

**INFLUENCE OF LANGUAGE RELATED FACTORS ON ACADEMIC  
PERFORMANCE AMONG URBAN REFUGEES: A CASE OF MWIKI AND  
NEW EASTLEIGH PRIMARY SCHOOLS, KENYA**

**Kamau Faith Wairimu**

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## DECLARATION

This research project is my original work and has not been presented for any  
Other university

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Kamau, Faith Wairimu  
E55/78233/2012

This research project has been submitted for examination with our approval as  
University Supervisors

---

Dr. Grace Nyagah

Senior Lecturer and Chairman

Department of Educational, Administration and planning

University of Nairobi

---

Dr. Rosemary Imonje

Lecturer

Department of Educational Administration and Planning

University of Nairobi

## **DEDICATION**

This research project is dedicated to Alliance high school for giving me the impetus to go back to school and providing an enabling environment to study. To my children, Kevin, Basil and Janice for their understanding, my brothers and sister for encouraging me during the course and to my late parents for laying the foundation. To all urban refugee students in Kenya with the hope that they will have proper and quality education availed to them in the near future.

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## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of the study was to examine the influence of language related factors on academic performance among urban refugees; a case of Mwiki and New Eastleigh primary schools, Kenya. To achieve this, research questions on influence of language policy, remedial language, teaching methods and possible strategies used to meet the objectives of the study. The study adopted a case study design to determine the influence of language related factors on academic performance among urban refugees. The study used a sample of 2 head teachers, 30 teachers and 50 urban refugee pupils. Data was coded and classified into major themes from which a summary was made. Qualitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics supported by tables, pie-charts, frequency distribution tables and percentages. Data analyzed formed the basis for research findings, conclusions and recommendations. The findings from this study could be useful in providing policy makers, County Directors of Education, the Ministry of Education, the Government of Kenya and National and International Non Governmental Organizations with essential information on the influence of language related factors on academic performance among urban refugees. Urban refugees can be given equal access and quality education by the government by ensuring that they are taught and tested in languages they understand as they learn the official languages. Teachers handling urban refugee pupils could be given special training and where possible teachers who share the urban refugees' cultures could be hired to assist in the implementation of the curriculum. Above all, suitable language teaching methods and strategies could be adopted to ensure quality teaching and learning among urban refugees in Kenya.

## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

<b>EFA</b>	Education for All
<b>KCPE</b>	Kenya certificate of primary education.
<b>LO1</b>	Language of instruction
<b>L1</b>	First language [mother tongue
<b>L2</b>	Second language
<b>LP</b>	Language Policy
<b>MOE</b>	Ministry of Education
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>US</b>	United States
<b>UDHR</b>	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organizations
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1. Background of the study

The biggest obstacle to Education for All (EFA) goals is the use of foreign languages for teaching and learning; United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2005). Alidou (2009) posits that underachievement is not experienced by learners because they have inherent cognitive problems but due to the fact that most learners do not fully master the language of instruction. Language may not be the only reason that accounts for learners low academic performance but it is a significant determinant that accounts (UNESCO, 2005). The World Bank establishes the detrimental effects of using a foreign language; children who speak a language other than the language of instruction confront a substantial barrier to learning (Lockheed & Verspour 1991, in Mazrui 1997).

The deprivation of linguistic minorities of the right to develop and use their language for access to education and information has been, under current human rights provision be considered and classified as a crime against humanity or even linguistic genocide depending on the magnitude of case (Skutnabb-kangas, 2008). Children living in refugee camps and settlements, or internally displaced, whose security has been shattered often violently, and who have lost or have been separated from friends and family members have lived in a state of despair.

Education however provides a vehicle for rebuilding refugee children's lives, through social interaction and gaining knowledge and skills for their future lives. In the absence of education, the alternative is depression and idleness for some, and for others, a range of antisocial activities and the thought of revenge through a renewal of arm conflict (Nicolai & Triplehorn, 2003)

The right to education of refugee and internally displaced children is enshrined in human rights laws and conventions; it is recognized that for children whose lives are affected by war, violence, displacement and the general disruptions of normal life, education plays an important role in providing protection (The Universal Declaration of Human Right, 1948). Many refugees however do not perform well in school and others even drop out of school due to their inability to speak the language of instruction. Instructions through a home or local/regional language improve the quality and quantity of interaction between pupil and teacher (Hardman 1, 2008). Cognitive development and literacy is best fostered in a familiar language (Benson, 2002 & Alidou, 2006). Instructions in a home language ease the transition between home and school and children perform better if the language of instruction is a familiar language (Williams 1996; Tambulukani, 2011).

Research has shown that when students express themselves in a language they master in terms of content, they get much better results in assessment (Brock-Utne, 2011). The importance of local languages as languages of instruction cannot

be overestimated. If children are to master cognitively complex concepts, they can do this most easily by learning them in languages with which they are familiar. Asking them to learn subjects such as science and mathematics through a foreign language when their proficiency in the language is not sufficiently developed is sentencing them to failure. Not only does this lead to tragic personal consequences for the refugee students and their families but a waste of national resources. By allowing them to learn foreign languages when they are confident in their own identities and cultures, they will be able to understand English especially as an international language of communication and that hence the reason why it is worth learning, (Karanja, 2010).

Research from Botswana, MacDonald (1990) reveals that the switch from one medium of instruction [Setswana] to another in year 5, English was a major reason why students dropped out or had to repeat the class. They simply did not master the language of instruction and testing, which in this case was English. Students who learn through a language of instruction which they do not master are hence disadvantaged in assessment internally and internationally. The use of a foreign language in instruction, in Freirean terms, makes children objects of their world, rather than the subjects (Freire, 1973 in Gacheche, 2010). When a foreign language dominates instructions in schools, learners are bound to have questions, doubts and hesitations that remain unexpressed which could lead to dangerous resentments. (Gacheche, 2010). When an education system imposes a foreign language on children, disregarding their initial contact with language and pattern

of processing new information, it inhibits their development of cognitive function( Gacheche ,2010). Research has shown that children with strong first language skills are more ready and able to learn a second language. It is difficult to build a second language if the first language foundation is not established and supported while the second language is being learnt. To put a halt on the native language will only hurt the child's language growth and long term negative effects will be inevitable on urban refugee pupils.

The practice of punishing children when they speak their home language within the school compound further lowers the status of indigenous languages (Bunyi 2005). This is a widely occurring trend, yet government has not spoken out against it despite official policy advocating for first language use, propagating the low status ascribed to local languages (Thiong'o, 1986 & Muthwii, 2007).

Kenya implemented a language policy in schools in 1976 that decrees children are taught in their mother tongues in the first three years of primary school. In regions where different ethnicities reside, policy advocates use of Kiswahili alongside English (Eshiwani, 2003). The most comprehensive articulation of the Kenyan language policy is contained within the 2010 constitution of Kenya. In chapter 2, article 7, the constitution retains the status of Kiswahili as the national language and further elevates it to official status in addition to English (Kenya constitution 2010 chapter 2, article7). The constitution also clearly articulates the government's commitment to promote and protect the diversity of languages of

the people of Kenya. The Basic Education Act (2013) has adopted the 1976 language policy in education in Kenya (Eshiwani 1983) at such a time when refugee students' population in Kenyan schools continue to become increasingly diverse in terms of race, class, ethnicity and languages.

It is however notable that the urban refugees are not performing well in school especially in Kenyan remedial languages. Both Mwiki and New Eastleigh primary schools both located in urban areas and with refugee pupil population at 10% and 99% respectively have recorded a low performance in both English and Kiswahili languages as shown tables below. Good performance in languages is a pointer to the general performance of a pupil. (Mwiki and New Eastleigh primary schools' head teachers' offices). The maximum score a pupil can record is 100 marks in a subject.

**Table 1.1 KCPE Language Meanscores (2009-2013) for Mwiki and New Eastleigh Primary Schools' refugee pupils.**

SCHOOL	SUBJECT	YEAR				
		2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
MWIKI	ENGLISH	36.92	42.7	44.5	44.95	43.7
	KISWAHILI	35.9	47.6	50.33	30.15	33.17
NEW EASTLEIGH	ENGLISH	45.3	44.8	47.03	50.37	44.59
	KISWAHILI	42.7	48.5	49.82	43.30	40.56

Source; Head teachers' offices (Mwiki and New eastleigh primary schools)

The above results portray a poor performance in remedial languages among the urban refugees in New Eastleigh and Mwiki public primary schools. Though there may be many factors contributing to this performance, the aim of this research is to investigate the extent to which language related factors might be attributing to this low performance in the above named institutions.

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

Despite access to education being a right to every child, there seems to be language issues that impede the academic performance of urban refugees in public primary schools as reflected by the language performance of the urban refugees in Mwiki and New Eastleigh primary schools. These two schools are in urban areas and have high refugee learner enrolment, mwiki's 10% and New Eastleigh's 99% being refugee learners. In spite of all the efforts made by the government in ensuring access to education, refugee communities in enrolling the pupils and teachers for teaching, many refugee students are posting low language performance as reflected in results of New Eastleigh and Mwiki primary schools. This raises a desire to carry out a study on the extent to which language related factors are attributing to this low performance.

The study examined the contribution of language policy in education, when it is a problem for a remedial language to be different from home language, teaching and learning methods of the language in practice, consequently leading to the low performance of urban refugees students in New Eastleigh and Mwiki primary

schools and teaching strategies as per the remedial language that can be adopted with an aim of improving on the language performance.

### **1.3 Purpose of the study**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of language related factors on the performance of urban refugees in New Eastleigh and Mwiki primary schools.

### **1.4 Objectives of the study**

The study was guided by the following objectives;

- i To examine how language policy in Kenya influences academic performance of urban refugee learners in Kenya
- ii To establish the extent to which the language of instruction , if different from the home language influences the urban refugee learners' academic performance in Kenya.
- iii To establish how the methods used in teaching and learning the language of instruction influence the urban refugee learners' academic performance in Kenya..
- iv To suggest new teaching strategies as per the language of instruction with an aim of improving the urban refugee learners' academic performance in Kenya.

