupu kwa kuhifadhi chakula, maji au kwa kazi nyingine yoyote. Vyombo vilivyo tupu ni lazima vivunjwevunjwe na kutupwa mahali panapofaa.

Huduma ya kwanza

Dalili : Roundup ikigusana na mwili kwa muda mrefu husababisha kuashwa kwa ngozi. Ikiingia machoni huwasha na kuharibu ngozi ya mboni. Ukimeza Roundup utapata maumivu ya tumbo, kizunguzungu, kutapika na kuharisha.

Maelekezo ya huduma ya kwanza: Mweke mdhuriwa mahali pa wazi na penye hewa safi na nyingi. Mavazi yote yenye dawa yavuliwe haraka.

Macho : Osha kwa maji mengi haraka kwa muda wa dakika 15 na zaidi. Kama muasho bado unaendelea mwone daktari.

Ngozi : Osha kwa maji mengi na kama inaendelea kuasha muone daktari. Kama umemeza dawa muone daktari.

Taarifa kwa daktari : Hakuna dawa ya kutegua sumu ya Roundup ndani ya mwili. Ni sumu haizui (cholinesterase) hivyo si vizuri kutibu kutumia atropine na oximes. Tibu dalili tu.

Ilani kwa mtumiaji: Dawa hii ni sharti itumiwe kulingana na maagizo yaliyo kwenye kibandiko. Ni hatia chini ya sheria za madawa ya kudhibiti wadudu waharibifu kutumia au kuhifadhi dawa hii katika hali isiyo salama.

Dhibitisho : Bidhaa zote tunazozua ni za hali ya juu na tunaziamini kuwa zinafaa, lakini kwa kuwa hatuwezi kuchunguza juu ya uchanganyaji wake au matumizi yake baada ya kununuliwa masharti yote na garantii za kisheria au kawaida juu ya uzuri au hali ya bidhaa zetu zinaondolewa na hatuna mamlaka yoyote tutakayoyakubali au hasara yoyote itakayopatikana na hifadhi, uchukuzi au matumizi yake.

Roundup ni alama ya biashara ya Monsanto. Roundup imetengenezwa na Monsanto na huuzwa Africa Mashariki na Bayer East Africa Ltd S.L.P. 30321, 00100 GPO, Nairobi, Kenya. Nambari za simu 8560667-74 Kipepesi: 8561636/8560935.

Appendix 14 : Special Letter

3.8.08

A Question addressed to the Prime Minister
Hon. Raila Odinga from Mwinadi Kiraithe of
Kalewa in Maara District.

You said that you know what the Youth will
depend on, don't you also think for the old
emaciated group of society? also to
respond there is this thing since the era
KANU about the MauMau freedom fighters
being Compensated. we had Contributed alot of
money to chase for our Compensation, when will
we be ever Compensated? Please Hon. Prime
Minister Can you look on that. When your
father are you a kilo of meat will you
take it to him when he has already died

Mr. Prime Minister, Hon. Raila Odinga the
you see this is important please Send a vote
of thanks inform of mobile phone to ease my
communication with you.

Yours ~~~~~~~~~~~~
KALEWA County School,
P.i Box 83,
CHOGORIA
MAARA - DISTRICT

CURRICULUM VITAE

Wendo K. Nabea
Laikipia College Campus
Egerton University
P.O Box 1100
Nyahururu, Kenya.

Email: wendoki@yahoo.com
wendo.nabea@gmail.com

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Nationality: Kenyan
Sex: Male
Marital status: Married

EDUCATION

2007 – 2010   Ph.D. Studies, Institute of Linguistics, University of Vienna, Austria
1992 -1995   M.A. Linguistics (Swahili Studies) University of Nairobi, Kenya
1988 – 1991   B.A. (Literature and Swahili Studies), University of Nairobi, Kenya

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

2002 - (to date)   Lecturer, Egerton University, Kenya
1997 - 2002   Assistant Lecturer, Egerton University, Kenya
1992   Teacher, Sawawawa Senior School, Meru, Kenya
1988   Teacher, Mutindwa Secondary School, Chogoria, Kenya

ADDITIONAL PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

1990 - 2004   Literary Critic for both Sunday Nation and Sunday Standard
                Newspapers in Kenya
1996 (to date) Adjudicator in the annual Kenya Schools and Colleges Drama Festival
1999 - 2000   Co-editor, Egerton University Military Science Programme, Kenya
2002   Coordinator, Egerton (Laikipia Campus, Kenya) - Karlstad (Sweden)
                Universities Exchange Programme
2002   Visiting Lecturer, Karlstad, Sweden (Courtesy, Egerton - Karlstad
                Univiersities Exchange Programme)

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Nabea, Wendo. 2009. "Language Policy in Kenya: Negotiation with Hegemony." In:
Itibari, Zulu (ed.) *Journal of Pan African Studies*. (3) 1, 121-138.

Nabea, Wendo. 2007. "Barasa bin Naliaka." In: King'ei, Kitula and Kobia John (eds.) *Likizo ya Mauti na Hadithi Nyingine*. Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau, 84-87.

RESEARCH

2009 (on-going)	Written Language of Cell Phone Messages in Kenya: A Pragmatic Analysis.
2008	Discourse Analysis of the Ethnopolitical Narrative Prior and After the Kenya 2007 Elections.
2006	Originality, Literacy and Orality in Historical Swahili Plays.
2004	Naming Among the Meru of Kenya: Semantics of Gender Differentiation.

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSIP

College of Social Sciences in Africa (CODESRIA)

International Water History Association (IWHA)

Chama cha Kiswahili cha Taifa (Chakita)

Schools and Colleges Drama Festival
International Reading Association, Kenya chapter

CONFERENCES

2008	11th Conference of English Language and Linguistics (CELL), English Department, University of Vienna
2007	10th Conference of English Language and Linguistics (CELL), English Department, University of Vienna
2005	CODESRIA Methodological Workshop, Kenyatta University, Kenya
2002	CODESRIA African Humanities Institute Conference at the University of Legon, Ghana
2001	International Water History Association (IWHA), Bergen, Norway
2001	International Literature Symposium, Thomson's Falls, Nyahururu, Kenya
2001	Chama cha Kiswahili cha Taifa, Thomson's Falls, Nyahururu, Kenya
2000	Chama cha Kiswahili cha Taifa (Chakita), Mombasa, Kenya
1999	National Literature Symposium, Laikipia College Campus, Egerton Unversity, Kenya