### **1.5 Research questions of the study**

The study was guided by the following research questions;

- i. How does the language policy in Kenya influence the urban refugee learners' academic performance in Kenya?
- ii. To what extent does the language of instruction, if different from the home language influence the urban refugee learners' academic performance in Kenya?
- iii. How do the methods used in teaching and learning of the language of instruction influence the urban refugee learners' academic performance in Kenya?
- iv. What teaching strategies as per the language of instruction can be adopted in order to enhance urban refugee learners' academic performance in Kenya?

### **1.6 Significance of the study**

The study findings could be significant to the education policy makers as they could understand how their policy decisions influence the urban refugee learners' academic performance, and possibly improve program design. The findings of the study could also be significant to Nairobi County Directors of Education, school boards of management, and Teachers and parents association of urban schools with refugee enrolment. The teachers of the urban refugee learners might find the suggested teaching and learning methods of the remedial language and teaching strategies as per the same relevant in an attempt to enhance the urban refugee learners' academic performance in New Eastleigh and Mwiki primary schools.

The research findings could also be applicable in any other urban schools enrolling urban refugee learners as it could add to the existing knowledge on influence of language related factors on urban refugee learners' academic performance.

### **1.7 Limitations of the study**

A limitation is an aspect of a research that may influence the results negatively and affect the generalizability of the results but over which the researcher has no control (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003).

The study experienced limitations because it took place at a time when the country was under terrorism threats and as a result, the government of Kenya had ordered refugees in camps to relocate to their countries of origin while those who had found their way to the urban areas were being repatriated back to the camps. This situation caused fear among the urban refugee pupils and seemed to withhold information for fear of identification and possible repatriation. The researcher however tried and assured them of confidentiality in the identities.

### **1.8 Delimitation of the study**

Delimitation is a purposeful and conscious action taken in order to make the research manageable (Kombo & Delno, 2006). The study confined itself to students of refugee origin, their teachers and the head teachers of two public primary schools, Mwiki and New Eastleigh, Kenya. While the New Eastleigh primary school has 99% of its population being urban refugees of Somali origin,

Mwiki primary school has about 10% of its population being urban refugees from Sudan, Rwanda, Ethiopia, DRC, Tanzania, Uganda and even Eritrea (institutional headmasters' offices, New Eastleigh and Mwiki primary schools).

### **1.9 Basic assumptions of the study**

The study assumed that the respondents were honest in their responses and that the grades scored in languages in the KCPE examinations reflect the true language ability of the learners.

### **1.10 Definitions of significant terms**

This section defines the significant terms used in the study.

**Academic performance** refers to grades representing the sample of achievement with respect to attained skills or knowledge

**First language** refers to the first language a child learns after birth

**Language policy** refers to all language practices, beliefs and management decisions of a community.

**Low academic performance** refers to the mean score below the pass mark

**Language barrier** refers to the hindrance emanating from the use of unfamiliar language

**Performance** refers to the students' academic achievement

**Refugee** refers to a person who has left his/her country of nationality and is unable or unwilling to return to the country of origin.

**Second language refers to** any other language that a child acquires

**Urban refugee** refers to forced migrants, victims of internecine strife, human rights abuse and prosecution who drift into towns and cities in search of refuge.

### **1.11 Organization of the study**

The study is organized in to five chapters. Chapter one consists of the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, limitations of the study, delimitations of the study, assumption of the study, definitions of significant terms and organization of the study. Chapter two focuses related literature on the topic under study and consists of introduction, concept of academic performance, influence of language policy on urban refugee learners' academic performance, influence of a remedial language on urban refugee learners' academic performance if differs from the home language, influence of teaching and learning methods, teaching strategies, summary of literature review, theoretical framework and conceptual framework. Chapter three presents the methodology applied in the research and consists of introduction, research design, target population, sample size and sampling procedure, research instruments, instrument validity, instrument reliability, data collection procedure and data analysis techniques. Chapter four contains the data analysis, interpretation and discussion of the research findings while chapter five consists of summary of the study, conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for further research.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter reviewed related literature of other scholars on concept of language policy in education and its impact on urban refugees academic performance, how a remedial language different from the home language influences urban refugee learners academic performance, influence of teaching and learning methods as per the remedial language and teaching strategies for improvement of urban refugee learners academic performance.

#### **2.2 Concept of academic performance**

Performance of students is part of the overall achievements of students in their examinations, be it internal or external including national examination in schools. It can be in form of passing examinations, tests, exercises, what the students can practically do, and how the society perceives the student in terms of the satisfaction they derive from the education obtained by the learners. It is as a process of establishing shared understanding about school outcomes.

The Oxford English Dictionary (2006) defines performance as the accomplishment and execution of tasks. The accomplishment of tasks in the content of the academic function of schools refers to academic excellence or efficiency which is measured in terms of students' performance in class work and national examinations. Effective school performance is further conceived as the

ability to produce desired education outcomes in relation to the school goals. In the context of teaching, performance refers to the teacher's ability to teach consistently with diligence, honesty and regularity. To the student, performance would mean excelling regularly in the examinations and inter-class tasks.

Campbell (1990) believes that performance is something a person regards as an outcome of work, because they provide the strongest link to the strategic goals of the organization, customer satisfaction, economic and social contributions. To sum it up, effective performance is concerned with results that impact on societal and organizational needs.

### **2.3 Influence of language policy on urban refugee learners' academic performance**

Language policy refers to all the language practices, beliefs and management decisions of a community ([Spolsky, 2004). Language policy therefore determines which language should get status and priority in society by being labelled 'standard', official, local or national. Language policy has the potential to legitimize marginalized languages and therefore manipulates and imposes language behavior (Shohamy, 2006)

Many countries use one or more languages in school that are not local languages. The language of Education is normally the official national language, or foreign language considered important for people to learn. Some governments stipulate that one or more of these languages must be used in schools. Others such as South

Africa and India have policies stating that primary schools should use the languages spoken by children at home, often called their mother tongue or first language. However, even in these countries, in practice, many government or private schools still use official or foreign languages for teaching, including at early grades.

Policy makers assume that all they have to do is spell out how language is to be used in education, and principals, teachers and learners shall toe the line. All that has happened, however, is that the process has increased tensions and the actual outcomes, practices and effects of policy in education. Bamgbose (1991) notes, Kenya's policy makes sweeping statements about how language shall be used without specifying how the implementation process will be carried out, and the result is, the opposite of what is recommended has been going on, without any notice of the contradiction involved. Part of the reason this happens is that the top-down imposition fails to take into account the capacity of education departments to communicate the requirements of the policy (Probyn, 2005).

However language planning is a constant negotiation process of the interests of various social groups and their changing priorities and should therefore consider language practices first before writing policy. There is lack of language of communication that empowers refugee student intellectually, socially, emotionally and politically by using the host country's language to impact knowledge, skills and attitudes in order to improve their academic performance.

Gary (2000) asserted that teachers who use the different languages for refugeesø students use the cultural knowledge, prior experiences and performance styles of diverse students to make learning more appropriate and effective for them. It teaches to and through the strengths of these students in order to improve their academic performance. According to Hamilton and Moore (2001), increasing exposure to the host language should be a goal while providing encouragement for the maintenance of the native language.

Pinnock claims that children experience higher failure rates in school if the language they learn at school is different from the one spoken at home. In 2008, (UNESCO) conducted research across 26 countries showing that over 50% of students who dropped out of school did not speak the language in which they were being educated. This applies to the United States as well. A 2012 report by the American psychological Association noted that latino students who spoke one language at home and another at school were at increased risk of graduating rate or dropping out of school.

An American counselor in conversation with the then US senator notes that a real education is one that gives a child an understanding of himself, his world, his culture, his community, that is what makes a child hungry to learn, the promise of being part of something, of mastering his environment (Obama 1993).

If language policy does not meet its objectives, the cost of its failure will be felt across all sectors of society rather than just by those disadvantaged by the system.

A critical approach to language policy can reverse the hegemonic tradition of policy, where entrenched and accepted institutional practices ensure power remains in the hands of a few. The status a language acquires depends a lot on government support for it. One way the government can improve indigenous language status is by increasing its functional uses (Hornberger 2006). Thus, making local languages language of instruction means they can be used beyond the home, the languages gain greater values in the community. In this way, local languages can begin to be viewed as a valuable resource and thrive alongside global languages.

#### **2.4 Influence of language of instruction that is different from the home language on urban refugee learners' academic performance**

While many factors affect education quality, the language of classroom instruction fundamentally implants whether a child is able to read and learn. This is because learning in one's first language is essential for the initial teaching and reading (Dutcher & Tucker 1999). Yet an estimated 221 million children speak languages not used as the primary medium of instruction in the formal school system (Dutcher, 2004), creating significant obstacles for teaching and learning (Pinnock, 2005).

A study done in Thailand by Hugo Yu-Hsiu Lee shows that language learning programs at urban refugee shelters are at risk to create enormous large social inequality for urban refugee children and adolescents from their Thai

counterparts, because of languages they do not offer to teach. On the one hand, formal schooling interrupted refugee children and adolescents do not receive regular Thai language assistance, but they are entitled to enroll in a local Thai school. (Hugo Yu-HsiuLee,

These children arrive on the first day of school with thousands of oral vocabulary words and considerable phonemic awareness in their mother tongue, but are unable to use and build upon their skills. Dismissing this prior knowledge, and trying to teach children to read in a language they are not accustomed to hearing or speaking makes the teaching of reading difficult especially in under resourced schools in developing countries.

As a result, many students repeat or drop out of school, while those who stay in school lack basic literacy skills and have not mastered content knowledge. Despite growing evidence that mother tongue based bilingual or multi lingual education is crucial to improving education access and quality (UNESCO, 2008; Heugh, 2007). Implementation of mother tongue based education policies continues to be hampered by political debates that are not focused on what best facilitates children's learning, leading to insufficient investment in teacher training and instructional materials in local languages. Furthermore, investments that are made by donors, governments, and others are wasted as millions of children are either excluded from school, drop out, repeat of grades or fail to learn because they do not understand the language used in school

## **2.5 Influence of methods used in teaching and learning of the language of instruction on urban refugee learners' academic performance**

A research carried out by Karanja, (2010) at Baraka primary school Nairobi observed that to a large extent, teachers used whole-class, and teacher centered methods, with minimal teacher-student and student-student interactions. Teacher-student interactions were limited mainly to the teacher asking questions and the student providing answers. In addition, teachers did not use teaching aids to enhance their lessons. The classroom walls were bare; visuals such as charts, maps and drawings were conspicuously absent. Consequently students learn mainly through rote memorization and their creativity and critical thought were stifled (Karanja, 2010).

Benson(2004), found that when teachers are not native speakers of the child's first language or lack sufficient training on how to carry out mother-tongue based teaching, they avoid the 'unknown good' and regress to the 'known bad'. That is, teachers revert to old system of teacher centered instructions, while pupils are merely required to repeat content after the teacher and given little room to ask a questions or express hesitations they may have. Kenyan lessons show that classroom interactions in second language dominant schools are dominated by safe talk, where teachers make little demand on learners, encourage oral answers, repetition of phrases and copying of notes from chalkboards or textbooks, undermining efforts to bring up a new generation of teachers (Stenhouse, 1971).

## **2.6 Teaching strategies as per the language of instruction that can be adopted in order to enhance urban refugee learners' academic performance**

A strategy is a new way of with an aim of achieving a goal. The term strategies refer to the fact that we have different methods to approach and solve a problem or a task (Brown, 2000). Every person has his or her own personality traits that definitely affect their learning. Sometimes we are not even aware of them, but it is important for the learner to know different ways of learning so they can benefit as much as possible from the language of instruction. In second language learning classroom, it is important to make space and time for the learner's varying strategies in order to optimize the learning process. It can be considered the teacher's responsibility to introduce different methods in order to touch all strategies and styles.

According to Blooms taxonomy that was related to education and language learning, three concepts, recalling, responding and valuing were defined. In the process of learning a second language, the learners have to be receptive to whom they are communicating with and to the language itself. They need to be responsive to the persons they are interacting with and to the context, and finally they must value the communicative act (Brown, 2000). Understanding how human beings feel and respond believe and value is an exceedingly important aspect of theory of second language acquisition (Brown, 2000). According to Brown (2000), an optional and successful learning situation is due to the teacher's attention both to linguistic performance and emotional well being.

If refugee children are to attend mainstream content classes, one way that teachers can help make accommodation for them is by examining the language of the classroom. Comprehensible input is necessary for second language development. Krashen, (1982) argues that it is necessary to have input that is just slightly beyond what learners know. Cummins, (1988) supports the necessity of comprehensive input and argues that it is much better given in content classes where the second language is actually used to convey meaning, rather than teaching the language as a subject itself. He asserts that the ideal program is one with a bilingual teacher, modified language input and first language promotions.

While including refugee children in mainstream classes is considered good practice, there might be some occasions where withdrawing them is appropriate. Reasons for withdrawal might include helping total beginners with Basic English literacy, focusing on specific problems or assignments, and allowing traumatized students to develop a trusting relationship with an adult. As with mainstream, the benefits of pull-out classes accrue when they are well planned. Any withdrawal should be discussed with students and teachers (Rutter, 1994) it is important to focus pull out classes to meet the specific needs of students and link the classes to content courses in order to maximize relevancy (Van Hees, 1997) if pull out lessons are not made relevant to the students, they may feel that they are losing valuable time in their content courses (Lewis, 1998).

Newly arrived refugee children are paired with both second language and second language peers (Barnard, 1998 & Van Hees, 1997).it can be useful to have tutors to help new students become familiar with the expectation of their new school. Pairing a new refugee student with an English speaking peer can enable the refugee child to learn how the system works. It will also give the refugee student an opportunity to create friendships and to practice using English.

The ideal situation for first language education is to identify teachers who are fluent in the language familiar with the local culture and respected by others in the community (Young, 2009). In communities with an insufficient number of trained teachers, the use of community assistants, speakers of the local languages who can receive some training to help trained teachers communicate curriculum content, can help bridge gaps between teacher and learners. While specific teachers can do specific things in their classrooms, it is also important to consider the context of the entire school. Helping refugee children with the task of learning a second language and acculturating to the new society should be seen as the responsibility of all teachers not some (Rutters 1994).

## **2.7 Summary of literature review**

The enrolment of refugees in urban schools in Kenya is rising by the day and continues to become increasingly diverse in terms of race, class, ethnicity and language. Language barrier continues to create problems for refugee children in schools world over. The 2010 (EFA) report advices that to effectively teach the

around 221 million children worldwide who speak a different language at home from the one used for instruction in schools, there is need to first teach them in their home language while gradually introducing the national or official language.

The Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) notes that people learn best when they are taught in a language they understand well (Darkar Framework for Action 2000). UNESCO (2005) adds that one of the biggest obstacle to Education for All (EFA) remains in place; the use of foreign languages for teaching and learning.

Reviewed literature has shown that language relate factors can affect the academic performance of the urban refugees negatively and an affirmative action would be necessary to bring them to the level of others. The gap remains in the strategy of doing so enabling them compete favorably with others.

## **2.8 Theoretical framework**

The theoretical framework adopted in this study was derived from the multiple intelligence theory discovered by a psychologist, Howard Gardener, in 1983 in his book *Frames of mind*. The theory suggests that there are at least seven ways that people have of perceiving the world. Gardner labels each of these ways distinct intelligence in other words, a set of skills allowing individuals to find and resolve genuine problems they face.

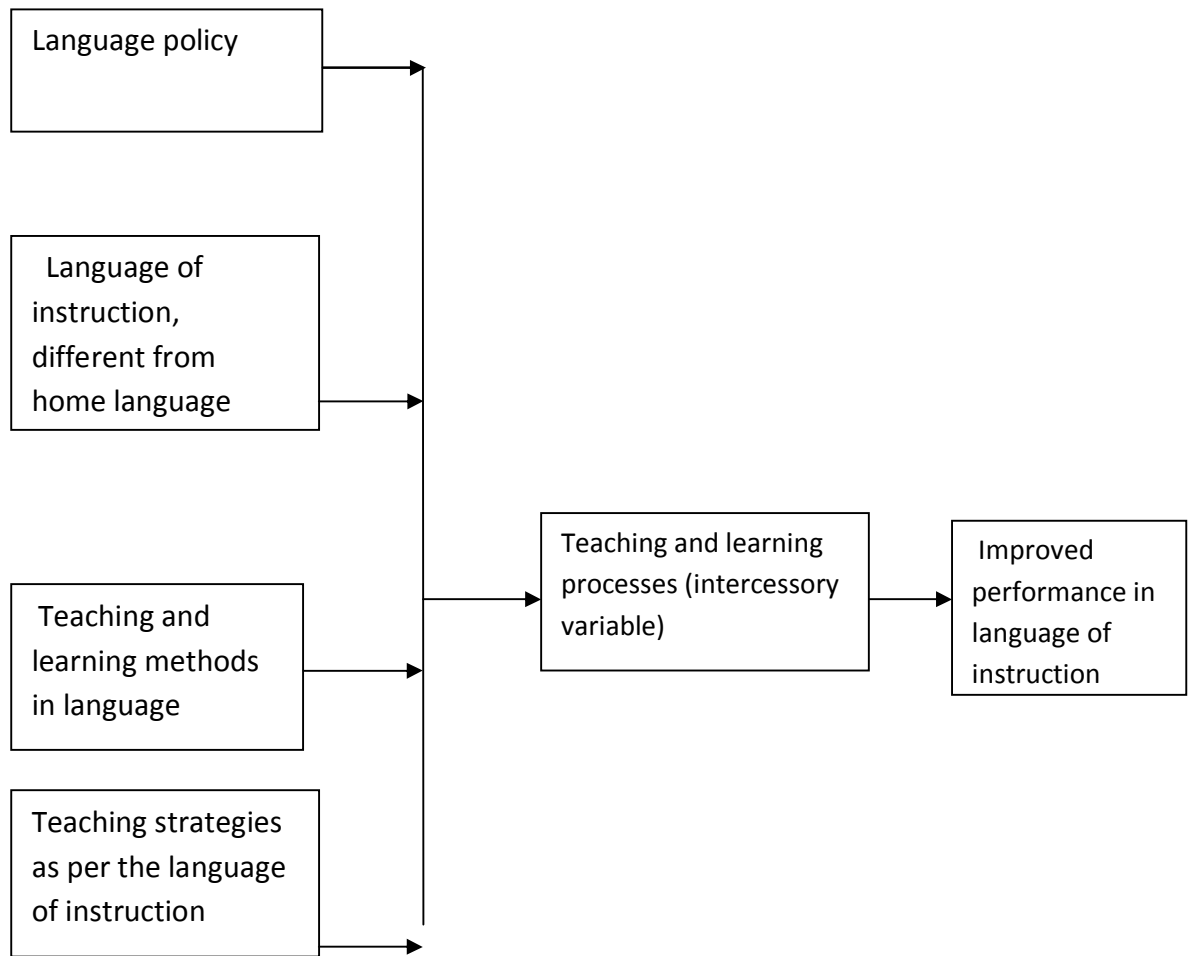
One of these ways of intelligence is linguistic intelligence that involves sensitivity to spoken and written language, the ability to learn languages and the

capacity to use language to accomplish certain goals. This intelligence includes the ability to effectively use language to express oneself rhetorically or poetically; and language as a means to remember information. Writers, poets, lawyers and speakers are among those that Howard Gardner sees as having high linguistic intelligence. The reason of adopting this theory was that it was related to the variables in the study.

## **2.9 Conceptual frame work**

Conceptual framework is the result of what a researcher conceptualizes as the relationship between variables in the study and shows the relationship graphically or diagrammatically (Mugenda & Mugenda 2000). A conceptual definition is an element of the scientific research process in which a specific concept is defined as a measurable occurrence or in measurable term. Independent variables are those variables which are systematically varied by the research. On the other hand, dependent variables are those variables whose values are presumed to depend on the effects of the independent variables (Mugenda, 2008). Below is an illustration of the above.

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**Figure 2.1 language related factors that influence the urban refugee learners’ academic performance**

In conceptual framework it was conceptualized that academic performance of the urban refugee learners was influenced by language in education policy, problems cause by a remedial language on learners whose home language is different. The teaching and learning methods of the remedial language also influence the urban refugee learners academic performance as well as the teaching strategies used in teaching the urban refugee learners the remedial language.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1. Introduction**

This chapter deals with methodological procedures employed in the study. This consists of; research design, target population, sample size and sampling procedure, research instruments, validity of instruments, data collection instruments and data analysis techniques.

#### **3.2. Research design**

The study adopted a case study design. According to Kumar, (2005), a case study is an approach to studying a social phenomenon through a thorough analysis of an individual case. The case can be a person, group, episode, process, community, society or any other unit of social life. The approach rests on the assumption that the case being studied is typical of cases of a certain type so that, through intensive analysis, generalizations may be made that can be applicable to other cases of the same nature. The research aimed at gathering accurate information on influence of language of instruction on urban refugee pupils' academic performance in Mwiki and New Eastleigh primary schools in Kiambu and Nairobi counties respectfully

#### **3.3 Target population**

Kombo and Tromp, (2006), define a population as a group of individual objects or items from which samples are taken for measurement. The study targeted two

schools with high population of urban refugee pupils in Kenya. The study comprised two head teachers, a total of 100 teachers from both schools and a total of 120 class eight 2014 urban refugee pupils in both schools.

### **3.4 Sample size and sampling procedure**

According to Orodho and Kombo (2002), sampling is the process of collecting a number of individuals or objects from a population such that the selected group contains elements representative of the characteristics found in the entire group. Sampling is done in order to give the research a more manageable group for the purpose of the study. The study used two sampling techniques namely; purpose sampling and simple random sampling. The target population of 222 respondents was used, 2 headteachers, 100 teachers and 120 urban refugee pupils. A sample size of 82 respondents was used, 2 headteachers, 30 teachers (30%) from the schools that were represented (Orodho 2002) as well as 30, 30% of the urban refugee class eight pupils in New Eastleigh and all the 20 urban refugee pupils of Mwiki primary school. The two head teachers from both schools and the 20 Mwiki urban refugee pupils were purposefully sampled. The sample size therefore comprised of 82 respondents; 2 head teachers and 30 teachers, and 50 urban refugee pupils from targeted schools.

**Table 3.1 Target population and sample size**

<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Target population</b>	<b>Sample population</b>	<b>%</b>
head teachers	2	2	100%
Teachers	100	30	30%
NewEastleigh refugee pupils(class8)	100	30	30%
Mwiki primary refugee pupils(class8)	20	20	100%

Simple random techniques was used to come up with a representative sample size for teachers and pupils then analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative techniques. The data was presented in form of figures and tables.

### **3.5 Research Instruments**

Structured questionnaires were used in this study in addition to in depth interviews with the heads of the two schools. Focus group discussions were also used among the pupils as the researcher also used observation as much as time will allowed. Orodho and Kombo, (2003), states that in questionnaires, respondents fill in answers in written by the researcher, and the researcher collects the forms with the completed information. They included questionnaires, one for the teachers and the other for the pupils, both with open ended and closed ended questions. The open ended questions gave qualitative data while the closed ended questions gave quantitative data.

### **3.6 Instrument validity**

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) "Validity is the accuracy and meaningfulness of inferences which are based on the research results. It establishes whether the questionnaire content is measuring what it is supposed to measure. Validity is thus the degree to which results obtained from analysis of the data actually represent the phenomenon under the study. The study adopted content validity which indicates whether the test items represented the content that the test is designed to measure. A pilot study was carried out in New Kihumbuini, Riruta, to assist in determining clarity, accuracy and suitability of the instrument. To ensure validity, the instruments used in the study were examined by the supervisors and other Reliability academic experts in the department to ensure validity.

### **3.7 Instrument Reliability**

Reliability is the consistency of measurement, or the degree to which an instrument measures the same way each time it is used under the same conditions with the same subjects. In short, it is the repeatability of the measurement. A measure is considered reliable if a person's score on the same test given twice is similar. It is important to remember that reliability is not measured; it is estimated (Mustonena & Vehkalahti, 1997)

The split half technique, according to Babble, (2010) is used to test the reliability of the instruments. One testing session was administered to the selected sample

group. The scored items were then divided into two, with all odd items in one group and the even items in another group. The total score for each group was then computed and correlated. The resulting coefficient indicated the degree to which the two halves of the test provided the same results, and hence described the internal consistency of the test. The reliability coefficient was calculated as follows:

$$r = \frac{2\sum XY - (\sum X)(\sum Y)}{\sqrt{[2\sum X^2 - (\sum X)^2][2\sum Y^2 - (\sum Y)^2]}}$$

### 3.8 Data collection procedure

The administration of research data collection instruments was done by the researcher both at pilot and main study. A research permit was obtained from the National Council of Science, Technology and Innovation through an introduction letter by the University of Nairobi. Subsequent clearance to carry out research was obtained from the county commissioner and county director of education. The researcher visited each school and administered in depth interviews with the heads as well as the questionnaire to the teachers and pupils after explaining to the respondents their expected role in the research. Focus group discussion was also held among the urban refugee pupils in both schools

### **3.9 Data analysis techniques**

Analysis of data started with checking gathered raw data for accuracy, usefulness and completeness. After data cleaning, the data was coded and entered in the computer for analysis. Analysis procedures employed involved both qualitative and quantitative procedures. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency counts and percentages. Quantitative data analysis required the use of a computer spreadsheet, and for this reason the statistical package for social sciences was used. Martin and Acuna, (2002) states that SPSS is able to handle large amount of data, and given its wide spectrum of statistical procedures purposefully designed for social sciences, it is also quite efficient. Qualitative data was analyzed using content analysis based on analysis of meanings and implication emanating from respondent information and comparing responses to the data gathered on refugee education. The qualitative and quantitative data was presented in line with the objectives of the study. The results of data were then presented using frequency distribution table, pie charts and bar graphs.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This study was conducted to examine how language related factors influence academic performance of urban refugees. It sought to establish the extent to which language policy in Kenya, the remedial language if different from home language and how the methods used in teaching and learning the remedial language also influences their performance and suggested new teaching strategies as per the remedial language with an aim of improving the urban refugee academic performance.

Data collected was analyzed using SPSS package and results are presented in this section using descriptive statistics

#### **4.2 Demographic characteristics**

The distribution of the demographic data of the Teachers and pupils was established and this included the gender, professional qualifications, length of service in their respective schools, and the levels taught by the teachers; and the age of the pupils. The results were presented in the tables below.

**Table 4.1: Age distribution of the refugee pupils**

Age	Frequency	Percentage
Below 14 yrs	4	8.0%
14-18 yrs	41	82.0%
Above 18 yrs	5	10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>

The table 4.1 shows that out of the 50 refugee pupils under study, the majority 41 (82.0%) were aged in between and including 14-18 years. Four (8.0%) were below 14 years while 5 (10%) were above 18 years.

The table also shows that out of the 50 refugee pupils used as respondents, some were too young while others were actually young adults of both sexes. This is explained by the fact that above 5(10%) were above 18 years of age while 4 (8%) were below 14 years.

**Table 4.2 Demographic Information of the teachers**

<b>Demographic Factors</b>	<b>Variable</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
<b>Length of service in the school</b>	Below 3 years	13	44.8
	3-5 years	6	20.7
	6-8 years	6	20.7
	Above 8 years	4	13.8
<b>Levels taught</b>	Lower pr	1	3.4
	Upper pr	26	89.7
	Both	2	6.9

The study sought to find out the length of time teachers had spent in the schools and found out that 13 (44.8%) had spent less than 3 years, 6 (20.7%) had spent 3-5 years and another 6(20.7%) 6-8 years. Only four were in the school for a period of more than 8 years. The gradual reductions in the length of time spent by teachers in the schools explain the high rates of dissatisfaction among them. This can also be attributed to the fact that most of the teachers find better jobs to do since they are degree graduates and they take the opportunity as a stepping stone into better jobs or other careers.

Also most of the teachers teach in the upper primary as represented by 26 (89.7%) respondents. One (3.4%) teaches the lower classes while 2 (6.9%) teach both the lower and upper primary classes. This shows that there is understanding at this level which is very critical in language development as noted by Benson(2004) who said that mother tongue based teaching improves academic performance of the pupils. It was however noted that none of the teachers shared the home language or culture of the refugee pupils hence experienced both language and cultural barriers.

The study also sought to find out whether there are refugees in the schools and the response was positive since the study was carried out in an area where urban refugees have settled. It also indicates that the refugee pupils are in large numbers since all the teachers who teach different classes both in lower or upper primary confirmed that refugees are among the pupils in the schools.

**Figure 4.1 Teachers' gender parity**

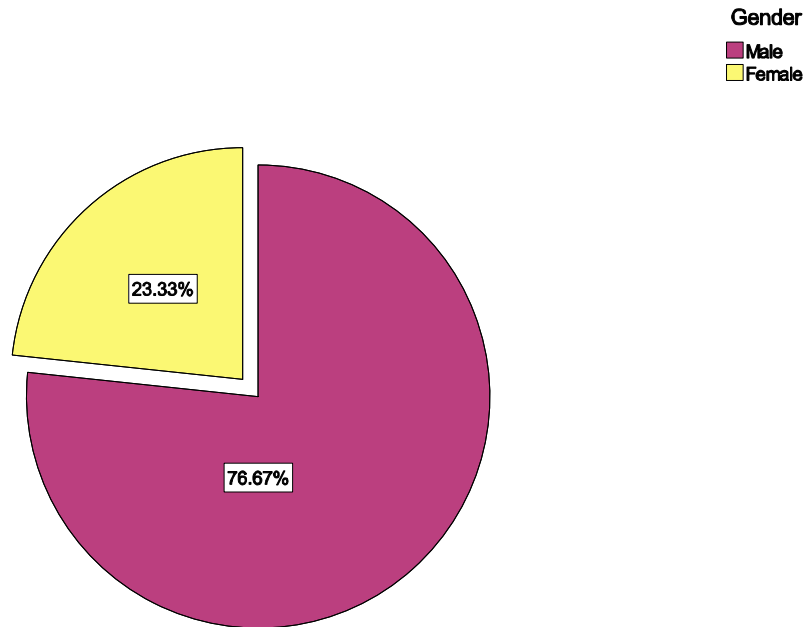


Figure 4.1 shows that majority of the respondents were males at 76.67% and females at 23.33%. This is a point of concern given the gender imbalance in favor of males as depicted by the study yet majority of the refugee pupils were girls though the study did not seek to know whether they were comfortable with the situation, it is assumed that girls may be more free to communicate their discomforts to female teachers preferably from the same background.

**Figure4.2 Professional qualification of teachers**

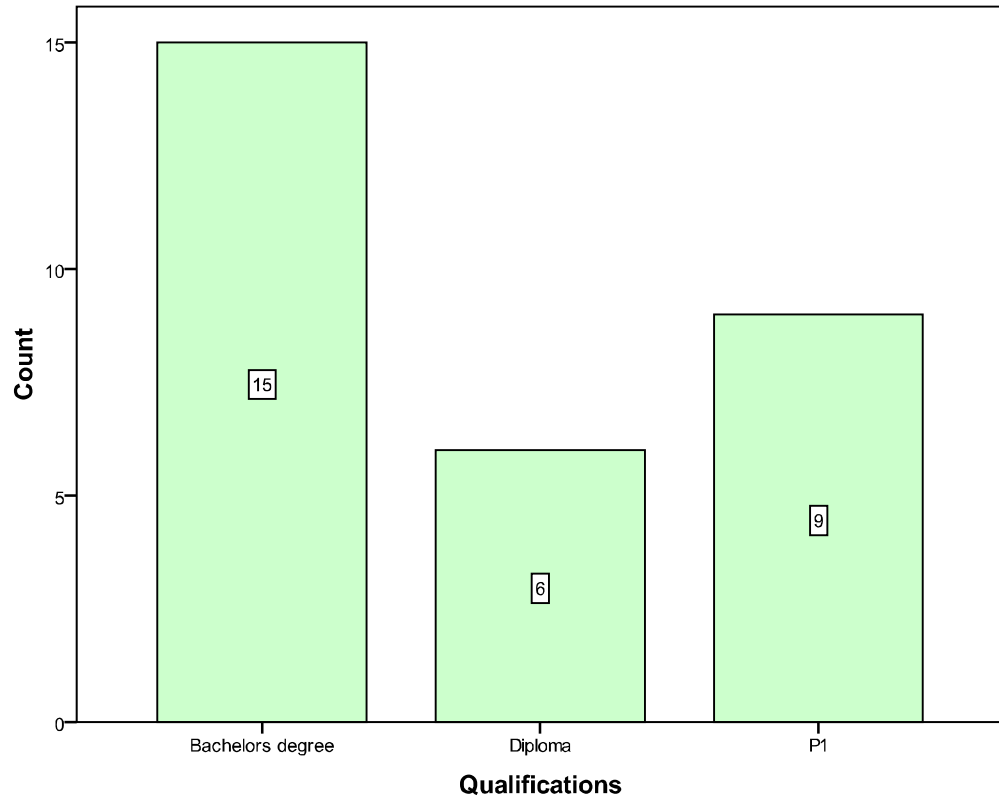


Figure 4.2 Shows that the professional qualification attained by most of the teachers is Bachelors degree at 50% (15) of the respondents, followed by P1 teachers with a percentage of 30% (9 respondents) while 6 (20%) were diploma holders. No other qualifications were recorded. The study showed that most of the teachers have the necessary qualifications to teach and address the challenges pupils face in relation to language and academic performance.

According to Brown (2000), an optional and successful learning situation is due to the teachers' qualification and experience in dealing with both linguistic performance and emotional well being.

#### **4.3 Influences of language policy in Kenya on academic performance of urban refugees.**

The study gave special attention to the language policy in Kenya with focus on education. Even though most of the Kenyans cannot adequately use English, it remains the official language and the medium of instruction in the education system while Kiswahili is the co-official language (Ogechi & Ogechi 2002). Other indigenous languages (given that Kenya is a multilingual and multiracial country ) were banned from being used in the education system because, as critics argued, teaching in mother tongue was archaic, a waste of time in this era of globalization and irrelevant given the status English commands as the language of technology.

The languages spoken by the pupils while at home were assessed as they contribute either positively or negatively to the understanding of the pupils in their academics. The information was tabulated as shown below.

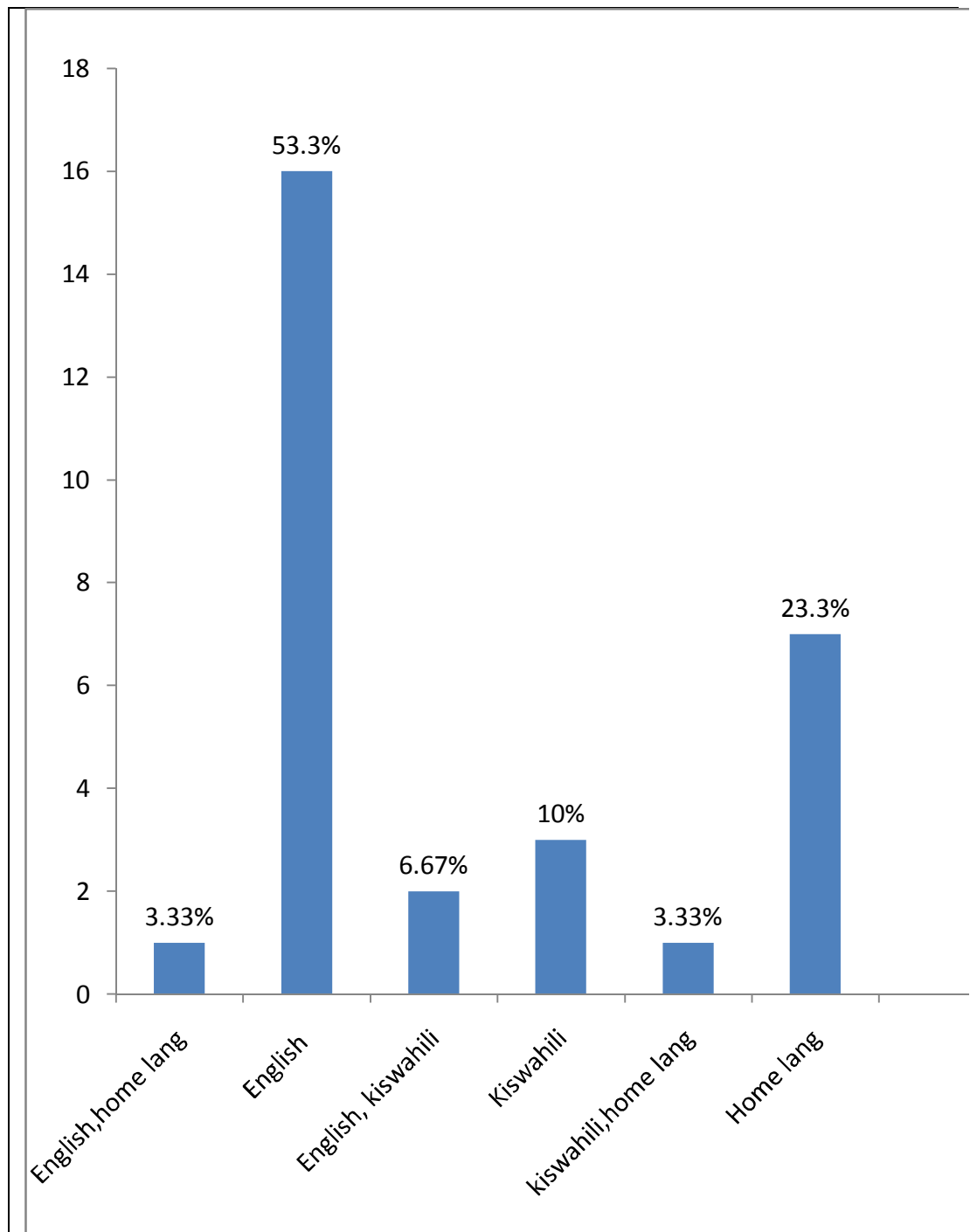
**Table 4.3 Languages spoken at home by urban refugee learners**

Home language	Frequency	Percentage %
English	4	8.0
Kiswahili	8	16.0
Other languages (Somali,Dinka,Italiano)	38	76.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 4.3 shows that quite a large number of pupils speak other languages a part from the languages used in school. This is represented by 38 (76.0%) pupils. Most of the respondents under this category indicated that they use Somali language which explains the large number of Somali refugees in Kenyan camps; few speak Dinka while others Italiano. Those who speak Kiswahili language at home were 8 (16%) and few 4(8%) speak in English. English and Kiswahili are the languages used in the Kenyan education system and pupils who have little understanding of the languages find it difficult to learn effectively.

The study sought to find out the languages used freely by the refugee pupils at school and the pupils' responses are depicted by the figure below;

**Figure 4.3: Refugee pupils' report on Languages they speak in school**



The above figure shows the languages refugee pupils comfortably used at school. It shows that majority used English at 53% followed by their home languages (others) or vernaculars at 23%. Kiswahili is less used by the refugee pupils at school 10% and this is reflected in their performance in the same as a subject. The rest combined different languages while at school. English and others at 3%, English and Kiswahili at 7% and Kiswahili and others rated at 3%.

The study then sought to know the languages used by teachers in class and the respondents (pupils) results are presented in the table below

**Table 4.4 Languages used by teachers in class**

Subject	Counts	Percentage %
English and Kiswahili	36	75.0
English	10	20.8
Kiswahili	2	4.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 4.4 shows that most teachers use both English and Kiswahili to teach in class. The responses from the pupils show that 75% (36) of the teachers use both languages, 20.8% (10) use English and 4.2% use Kiswahili. Due to the different ethnic groups and hence the languages spoken by pupils, teachers have to employ

the usage of languages that can be understood by all or most of the pupils. English is therefore the best followed by Kiswahili.

The students' performance in various subjects including English, Kiswahili, mathematics and science and social studies was assessed to establish the impact of the languages used in school and at home on the academic performance of pupils and the information presented in the table below.

**Table 4.5 Refugee pupils' report on their performance in English, Kiswahili, Mathematics and Science/Social**

Subject	Number of respondents							
	Performance	English	%	Kiswahili	%	Maths	%	SS
Very good	16	32	3	6	12	24	25	50
Good	23	46	17	34	19	38	16	32
Average	8	16	23	46	14	28	8	16
Poor	3	6	6	12	4	8	1	2
Very poor	0	0	1	2	1	2	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 4.5 displays the performance of urban refugee learners in various subjects. Performance in English language was reported to be good as 46% (23) of the

respondents said they performed well in the subject. 32% (16) said they performed very well, 16% (8) said they were average while 6% (3) reported that they had a poor performance and none reported a very poor performance. English language is the language used in class and in examinations for all the subjects with an exception of Kiswahili. English language is also an international language and some of the refugee pupils encounter it in their original homes hence its popularity and good performance.

The performance in Kiswahili was worrying since only 17 (34%) had a good performance. Only 6 % ( 3) were very good in Kiswahili and quite a good number were on average performance as represented by 46% (23). Among the respondents, 12% (6) claimed to be poor in Kiswahili while 2% (1) claimed a very poor performance. The poor performance in Kiswahili can be attributed to the fact that most of the refugees speak different home languages other than Kiswahili. The cultural and linguistic heterogeneity of refugees that come to Kenya complicates the language situation in schools and this impact negatively to the pupils who have to learn together with their Kenyan counterparts. Therefore the pupils focus on learning the language other than getting the knowledge and skills necessary for better academic performance.

In mathematics, most of the pupils reported they were above average as 12 (24%) and 19 (38%) said they had a very good and good performances respectively. 14 (28%) claimed to have an average performance, 4 (8%) claimed a poor

performance while 1 (4%) said they had a very poor performance in the subject. Performances in sciences and social studies were also reported to be above average as 25 (50%) had a very good performance, 16 (32%) were good in the subject, 8 (%) were on average and 1 (2%) poor with none reported a very poor performance in the subjects. This report portrays an existence of subject performance imbalance in the academic performance of pupils. This could be as a result of the languages used in implementing the curriculum as this may have an effect on their performance. The subjects taught in English such as mathematics, sciences and social studies have quite a good performance since pupils also perform quite well in English. Kiswahili language is problematic to most refugees and its use in teaching might be contributing negatively toward the academic performance of the pupils given that performance in the subject itself is wanting.

Even though the use of both English and Kiswahili for instruction, with local languages occasionally being used alongside English and Kiswahili in the early primary grades, help in fostering national unity which is a crucial goal in the Kenyan education, the cultural and linguistic heterogeneity of the refugees should be taken into consideration. This is because their Kenyan counterparts encounter Kiswahili use in their daily life situations since it is a national language in the country.

Language attitude test can help elucidate whether the pupils support the use of remedial language in teaching. Their attitude in languages and language of

instruction may have direct effects on performances in other subjects. The study found that most refugee learners had a negative attitude towards Kiswahili and claimed they found it difficult. The refugee learners were asked to specify the subjects they liked and the reasons why and the report is presented in the tables below.

**Table 4.6 Subjects urban refugee pupils liked**

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
English	15	29.0
Science	21	41.0
Maths	10	20
Kiswahili	1	2
Social studies	3	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 4.6 show the subjects liked by the pupils and science was their favorite with a percentage of 42% (21) followed by English with a percentage of 30% (15) and Mathematics with 20% (10). The least liked subject was Kiswahili with 2% (1) which was close to social studies having 8% (4) of the respondents.

The reasons given for the above vary widely among the pupils as shown in the table below.

**Table 4.7 Refugee pupils' reasons for liking the some subjects**

<b>Reasons for liking the subject</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
Career progression	11	22
Easy to understand	20	40
popular	2	4
Favorite	1	2
Informative	1	2
Interesting	4	8
Practical	1	2
Easy application	2	4
Learner friendly	5	10
Undecided	3	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 4.7 revealed that the pupils liked the above subjects mainly because they were easy to understand 40% (20) and to some ambitious learners, they took them seriously because they aspired to major in careers depended on the subjects as 22% (11) responded positively to that. Other pupils liked the subjects since they are learner friendly as shown by 10% (5) of the respondents. Other reasons were due to their popularity (especially English), easy application during examinations (reading and cramming), being the favorite subject, some were interesting and others informative.

Further, the subjects students didn't like were also assessed and the information presented in the table below.

**Table 4.8 Refugee pupils' report on subjects they disliked**

Subject	Frequency	Percentage %
English	2	4
Maths	14	28
Kiswahili	23	46
Science	1	2
Social studies	4	8
None	6	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 4.8 clearly shows that pupils didn't like subjects that involved learning new languages apart from the commonly used ones. This could be proved by the large number of pupils who disliked Kiswahili, a language which most of them, especially the refugees who speak different mother tongue languages, were not conversant with. From the above table, it could be seen that 46% (23) didn't like Kiswahili, while only 4% (2) dislike English. English was therefore the most preferred language for instructing as opposed to Kiswahili which is the national language in Kenya but unknown to most of the refugees. 28% (14) didn't like

Mathematics, 8% (4) hated Social studies, 1 disliked science and 12% (6) didn't dislike any of the subjects.

The reasons why the pupils disliked the subjects were also assessed and the findings presented in the table that follows.

**Table 4.9 Refugee pupils' reasons for disliking some subjects**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
Uninteresting	5	10
Not practical	4	8
No career progression	3	6
Demands cramming	4	8
Difficult to understand	31	62
Uninformative	2	4
Undecided	1	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 4.9 shows that most of the pupils didn't like the subjects because they were difficult to understand as 62% (31) found them difficult. This could be attributed to the languages used in teaching the subjects and at the same time the methods used. One found the subjects uninformative at 2% while 8 % ( 4) found the subjects not practicable. Some had a negative attitude towards some subjects as they found them uninteresting 10 % ( 5). Those that demanded cramming were also disliked by 4 pupils at 8% while 3 (6%) disliked some subjects for failure to prepare one for career progression. One refugee pupil (2%) was undecided as to the cause of dislike of some subjects.

#### **4.4 The extent to which the remedial language, if different from home language, influences academic performance of urban refugees**

The second objective was to establish the extent to which the remedial language, if different from home language, influenced the academic performance of urban refugees in Mwiki and New Eastleigh Primary Schools. To achieve this, the teachers were asked to specify the extent to which the refugees' first languages affected their performance and the following table displays results from the findings.

**Table 4.10 Teacher’s opinion on the extent to which the language of instruction, if different from home language, influences academic performance of urban refugees**

<b>Extent</b>	<b>Counts</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
Very large extent	11	36.7
Large extent	18	60
No extent	1	3.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

From the above table 4.10, it was revealed that the language of instruction influenced the academic performance of the urban refugee to a large extent of 60% (18) and a very large extent of 36.7% (11). Only one respondent specified that the remedial language had no influence on the urban refugees’ academic performance and this constituted 3.3%. Most of the refugees in Mwiki and New Eastleigh Primary schools spoke different home language from the remedial language used in school. A large number of them spoke Somali language as their mother tongue. This, being different from the language of instruction, influenced their performance in academics to a great extent as it hindered effective

acquisition of the requisite knowledge and skills and therefore constitutes a violation of the learner's right of access to quality education.

The opinions of the respondents were also assessed through the comparison of the performance of locals with that of the refugee and this also revealed the influence the first language had on the academic performance of refugees. The results were tabulated as shown below.

**Table 4.11 Teacher' opinion on whether the host pupils performed better than refugees in various subjects**

	Teachers response		Number of respondents					
	English	%	Kiswahili	%	Maths	%	SS	%
<b>Strongly Agree</b>	10	33.3	21	70.0	3	10.0	4	13.3
<b>Agree</b>	8	26.7	3	10.0	3	10.0	6	20.0
<b>Neutral</b>	4	13.3	3	10.0	3	10.0	4	13.3
<b>Disagree</b>	5	16.7	1	3.33	15	50.0	10	33.3
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	3	10.0	2	6.67	6	20.0	6	20.0
	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 4.11 shows the opinions teachers gave on whether the host pupils performed better in various subjects as compared to refugees. It was strongly

agreed that the host pupils performed better in English language as 33.3% (10) indicated, 26.7% (8) shared the same sentiments. This could be attributed to the wide use of English language nowadays because it is a national language alongside Kiswahili and was the main language used in giving instructions. Other responses were negligible.

In Kiswahili, it was also strongly agreed that the locals performed better than the refugees as this was the language most people (more than 2/3 of Kenyans) are familiar with. Refugees found it difficult to learn the language as was highlighted that most of them even had a negative attitude towards it. 10% (3) agreed, 3.3% (1) disagreed while 6.67% (2) strongly disagreed. The opposite was realized in the responses given under mathematics as 50% (15) disagreed that locals performed better than refugee, 20% (6) strongly disagreed while the remaining percentage was shared among those who agreed, strongly disagreed and were neutral.

Performance in science and social studies was quite evenly distributed as 20 % (6) agreed the locals perform better, 13.3%(4) strongly agreed, also 13.3% (4) were neutral, 33.3% (10) disagreed while 13.3% (4) strongly disagreed. This explained that the performance of refugees was quite good in sciences, mathematics and social studies but the locals surpassed them in languages and especially Kiswahili which was always new to them at the start.

#### **4.5 Establishment of how the methods used in teaching and learning the remedial language influences refugees' academic performance**

Thirdly, the study assessed the methods that were used in teaching and learning the remedial language in order to find their influence on the refugees' performance. Head teachers of Mwiki and New Eastleigh primary schools were interviewed and the following information was revealed.

On the number of refugees in their schools, they said that they were many but did not specify the exact numbers. The two schools are located in areas that have high proportion of refugees especially Eastleigh. This forms a rich catchment for the schools and hence their enrolment. They said that the refugees were not well conversed with Kiswahili as a language of instruction. However, most of them could understand English. They therefore encouraged the pupils and teachers to speak and teach in English respectively. They said that teachers used questions in class and pupils participated in classroom discussions by giving answers to these questions.

The head teacher for Mwiki insisted that all pupils were treated equally with no special attention to particular groups and added that the refugees got assistance from their teachers just like any other pupil. The head teachers also complained of the lack of necessary resources like classrooms, reading books to facilitate explanations in classes and stated that government support was minimal.

#### 4.6 Suggestions on new remedial language teaching strategies

The fourth objective sought to find ways on how the refugees' academic performance could be improved and this included asking teachers and pupils to suggest on how it could be done best on their own experience. Their responses were captured and presented in the tables below.

**Table 4.12 Teachers' Suggestions for further improvement on urban refugees' academic performance**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Do more practice	5	16
Learn from lower classes	1	4
Remedial classes	14	48
Special attention	6	20
Use English at home	1	4
Use English in class	2	8
	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 4.12 shows that the suggestions given varied among the respondents as 48% (14) suggested that remedial classes needed to be introduced for urban refugees to learn the languages used to teach in class to enable them understand what they were taught hence help improve their academic performance. Some suggested that the pupils needed to do more practice to perform better and this accounted for 16% (5) of the respondents. This was important for the pupils as they could concentrate on reading more material to improve on their understanding of the languages. Generally, it was also recommended because practice makes perfect.

Furthermore, other respondents suggested that refugees should always start from the lower classes despite their age to help them learn how to use the languages first before they could continue with their education. Special attention was also emphasized as 20% (6) suggested, others said that English language should be used at home where the refugees resided as this could help them practice more on communicating in the languages used in class and in giving instructions. Some also suggested on the use of languages that could be easily understood by majority of the pupils in class such as English.

Head teachers on their part suggested that the Kenyan government should provide financial support to Mwiki and New Eastleigh schools to help them purchase teaching equipments that can facilitate learning in schools; they also asked other

organizations such as UNHCR to continue and even improve on the support they offered since that is part of their responsibility

**.Figure 4.4: Refugee pupils’ Response to Suggestions for their improved performance**

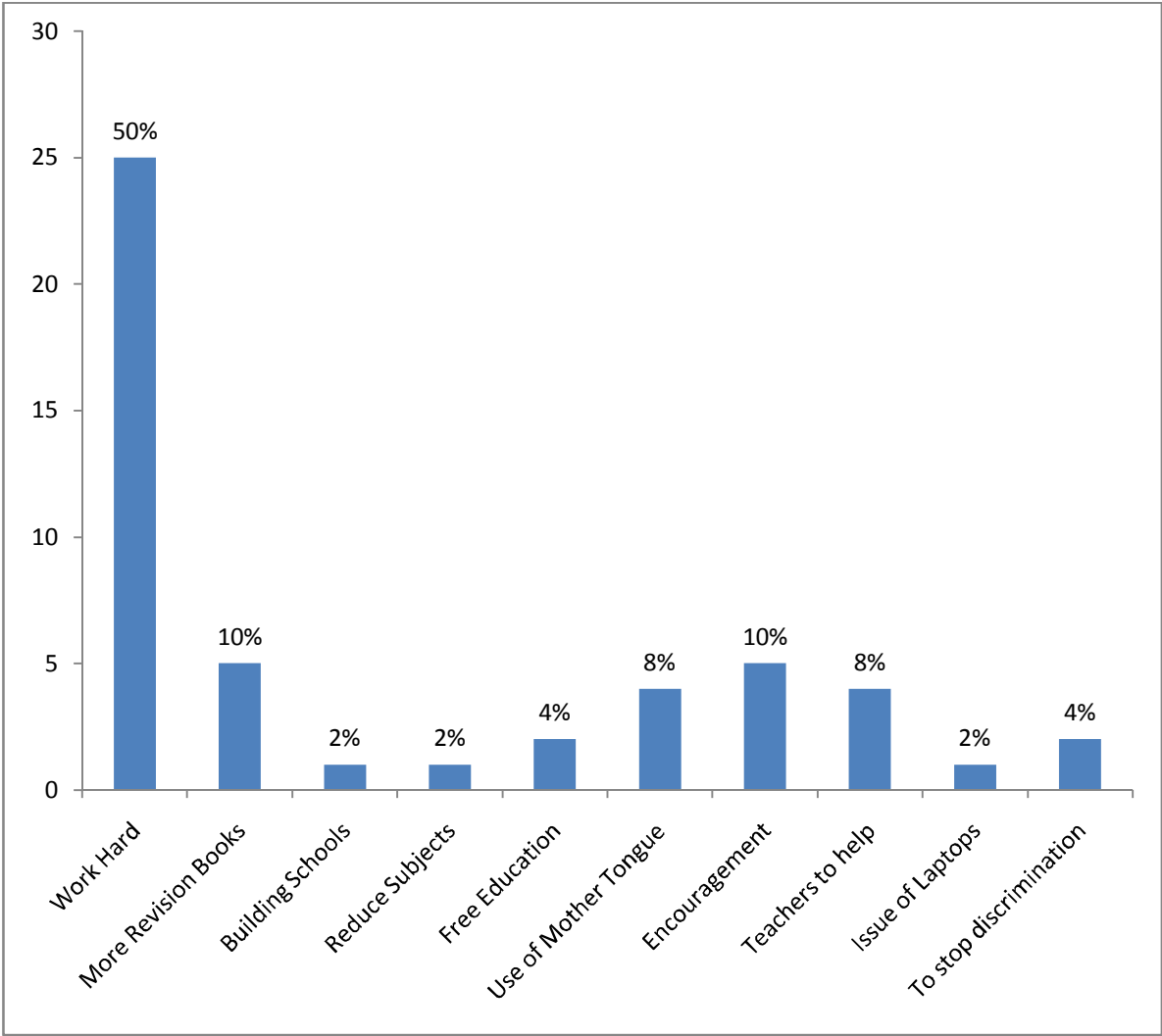


Figure 4.4 shows the suggestions given by the refugee pupil just like among the teachers varied widely. Half of them 50 % ( 25) however felt that there was need for them to work hard in the remedial language if they were to improve on their academic performance. The study found that there was a general feeling that an extra mile had to be covered by refugee pupils themselves as far as remedial language is concerned in order to mark an improvement in their academic performance.

Furthermore other refugee pupils suggested that more revision books could be handy 10 % ( 5) while others felt levies 4%(2) charged in schools keep them away from school hence the reason for not doing well academically. Use of mother tongue 8 % (4) in explaining concepts was also suggested as well as encouragement 10%(5) and assistance by the teachers 8%(4). A few suggested that both the teachers and the government should avoid discrimination 4 % ( 2) while dealing with the refugee pupils.

The study found that there seemed to be a consensus between the teachers and the refugee pupils response in the fact that more effort was required from the pupils and the teachers if language related factors influencing the refugee pupils academic performance were to be dealt with adequately. This was seen in the teachers suggestion for remedial classes 48%, special attention 20% more practice in the remedial language 16% for the urban refugee pupils.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY OF THE STUDY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, the summary of the findings of the study, conclusions, and recommendations are presented. The chapter is organized beginning with summary of the results, followed by the study findings, conclusions of the study and finally suggestions for further study.

#### **5.2 Summary of the study**

The study assessed the influence of language related factors on academic performance among urban refugees in Mwiki and New Eastleigh primary schools, Kenya. It examined how the language policy in Kenya influences academic performance of urban refugees in New Eastleigh and Mwiki primary schools. It sought to establish the extent to which the remedial language, if different from home language influenced their academic performance, to establish how the methods used in teaching and learning the remedial language also influences their academic performance and suggested new teaching strategies as per the remedial language with an aim of improving the urban refugee learners' academic performance in New Eastleigh school and Mwiki primary school.

Literature on language related factors influencing urban refugees' academic performance were reviewed. From the reviewed literature, it is clear that Kenya's policy makes sweeping statements about how language shall be used without specifying how the implementation process will be carried out, and the result is, the opposite of what is recommended has been going on, without any notice of the contradiction involved (Bamgbose 1991).

To a large extent, teachers used whole class and teacher centered methods, within minimal teacher-student and student-student interactions. Teacher-student interactions were limited mainly to the teacher asking questions and the student providing answers. In addition teachers did not use teaching aids to enhance their lessons. The classroom walls were bare; visuals such as charts, maps and drawings were conspicuously absent. Consequently students learn mainly through rote memorization and their creativity and critical thought are stifled (Karanja 2010)

If refugee children are to attend mainstream content classes, one way that teachers can help make accommodation for them is by examining the language of the classroom. Comprehensible input is necessary for second language development. Krashen (1982) argues that it is necessary to have input that is just slightly beyond what learners know. Cummins, (1988) supports the necessity of comprehensive input and argues that it is much better given in content classes where the second language is actually used to convey meaning, rather than

teaching the language itself. The ideal program is one with a bilingual teacher, modified language input and first language promotions.

### **5.3 Summary of findings**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of language related factors on the urban refugees' academic performance in New Eastleigh and Mwiki primary schools in Nairobi and Kiambu counties respectively. The study was guided by the following objectives; to examine how the language policy in Kenya influences academic performance of urban refugees, to establish the extent to which the language of instruction, if different from the home language influences the urban refugee learners' academic performance, to establish how the methods used in teaching and learning languages influences the urban refugee pupils' academic performance, and suggested new teaching strategies as per the language of instruction with an aim of improving the urban refugee pupils' academic performance.

The study found that languages used in instruction influenced refugee academic performances directly at (76%), as their performances in languages were poor especially Kiswahili at (8%) hence affecting performance in other subjects. The use of Kiswahili as the national language and English as the official, with local languages being used alongside them in the early primary grade was found to be unfair (12%) to the refugees. Pupils find it difficult to study a new language and at the same time apply the new study language in other subjects. The students who

speak one language at home and another in school were at increased risk of dropping out of school due to poor performance.

Another consequence of this is that two classes of learners is immediately created within a class that is the class of the advantaged (those who understand the languages well) and therefore included and that of the disadvantaged (those who do not understand the languages well) hence excluded. Those who use both English and Kiswahili are the advantaged while those who are not able to use both are remain disadvantaged. Teachers on their part said that lack of proper communication skills lead to poor performance of refugees. Another teacher added that the code-mixing between English and other local languages to explain concepts in class is a disadvantage to the refugees who do not understand the languages..

The study found that the use of both English and Kiswahili in learning environments affects the academic performance of refugees since most of them cannot understand the languages properly. Teachers specified that that this situation affects the academic performance of the refugees to a large extent.

These results prove the 2010 EFA report stated above in the literature review and hence emphasizing on the advice to effectively teach the refugees initially in their home language while gradually introducing the national or official language.

The findings of the study point to the ineffective classroom communication, which leaves the teacher as the dominant participant in classroom exchanges and

pupils providing minimal verbal contribution and hence gaining very little from the lessons. The study found that refugee pupils had challenges in different subjects; 12% indicated that they were poor in Kiswahili, followed by mathematics at 8%. 50% of the urban refugee pupils reported that they were very good in social studies, followed by English at 32%. Further they indicated science as the subject they liked most at 41% followed by English at 29%. The least liked subject was Kiswahili at 2%

All the classroom talk is initiated by the teacher and the pupils only respond to questions asked by the teacher. Pupils therefore become passive recipients. This rote learning is encouraged in all the lessons and pupils hardly ask questions in order for the teacher to gauge their understanding of the concepts learnt during the lessons. One-word answer questions are predominant and the answers given are mostly choral. Pupils therefore find it difficult to express themselves effectively in English, mark you, they were candidates preparing to sit for their final K.C.P.E exams.

The study suggested on various new teaching strategies to help improve the urban refugee academic performance and these included giving the pupils more attention while teaching in class, using languages that can be well understood by majority of the pupils, introducing remedial classes for teaching learners who do not understand the languages being used in class to enable them study the languages to improve their understanding, encouraging pupils to work hard and

practice speaking these languages even in their homes and to improve on student-teacher interactions.

The study found that language related factors influence the academic performance of urban refugees. Teachers specified that refugees' first language affects their performance to a large extent. The education system encourage learning through English and Kiswahili and mother tongue at the lower stages which is not fair to the refugees who speak in different home languages and find it difficult to toe the line as is assumed by the policy-makers. Refugees' academic performance in English and Kiswahili was wanting as compared to the locals and these affected their performances in other subjects. The subjects not well performed resonated mainly to poor understanding of the subjects and this is due to language influence. Teachers sometimes could use Kiswahili in explanations and this did more harm to the refugees' performance.

#### **5.4 Conclusions of the study**

This section deals with the conclusions made out of the findings in this study. The conclusions were made in line with the topic and research objectives. Based on the findings of the study, it was found that language related factors influence the academic performance of urban refugees. Both the head teachers and the teachers agreed that the language policy in Kenya is not in favor of the refugees for the policy makers assume that all they have to do is spell out how language is to be

used in education and the principals, teachers and learners shall toe the line. The use of English and Kiswahili as official education languages in impacting knowledge, skills and attitudes creates a gap and lack of language of communication that empowers the refugee pupils intellectually, socially, emotionally and politically. Real education is one that gives a child an understanding of himself, his world, his culture, his community, that is what makes a child hungry to learn, the promise of being part of something, of mastering his environment. Refugee pupils' performance in Kiswahili especially was wanting as compared to the locals and this affected their performance in other subjects. The study revealed that teachers sometimes used Kiswahili as a remedial language and this disadvantaged the refugee pupils who had no prior contact with the language.

The study established that many refugee pupils performed poorly because the language of instruction differed from home language. They did not understand the language used at school especially Kiswahili. In addition, the study established that teachers used whole class, and teacher centered methods, with minimal teacher-student interactions due to the large classes they had to contend with. Teachers did not use teaching aids to enhance their lessons. This state of affairs disadvantaged the refugee pupils who were learning the remedial language with the curriculum at the same time hence posted poor academic performance especially in Kiswahili.

Finally the study established that in second language learning classroom it is important to make space and time for the learners' varying strategies in order to optimize the learning process. It can be considered the teachers' responsibility to introduce different methods in order to touch all strategies and styles. Although the ideal situation for the first language education is to identify teachers who are fluent in the language familiar with the local culture, the use of community assistants, speakers of the urban refugee languages who can receive some training to help teachers communicate the curriculum content can bridge gaps between teachers and learners. Helping refugee children with the task of learning a second language and acculturating to the new society should be seen as the responsibility of all teachers not some.

### **5.5 Recommendations of the study**

It is evident that language related factors influence the academic performance of urban refugees in school as has been established by the study. In an attempt to change this state of affairs, the study recommended;

- i. The refugee pupils should be taught the language basics first before they join other pupils in the Kenyan school curriculum in order for them to build up their confidence and morale in the languages.

- ii. The education system should be all inclusive and hence take into consideration the contributions and perspectives of the different ethno cultural groups that make up the society and this includes the refugees.
- iii. The refugee pupils should also be given special attention during teaching just to ensure the languages being used in explanations can also be understood.
- iv. The refugee Pupils should be provided with an academically challenging curriculum that includes attention to the development of higher level cognitive skills.
- v. Teacher instructions should also focus on the creation of meaning about content by pupils in an interactive and collaborative learning environment.

### **5.6 Suggestions for further study**

This research was based on the influence of language related factors on the academic performance of the urban refugee pupils. For further improvement of the urban refugee pupils' academic performance, the study suggested further studies on the following;

- i. Further studies should be carried out to also unearth the influence of Kiswahili language on urban refugee pupils' academic performance

- ii. Social cultural barriers influencing academic performance among urban refugee pupils.
- iii. Social political challenges influencing urban refugees' academic performance.
- iv. Gender issues affecting urban refugees' academic performance.
- v. Other problems the refugees go through and how they affect their academic performance in school.

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## **APPENDICES**

### **APPENDIX 1: Letter of Introduction**

Kamau, Faith Wairimu

Box 7, 00902

Kikuyu, KENYA

Dear sir/madam,

#### **RE: PERMSSION TO COLLECT RESEARCH DATA**

I am a post graduate student at the University of Nairobi, currently undertaking a research to investigate the Influence of language related factors on urban refugees' academic performance in Mwiki and New Eastleigh primary schools.

I kindly request you to partner with me by completing the questionnaire given. Your identity will be treated with utmost confidentiality and you are requested not to indicate your name on the questionnaire. The questionnaires are only designed for the purpose of the study.

Your co-operation will be highly appreciated

Yours faithfully

Faith W Kamau

## APPENDIX II

### Teachers' Questionnaire

1. What is your gender? Male----- female-----
  
2. How long have you been in this school? Below 3yrs [ ] 3-5yrs [ ] 6-8 yrs [ ]  
above 8yrs [ ]
  
3. What levels do you teach? Lower [ ] upper [ ] both [ ]
  
4. What subjects do you teach? Languages [ ] maths [ ] sciences [ ]  
social studies [ ]
  
5. What are your highest professional qualifications?  
  
Masters degree---- bachelors degree----- Diploma-----P1-----others--specify-
  
6. Do you have urban refugee pupils in your class? Yes [ ] No [ ]
  
7. Which language(s) are the urban refugees pupils commonly use in  
communication?  
  
English [ ] Kiswahili [ ] others [ ] specify -----

8. What language(s) do you mostly use while teaching? English [  ] Kiswahili

[  ] both [  ] others [  ] specify-----

-----  
-----

9. How effective is\are the language(s) you use in class on the urban refugees?

Very effective [  ] fairly effective [  ] weakly effective [  ] not  
effective [  ]

10. Give reason for your answer -----

-----

11. To what extent do the refugees' first language affect their academic  
performance very large extent [  ] large extent [  ] no extent [  ]

12. Give your opinion on the following sentiments;

a Locals perform better in English than the refugees. Strongly agree [  ] agree [  ]  
neutral [  ] disagree [  ] strongly disagree [  ]

b Locals perform better in Kiswahili than the refugees. Strongly agree [  ] agree [  ]  
neutral [  ] disagree [  ] strongly disagree [  ]

c locals perform better than the refugees in maths. Strongly agree [  ] agree [  ]  
neutral [  ] disagree [  ] strongly disagree [  ]

d Locals perform better in science and social studies than the refugees. Strongly agree [ ] agree [ ] neutral [ ] disagree [ ] strongly disagree [ ]

13. What suggestions would you make for further improvement on urban refugees' academic performance? -----

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION.

### APPENDIX III

#### Pupils' Questionnaire

1. What is your gender? Male [ ] female [ ]
2. How old are you? below 14 yrs [ ] 14-18 yrs [ ] above 18 yrs [ ]
3. What language(s) do you use at home? English [ ] Kiswahili [ ] others [ ]
4. What language(s) are used by your teachers in class? English [ ] Kiswahili [ ] both [ ] others [ ]
5. Which subject do you like most? -----Why? -----  
-----  
-----
6. Which subject don't you like? -----Why? -----  
-----  
-----

7 How is your performance in the following subjects?

a English? Very good [ ] good [ ] average [ ] poor [ ] very poor [ ]

b Kiswahili? Very good [ ] good [ ] average [ ] poor [ ] very poor [ ]

c Maths? Very good [ ] good [ ] average [ ] poor [ ] very poor [ ]

d Science and social studies? Very good [ ] good [ ] average [ ] poor [ ] very poor [ ]

8. What suggestions would you give for further improvement of the urban refugee pupils' academic performance? -----

-----  
-----  
-----

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION

## **APPENDIX IV**

### **Interview schedule for the head teachers**

1. How long have you been in this school?
2. What subjects do you teach?
3. How many refugee pupils are in your school?
4. What are their Nations of origin?
5. What language(s) do they speak at admission (home languages)?
6. What language(s) do the teachers mostly use in class (school language(s))?
7. Are they well conversed with the language of instruction at admission?
8. If not to above, what kind of assistance are they offered as per the language of instruction?
9. Have you received any kind of training on how to deal with refugee pupils?
10. How do you compare the academic performance of the urban refugee pupils with their local counterparts?

11. What teaching and learning methods of language of instruction do you apply in the case of the urban refugees who may need assistance?
12. What teaching strategies are already in place in aid of the urban refugee pupils in the case of language of instruction?
13. What academic challenges do the refugee pupils deal with while at school?
14. How does the school community deal with those challenges
15. What do you plan to put in place in future in order to further improve the academic performance of the urban refugee pupils passing through your school as far as language of instruction is concerned?
16. a) Do you think the school community requires any external assistance as far as urban refugees' education is concerned?  
b) If yes specify

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION.