

Bilingual Education for Street Children in Kenya: Evidence from Language Mixing

Julius Jwan and Nathan Oyori Ogechi

Moi University, Kenya

Abstract

This article argues a case for bilingual education in the rehabilitation of street children in Kenya. These children are drawn from a variety of linguistic backgrounds. Too few of them are monolinguals when they are placed in rehabilitation centres where a four years non-formal education programme is run. The children mainly speak a mixture of Kiswahili, English and an urban youth variety called Sheng. Basing our study on the experience of Eldoret Children's Rescue Centre, we show that it is possible to achieve literacy through using the children's "home" language. The home language is the mixture of Kiswahili and English. The paper also highlights the challenges of adapting the approach.

Key words: street children, bilingual education, language mixing

1. Introduction

The issue of street children¹ in Kenyan towns has always been an acute problem. This is because of their fast increasing number and the many ugly incidents of crime that have hit our towns. For instance, in 1997 the then KANU² government became worried when the street children in Nairobi City engaged security personnel/watchmen in a fight at night in which one child and one watchman were killed (The Daily Nation, 12th April 1998). Apart from this incident; the menace of street children to people in Kenyan towns has become increasingly dangerous over time.

A German non-governmental organisation – Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (G.T.Z. [German Society for Technical Co-operation]) - in a report released in 1998 indicated that the problem of street children in Kenya started right from the colonial times but has greatly increased during independence because of the fast expansion of major towns in Kenya. The causes of the problem are many. They range from hard economic times and marital problems of

¹ The term street children refers to the children who spend their time in the streets begging. While some sleep in the streets, others go to their homes and come back to the streets the following morning.

² KANU represents Kenya African National Union Party that ruled Kenya from independence in 1963 to 2002.

the children's families to land and politically instigated ethnic clashes. According to the GTZ report, if the government had addressed the issue of street children from independence then it would not be as dangerous as it is now (Outa 1995).

The street children come from various backgrounds. There are those who were born and brought up in rural areas before they relocated to towns. Others are siblings of street families that have sprung up as a result of the children growing up and intermingling in the streets. The first category may have competence in any of Kenya's local languages³. However, the latter have no knowledge of any single language apart from a juxtaposition of Kiswahili and English and/or Sheng (Githiora 2002). Thus while in the streets, these children use a mixture of Kiswahili, English, local languages and Sheng⁴ to communicate. Therefore, one might argue that their first language is the fused lect (Auer 1999) comprising of surface morphemes from English, Kiswahili, the local languages and Sheng. Their use of the fused lect in streets makes them transcend linguistic ethnicity.

In an attempt to solve the problem, the NARC government in June 2003 demanded and declared that all the street people above 18 years should engage in productive work. It also undertook to take some of them to the National Youth Service (NYS) College for training in various trades⁵. Those below 18 years were taken to rehabilitation centres. However, no proper modalities had been drawn on how these directives could be effectively implemented. Thus the problem continues both in Nairobi and the other towns in Kenya.

To date, much of the rehabilitation of the street children is spearheaded by Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) with little support from the government (e.g. provision of Teachers and

³ Approximately 43 languages are spoken in Kenya of which Kiswahili, the national and official language, is one. English was introduced during the British colonial reign. But it is now the official language that is widely spoken to the extent that it is considered one of the Kenyan languages (Webb & Kembo-Sure 2000).

⁴ Sheng is a grammatically unstable social code that sounds like Kiswahili (Ngesa 2002) but has a distinct and unstable vocabulary. It is widely spoken among the urban and a few rural youngsters in Kenya (Ogechi 2002: 4). Below is an example of Sheng:

Kithora ma-doo z-a mathee
to.steal CL6-dough CL10-ASS mother

'to steal my mother's money' (Abdulaziz & Osinde 1997:56)

⁵Para –military training where young people learn drills. Fire fighting, cleanliness and vocational training activities like carpentry, driving, masonry etc

land on which to built the centres). The Undugu Society of Kenya, for example, started Basic Education Programme (UBEP) in 1978 with one school in Pumwani and later expanded to other slum areas in Nairobi, e.g. Kibera, Mathare. Currently, the society runs four such schools and a special one (Muchuma) specifically for children under 10 years. Their main mission is to care, rehabilitate and facilitate the development of the socially and economically disadvantaged children, youth and other groups to attain human dignity and self-reliance (Outa 1995).

The Eldoret Children's Rescue Centre located in Eldoret town in the northwestern part of the country is run by a Christian organisation and serves the same purpose as the UBEP. With a staff of 8 teachers, the Centre operates on a non-formal education curriculum. Here the children go through four stages (classes), namely D, C, B and A from the lowest to the highest respectively. The subjects taught at the centre include English, Mathematics, Science, Religious Education and G.H.C. Trades such as carpentry, tailoring, welding, and plumbing are also taught.

Language plays a very important role in the rehabilitation of the street children. As already said, some of the children have knowledge of more than one language and so they are bi- or multi-lingual. Their teachers are also bilingual in Kiswahili, English and their mother tongues. At the centre, the administration demands that the urchins must use only Kiswahili and English. According to the teachers and the administration, allowing the children to use their mother tongues would easily lead to ethnic groupings since the children come from different ethnic backgrounds. This in turn might make those from an ethnic group that is numerically strong to bully or molest those whose number is small (Kassamani 1992).

In the classrooms, the practice is that teachers use a mixture of English and Kiswahili as media of instruction. However, there is no clear policy on the use of the two languages for instruction at the centre. They cannot follow the government language policy in formal schools which states that: in lower primary (the first three years of schooling), the language of the catchment areas be used as a medium of instruction in rural areas while English is used in upper primary. In urban and peri-urban areas, English or Kiswahili is used in lower primary (Republic of Kenya 1964). This policy cannot apply to the street children rehabilitation centre because they only have four classes/stages and not eight, as is the case in the formal schools.

While appreciating the cardinal contribution of the non-formal education offered in trying to rehabilitate and solve the street children menace, it is notable that the single language policy (either English or Kiswahili at a time) proposed is not very much in tandem with reality. It is true that the composition of the pupils at the centre does not have a homogenous linguistic background. Given this scenario, is it fair to insist on the urchins to use either Kiswahili or English only? Of what use is the insistence on only Kiswahili or English to the children's future? Since the fused lect appears to be the children's mother tongue, is it not fair to appreciate it and use it as a stepping stone to introduce literacy to them? Could doing so in any way be contributing towards bilingual education? What are the challenges of teaching children from a background that is as unique as that of the street children? Based on a research that was conducted at the centre, this paper proposes a bilingual education approach for the rehabilitation of street children in Kenya. It shows the challenges that can be faced in practising bilingual education given the prevailing circumstances in Kenya especially among the street children.

The paper has six sections. Section 2 discusses the concept of bilingual education. The methodology adapted here is unravelled in section 3 while section 4 is the analysis of data. Section 5 discusses the challenges learnt in attempts to introduce bilingual education in Kenya while 6 is the conclusion.

2. Bilingual Education

In this section, we attempt to present the conceptualisation of the term "bilingual education". First, we explain the terms "bilingualism" and "education" separately. Then we show how the compound noun bilingual education is conceptualised.

Bilingualism is the psychological state of an individual who has access to more than one linguistic code as a means of social communication (Hamers & Blanc, 1989). The degree of access to the two languages will vary along a number of dimensions, which are psychological, social, sociological, socio-cultural and linguistic. Wei (2000) explains that the term "bilingual" primarily describes someone who knows two languages. He adds that bilingualism can also be taken to include the many people in the world who have varying degrees of proficiency in and

interchangeably use three, four or even more languages. According to Mackey (2000), we can distinguish between societal bilingualism and individual bilingualism. On the one hand, societal bilingualism occurs when in a society, two or more languages are spoken. In this sense, nearly all societies are bilingual, but they can differ with regard to the degree or form of bilingualism (Appel & Muysken 1987). On the other hand, individual bilingualism refers to a state where one speaks two or more languages. However determining whether a given person is bilingual or not is far from simple (Appel & Muysken 1987). It raises the questions on the level of command of the languages in question, the level of fluency in written and oral competence, the components of the language to be considered: vocabulary, pronunciation, syntax, etc. In spite of that, all the foregoing cannot yield straightforward answers. In this paper, a bilingual refers to a person who uses more than one language regardless of the amount of each language used in a speech episode.

Turning to the term "education", can be explained as an organised and sustained communication designed to bring about learning with the aim of developing the organisation of knowledge and skilled abilities. In modern societies, these goals are attained through the development of literacy skills in a school environment. The importance attached to the development of literacy is based on worldwide conviction, which leads to economic improvement and is a prerequisite for all functional education. The choice of the medium through which literacy is achieved is therefore an important issue in a multicultural setting. The choice is between embracing a monolingual or bilingual education.

The term "bilingual education" refers to a variety of educational programs involving two or more languages to varying degrees. The term has been largely used to handle cases where there exists a minority language alongside majority language or cases where there are more than two languages with different statuses in the society – a prestigious language and a less prestigious language. Thus bilingual education is an education system where a minority language has a certain role alongside the majority language (Appel & Muysken 1987). They explain that the minority child's cognitive development will be retarded if he or she does not receive education in the mother tongue and if the mother tongue is not further developed in school. The minority language serves as a link between a child and his/her community. Similarly, the minority groups derive their strength from the recognition of their language especially when they are discriminated against in

the larger society. The recognition of the language and the culture of a minority group will improve the social and cultural relations between these groups and the rest of the society. The foregoing arguments have, however, had counter arguments, proving that all the positive aspects of bilingual education for the minority groups are relative.

Nevertheless, there are various models of bilingual education:

- The transitional or assimilation model is a practice in which all the languages in the community are used in the whole curriculum or only in certain stages, e.g. a case where the minority language is mainly used in the early grades to bridge the gap between the home language and the school language.
- The pluralistic or the maintenance model is one where both languages – the minority and the prestige languages - function as media of instruction in the classroom throughout the school programme.
- Literacy in all languages is one where both or all languages are taught as subjects. Here the aim of the bilingual education is literacy in both or all languages.

Regardless of the model, there is empirical support for bilingual education vide research. For instance, Appel (1984, 1987) conducted a research on Turkish and Moroccan immigrant children in Netherlands. The study concluded that minority and deprived children when given bilingual education usually perform better than those going through monolingual programs do. The latter exhibited problems of aggressive behaviour, apathy, and isolation compared to the bilingual education ones. The monolingual programme learners also developed resistance to other cultures.

In a later publication, Appel & Muysken (1992) explain that the effects of bilingual programmes can only be understood in relation to the educational, social, linguistic, economic and political context of the programme. They however conclude that the general trend in the research literature is that bilingual education for children from linguistic minority groups has positive outcomes in all areas: the language skills, other subjects, and social and emotional aspects.

In another study, Jacobson (1983) developed a concurrent use of two languages for bilingual instruction in what is referred to as the New Concurrent Approach (NCA). The alternation of language was structured in terms of four criteria:

- Both languages are to be used for equal amounts of times
- The teaching of content is not to be interrupted.
- The decision to switch between the two languages is in response to a consciously identified cue.
- The switching must relate to a specific learning objective.

In this paper, the term "bilingual education" is used to refer to a system of education in which, at a given moment in time and for varying amount of time, simultaneously or consecutively, instruction is planned and given in at least two languages, in this case English and Kiswahili. It is a case where the two languages are used as media of instruction. Bilingual education excludes a situation where a switch in the medium of instruction occurs at a given stage without further planning of the two languages in the curriculum in the later stages (as is the case in the formal schools in Kenya). The present paper shows that bilingual education in the Eldoret Children's Rescue Centre is motivated by several factors.

3. Methodology

The data used in this study were collected by Jwan at Eldoret Children's Rescue Centre between November 1996 - March 1997 for his Master of Philosophy degree thesis where the focus of data analysis was to unravel the functions of CS in classroom interaction (Jwan 1997). In the present paper, we use the data to argue a case for bilingual education. All the eight teachers at the centre were used in the study. Based on a judgement sampling procedure, three teaching subjects, namely Mathematics, Christian Religious Education (C.R.E) and Science were chosen for research. This sampling procedure was adopted because we wanted to use subjects from different fields, that is, the humanities and sciences. Science and Maths were selected on the basis that they are science subjects while C.R.E is a humanities subject. We anticipated that the choice of the subjects taught could help establish whether or not the type of subjects being taught influences the nature of bilingual

education. The choice could also help to establish if the amount of each language used in a given discourse could be attributed to the subject and the level of children's proficiency in the languages. In the case of the sciences, the choices served another purpose. That is, at the centre, Science is only taught in the upper stages (B and A) while Maths is also taught in the lower stages (D and C). So, analysing Maths could reflect what language choice is adapted in the lower stages.

Four lessons were recorded in each subject in every stage. The recording was done after getting permission both from the Ministry of Education at the headquarters and from the school administration at the local level. A discussion was organised with the teachers before the recording was done to sensitise them on the essence of the research. Of the four lessons recorded, only the last two in each subject in every stage were analysed. The first two lessons in each subject in every stage were discarded because they were meant to make the teachers and the pupils get used to having their conversations recorded. The last two lessons in each subject in every stage were analysed because by that time the teachers and the pupils had got used to having their lessons recorded. So, the recordings displayed natural language behaviour than in the earlier cases. The entire recording procedure had been tested earlier and improved upon through a pilot study. Two subjects (G.H.C. and Music) were used in the pilot study to test the suitability of the equipment, the questions and the methods of data analysis.

A questionnaire was also used to obtain information from the teachers and the principal. In addition, an interview/guided discussion was organised with the teachers and the principal to help clarify some information that was not very clear in the questionnaires. Non-participant observation was also used in the study. This helped capture everything that was considered relevant to the study but which could not be captured by the questionnaire, the tape recorder and the interview.

The data recorded were broadly transcribed word for word. Where surface morphemes were in Kiswahili, English translations were provided. Each lesson was then analysed by counting the number of English clauses, Kiswahili clauses, and the clauses containing both English and Kiswahili in order to determine the base language (BL). According to Ogechi (2002: 99), the BL is the language that quantitatively dominates all clauses in the sample of speech analysed. The BL is determined as follows:

1. *Segment the clauses in the sample of discourse selected.* Although a clause is conventionally a constituent with a verb, we propose to identify a clause as a constituent consisting of a proposition-expressing part plus an accompanying complementiser-like element that may or may not be null (Myers-Scotton & Jake 2000: 1071). A complementiser-like element should be "understood as any of the clause-peripheral words/particles/morphemes that are so common cross-linguistically and used with subordinate clauses or clauses with nonindicative mood" (p. 1071). According to this view, there is a possibility of identifying a full clause or a reduced clause. In (1) the first clause is full as it has a verb while the second clause is a reduced clause because it has no overt verb. Throughout the present paper, Kiswahili is in *bold italics* while English is in normal fonts.

(1) [[**Ni-ta-pata marks nyingi**] [**na tena za juu zaidi**]]
1S-FUT-get marks many and again of top most
'I shall score very high marks'

The segmenting of clauses in the sample of discourse analysed is done both for sentences with switches and those with no switches using square brackets as in (1).

2. *Determine the matrix language (ML) of each clause.* According to Myers-Scotton & Jake (2000), the ML in CS is the language that provides the frame into which elements from the embedded languages are inserted. So, the ML is the language whose word order is followed and it also supplies all subject-verb agreement markers for person, number, tense-aspect and stabilisers⁶ (where the latter exist).
3. *Determine the BL of the text analysed.* Calculate the distribution of the ML in the clauses of the text analysed. Count also the distribution of monolingual clauses in the sample of

⁶ Zima (1998) defines stabilisers as morphemes or sets of morphemes either of a free or bound nature which assume either certain grammatical features of a nominal character (gender, number or concord with their nominal heads if standing in a noun phrase or of a verbal character if standing in a verbal phrase. Stabilisers express a sort of absolute existence or non-existence vaguely located in the real world or any area in it. Often they are translated in English constructions as "it is". For example, *n-omoibi* (STAB-thief) translates to "It is a thief." A stabiliser in Ekegusii emphasises the existence. It appears to be pre-modifying in that it precedes the morpheme it stabilises. (For an elaborate exposition see Zima 1998).

discourse analysed. The language with the highest ML frequency count is the BL of the text analysed.

The foregoing analytical procedure helped in identifying the amount of each language (in terms of clauses) used in every subject, every stage and every lesson. This in turn helped in establishing if the amount of each language (Kiswahili and English) used varied from one stage to another and also from one subject to another. This was done by comparing the percentages of Kiswahili clauses with English clauses in the same stage. It was also done by comparing the percentages of English and Kiswahili clauses in one stage with those in another stage. Similarly, the percentage of Kiswahili and English clauses in one subject were also compared with those in another subject in corresponding stages. After this, an explanation was given for the variations and similarities. The inferences made from the percentages are beefed up with the teachers' responses.

4. Bilingual Education at the Street Children Rehabilitation Centre

An analysis of language use at the Eldoret Children's Rescue Centre yielded several factors that were found to necessitate bilingual education.

'Partial' continuity

This is a case where the children, while in school, pride in the continuity of the language they already know as well as the language of prestige (Appel & Muysken 1987). On the one hand, Wardhough (1986) states that a change from a language that is foreign to the listeners to the one familiar to them brings a sense of solidarity and continuity. On the other, Blanc (1987) has argued that the diversity and expansion of bilingual education programmes are determined by socio-historical factors, social, political and technical development. He further explains that socio-historical, ideological and social psychological factors mainly influence bilingual development and must be taken into consideration in bilingual education. So, the of switching of Kiswahili, English and the local languages by the children in the centre studied gives them a culture of their own, with their own history and socio-psychological set up. They form a community of their own. Therefore, when taken to the rehabilitation centres, the children should

have the opportunity to be educated in two languages, which is their "code" (Meeuwis & Blommaert 1998). To them, the mixture of English and Kiswahili is the "code" (home) language.

Although the teachers switch the two languages, our study showed that in the lower stages (D and C) they use more Kiswahili than English. That is, Kiswahili is the BL. However, as the children progress from the lower stages (classes) to the upper ones (B and A), the teachers tend to use more English than Kiswahili⁷ as illustrated in the following discourses.

Discourse 1 (Maths stage C):

- T. [*Saa kumi na forty*]. 'the time is four...' [You know, this hand *haijafika hapa katikati*]. [*Ikifika hapa katikati*] [*ndiyo utaniambia ni forty*] 'has not reached the centre, when it does it will be...'. [*Lakini hii bado inapoint to four*] 'but this one is still'. [*Ni saa ngapi?*] 'What is the time?'. [Yes Moses].
- P. [Half past four].
- T. [Half past four?]. [*Tulisema*] 'We said' [half *inaanzia hapa*]. [*Kwa hivyo hijafika half past*] 'starts here but it has not reached...' [Yes, *Tuambie?*] 'Tell us'.
- P. [A quarter to four].
- T. [Very good]. [It is a quarter to four]. [*Mnajua amesema a quarter to four*] 'you know he has said...' [*kwa nini?*] [*Hii mkono nzito ndiyo inaanza*] [*kufika*]]. [Why?]. [Because this hour hand is just reaching four]. [*Halafu hii mwingine ndiyo inaenda*] [*sasa unaelekea kufika tweleve*] 'then the other one is reaching ...'. [*Ndiko hii mkono ikuje ifike four*] 'for this one to reach...'.
[so it is a quarter to four]. [To *ni nini?*] 'to what...'
[[*Ebu angalia*] [*mniambie to ni nini?*]]. 'Could you look and tell me, to what this is?'
[[*Tulisema kutoka hapa*] [*kuelekea upande hii inaitwa?*]]. 'What did we say from here heading there means?'
- PC. [To?]
- T. [Yes "to"]. [[*Na ukitoka hapa*] [*ukielekea hivi*] [*unaelekea?*]] 'And from here going this way, where are you headed to?'
- PC. [Past].

⁷ Not that the conversations recorded do not display the use of Standard Kiswahili; rather, a variety of up-country Kiswahili that does not always follow the expected grammatical agreement.

T. [Yes, past]. [So *hapa ni* a quarter] '...here is...'.
[*Yaani* fifteen minutes]. 'that is...'

From the foregoing, it is clear that in discourse 1, the teacher's ML is Kiswahili since it consists 69% (N = 27 out of 39) of the clauses. Only 12 clauses have English as the ML. So the BL here is Kiswahili and the probable explanation for this is that this is a lower level where the pupils have not mastered English well enough to use for learning.

In essence, when such a bilingual approach is espoused, the children in the centre will pride in the continuity of the language they already know as well as the language of prestige. This will in turn take care of the dual role of rehabilitating them and initiating them into the literary world. The use of the "home" language in teaching is a requirement for a healthy development of the child's personality and development of positive self-image. As long recognised and advocated by UNESCO (1953:11) "it is axiomatic that the best medium for teaching a child is his mother tongue". If the rehabilitation centres do not use the children's mother tongue, then the children might perceive this as a place where they are not accepted. They might perceive it as a place where their social identity is questioned and undermined and they might flee back to the street where their identity via language is safeguarded. Subsequently this will defeat the rehabilitation envisaged. However, the use of Kiswahili alongside English for instruction relieves them of a culture shock, which the street children (being a minority group) in the society can experience at the transition from the streets to a more formal society (rehabilitation centres).

The use of Kiswahili and English for instruction also helps relieve what could be a forced linguistic and cultural assimilation of 'a minority group' into the mainstream majority group. Usually many minority groups derive their strength from cultural identity especially if they feel discriminated against in the larger society. The street children can only stay at the centres if they find 'partial continuity' of the street life at the centres. It is needless to belabour that language forms a very crucial aspect of culture. Recognition of the children's language will therefore improve the social and cultural relations between this group and the rest of the society.

In the Third World countries, the use of a minority language alongside a majority language in teaching seems to be the best way to reach isolated groups who do not participate in the

mainstream society (Appel & Muysken 1987). Members of such groups can gain literacy both in their language and the majority language and learn something about the wider community. In the case of Eldoret Children's Rescue Centre, the teachers used the two languages (English and Kiswahili) to provide continuity and facilitate learning at the centre.

Discourse 2 (Maths Stage A)

- T. [[Yeah, who can remind us] [what we were doing the last time?]]. [[*Wakati uliopita*][*tulifanya nini?*]] [*Tulifanya nini?*]
In our last lesson what did we cover? What did we cover?'
- P. [Decimals and percentages.]
- T. [[Yes, conversion of percentages into decimals] [and conversion of decimals into percentages]]. [[So today, *ninataka*] [*tujifunze kuhusu* decimals] [not decimals, first changing into fraction and fraction to percentage]]. 'I want us to learn about' [For example you can be given sixty percent]. [[Percent means] [put it over a hundred]]. [[So we have sixty percent], [which is equivalent to sixty over a hundred]]. [[*Kama unataka kubadilisha hii* into a fraction] [what you do] [is you start cancelling, zero and zero]]. [Two goes into six three times] [it goes into ten -?]
- PC. [Five times.]
- T. [Yes five times]. [So it is equal to three over five]. [That is your fraction now]. [Let us look at thirty five percent]. [[What you do] [is bring your thirty-five] [and put it over a hundred]]. [Then start cancelling]. [Which number can cancel them?]

From this discourse, although the teacher uses a mixture of English and Kiswahili, the amount of Kiswahili used is very little, namely 16% (N = 5 out of 30) of the clauses. Thus the lesson is basically in English with a few expressions in Kiswahili. This is because the children in this stage (class A) have had adequate exposure to English at the centre (four years). Therefore, they can fairly well understand what they are being taught in English. This illustrates that in the upper stages (A and B), although the teachers mix English and Kiswahili they use more English than Kiswahili. This is very different from what happens in the lower stages (D and C).

Topic and ease of expression

It has been argued that the topic of discussion is one of the reasons why people switch languages (Wardough 1986). Some topics are more easily discussed in some languages than others. Fasold (1984) explains that in a bilingual or multilingual situation, one language variety is likely to be

more appropriate in one domain than the others. However, he explains that the way languages are used will still be influenced by other factors like the topic of discussion and participants.

At the centre, the topics being taught seemed to influence the way the languages (English and Kiswahili) were used. This is because some topics were easier to express in English than Kiswahili and vice-versa. "Ease of expression" as discussed here refers to a case where a teacher switches from one language to another to express a concept despite the fact that the language previously being used also has an equivalent for the same concept. For example, scientific terms are easier to express in English than in Kiswahili because English is the primary language of science in Kenya. 'Ease of expression' can also be due to the physical articulation of words or phrases. Some words and phrases take a shorter time to articulate in one language than another does and thus motivate one to switch from one language to another, as illustrated in the following discourse:

Discourse 3 (Maths Stage D):

1. T [Fifty, fifty minus forty?] [*Nani atatufanyia*, Kase?]
'Who will give us the right answer, Kase?'
2. P [Ten.]
3. T [Ten.] [*Unafanya namna gani?*] 'How do you do the sum'
[Zero minus zero is?]
4. PC [Zero.]
5. T [*[Nikisema] [ni mtu mmoja] [ni mtu mmoja] [sio nyinyi wote]*. 'If I say one person it should be so not chorus answer'
[Five minus four *ni ngapi?*] 'How many?'
6. P [One.]
7. T. [*Inakuwa* how many?] 'it is'
8. PC [Ten.]
9. T [Ten.] [*Hesabu ingine* sixty plus thirty-five?] 'another sum'
[*Nani atatufanyie hiyo?*] [*Tumefanya mbili*] [*za kuondoa sasa*]
[*tunafanya mbili*] [*za kuongeza*]. 'Who will answer that? We have had two

sums on subtraction now let us add' [Sixty plus thirty-five?] [*Sitini kuongeza thelathini na tano?*] 'Sixty plus thirty-five' [*Mkono juu, wewe?*] 'Yes you'.

10. P4 [Ninety-five.]

11. T [[Good.] *na* [five plus zero is?]] 'and'

12. PC [Five.]

13. T [Three plus six is?]

14. PC [Ninety-five.]

15. T [Ninety five.] [[Seventy-five plus thirty-five,] [*tunaweza*] [*kufanya namna gani?*]] [[*Nani anaweza*] [*kutuambia*] [*tunaweza*] [*kufanya namna gani?*]] 'Who will tell us how to do this sum?' [Yes, five plus five is ten] [*Tunaandika?*] –'What do we write?'

16. PC [Zero.]

17. T [We carry?]

This discourse has a blend of a Kiswahili-English BL. It has 41 clauses in total. 48% (N = 20) of the clauses have an English ML and 52% (N = 21) of the clauses have a Kiswahili ML. Thus it is a typical replica of a Kiswahili-English code of the children as we have already argued elsewhere. It is the home language of the street children and the teacher has taken advantage of it to introduce literacy to the children at the lower level (level D). This notwithstanding, it appears that the subject being taught influences what the BL of the lesson is. For instance, in this discourse, the teacher is using English in mathematical expressions like "plus", "minus", and figures like "fifty", "forty", "ten", etc. On the other hand, in explanations that don't involve the figures and the mathematical expressions, he switches to Kiswahili. For example, "*Ten, unafanya namna gani?*" 'How do you do the sum' in turn 3; "*Nikisema ni mtu moja sio nyinyi wote*" 'If I say one person it should not be a chorus answer' in turn 5; "*Nani atafanyia hiyo?*" 'Who will answer that?' in turn 9 and "*Tumefanya mbili za kuondoa*" 'We have had two sums on subtraction now let us add' in turn 9 too etc. Here, the teacher switches to English because of ease of expression. He finds it easier to express the figures and the mathematical expressions in English than Kiswahili. This was also confirmed in the interview conducted with the teachers afterwards.

Some switches from Kiswahili to English here can also be attributed to fewer syllables of some expressions and figures in English than in Kiswahili. Such expressions and figures take a shorter time to articulate in English than in Kiswahili. For example, "fifty minus forty" in turn 1 has six syllables while its equivalent in Kiswahili "*hamsini ondoa arobaini*" has eleven syllables. "Zero minus zero" in turn 3 has six syllables while the Kiswahili equivalent "*Sufuri ondoa sufuri*" has nine syllables. Other examples in this discourse include "Ninety five" in turns 10 and 15 that would be "*Tisini na tano*". "Seventy five plus thirty five" in turn 15 could be "*Sabini na tano ongeza thelathini na tano*". This partly explains why the teachers found it easier to express the mathematical concepts and figures in English than in Kiswahili. On balance, it appears that it takes a shorter time to articulate the expressions in English than in Kiswahili.

Switching to facilitate learning

The study also showed that the teachers used English and Kiswahili interchangeably to enable the pupils to understand the subject better. A teacher could start to explain a point in English but on feeling that the children have not understood the point well enough, he could switch to Kiswahili to explain the same. Myers-Scotton (1993) refers to this type of switching as an exploratory choice. She states that an exploratory choice occurs when a speaker is not sure of the expected or optimal communicative intent or at least not sure which language will help achieve his/her social goals. When the explanation in one language does not appear clear, then one switches to another language to make an alternative exploratory choice. In the data recorded, most of these switches were from English to Kiswahili:

Discourse 4 (Science Stage A):

1. T [Then, we have soil depth.] [What do you understand by soil depth?]
[[First we know] [that soil holds the plants firmly in position.]
[*Inashikilia mimea kwa nguvu.*] ('Holds the plants firmly in position')
[Otherwise the plants would fall.] [*Kama inashikilia mimea kwa nguvu,*
[ina maana gani?]] [*Utapata] [kwamba* the soil which is not deep,
[mchanga ambao haujaenda chini sana] [hauwezi] [kushikilia mimea.].
'what does it mean to hold plants firmly? We find that'...'the soil which is
not deep can not hold plants firmly'. [*Upepo ikija] utapata kwamba* plants
fall]. ('when a strong wind comes'). [[Another thing that you have to
understand about the soil texture and depth] [is that shallow soil holds less
water]]. [*Mchanga ambao haujaenda ndani sana] [haushiki maji*
mengi]] ('shallow soil holds less water'). [*Hauna maji mengi.*] ('It does

have much water'). [And such soils are not good for crop production.] [[That is why we need deep soil] [that can hold plants] [and can carry enough water.]] [Deep soil does another thing]. [It supports deep-rooted plants.] [Which deep-rooted plants are these?] [[*Mimea ambayo inaenda chini*] [*kutafuta maji chini.*]] [[*Hiyo ndiyo ninawambia*] [*kwamba ni* deep-rooted plants] ('These plants are referred to as') [So what are deep-rooted plants?]

2. P [[*Mimea yenye inaenda chini sana*] [*kutafuta chakula na maji*]] 'These are plants whose roots get deep into the soil to get food and water.'
3. T [Okay, now let us look at sunlight.] [Most of you know the sun.] [*Nyinyi wote mnajua jua?*] ('You all know the sun?') [*Kuna maana gani kwa mimea?*] ('Of what importance is it to the plants?')

Discourse 4 is a perfect example of a bilingual lesson. It has 34 clauses, which are split into 17 Kiswahili clauses and 17 English clauses. Thus it is difficult to determine the BL here. Since this is a science lesson in a high level (level A), we could expect it to be conducted in an English BL. However, the fact that the children's "home" language is a mixture of Kiswahili and English and that four years is not long enough for one to learn English (Kembo 2000), the teacher resorts to a mixture of both Kiswahili and English. The resulting mixture of two languages is thus for purposes of facilitating learning through repetition of whatever is said in another language. For instance, in this discourse, the teacher states a point in English and then repeats the same point in Kiswahili. For example in turn 1, he states in English that, "First we know that soil holds the plants firmly in position". He then states the same in Kiswahili, *inashikilia mimea kwa nguvu*. 'It holds plants firmly'. In another sentence in the same turn, he states, *Utapata kwamba* the soil, which is not deep, cannot hold the plants firmly 'You will find that'. *Mchanga ambao haijaenda chini sana hauwezi kushikilia mimea* 'shallow soil cannot hold plants firmly'. In the same turn 1, the teacher starts stating a point in Kiswahili *utapata kwamba* 'you find that' and then switches to English "the soil which is not deep...". He again switches back to Kiswahili *mchanga ambao haujaenda chini sana* ... 'shallow soil' to explain the same point.

Lastly, in turn 2, the teacher states in English "Most of you know the sun". He then repeats the same in Kiswahili *Nyinyi wote mnajua jua* 'You all know the sun.' This type of switching is meant to make the pupils learn with ease what is being taught. The teacher does this so that the pupils who don't understand whatever is being explained or stated in English can understand it in Kiswahili and vice-versa. This confirms the responses of the teachers in the questionnaire when

they were asked to state why they switch between English and Kiswahili when teaching. One of the reasons given by 50% of the teachers is that they switch because the pupils understand Kiswahili better than English.

This type of language behaviour is referred to as switching from one language to another in order to reach all segments of the audience. In a classroom situation, this behaviour can be treated as an instance of bilingual education that is meant to facilitate communication and/or learning. The teachers want to reach all the pupils in the class.

This type of bilingual education has an advantage in that it is easier to influence groups of street children and to direct their social development. In addition, this approach will reduce the number of children who run back to the streets. From the study, it was established that about 50% of the children collected from the streets run away from the rehabilitation centres back to the streets. This is basically attributed to what the children consider to be harsh conditions at the centres especially in the classrooms. Thus there must be a friendly language use policy in the rehabilitation of the street children at the centre in order to forestall further fleeing of the children into the streets. Only a bilingual education language policy seems to assure the children as it also caters for the children's language rights (Ogechi 2003).

5. Challenges and Recommendations

In spite of the foregoing claim, it was discovered that in using a bilingual education approach in rehabilitating street children, the teachers are faced with certain challenges that hamper their work.

For instance, there is no well-developed language policy that specifically addresses the rehabilitation of street children considering that they have a background that is unique to them and therefore cannot be treated like the other children in formal schools. As we noted at the outset, some of the children are born on the streets and have never known any organised life. So, there is need for the government and other organisations concerned to come up with a bilingual education policy where both English and Kiswahili would be used concurrently as media of

instruction. The policy should allow for both languages to be used during all content instruction but with clearly expressed guidelines on how changing from one language to another is to occur. In this approach, the teacher has to decide on the basis of given guidelines when to switch to Kiswahili and when to switch to English.

Another challenge observed is that the teachers at the centre are not trained in any aspect of bilingual education. Some of the teachers are not trained at all while others are trained only in social work. Even those who are trained were trained with the formal schools in mind. As a result, each of them only does what they think is suitable on the spot. This creates a lot of variation in their approaches and methodology. Because of this, there is need for the teachers to undergo a carefully planned cue response-training programme. In this programme the teachers should learn to detach themselves from the teaching task and self-monitor their performance in terms of the major pedagogical objectives being pursued. They should be trained to use each language adequately depending on the stage and the linguistic repertoire for the children. However, they should resist or counter the natural pull exerted by this approach on the child's dominant language. The training should be such that every switching made during the instruction should be related to clearly defined objectives. This would be a step in the right direction as the country struggles to find out the best ways of rehabilitating the street children. However, the bilingual education programme should not be organised to bring about a kind of 'splendid isolation' for street children. This would be counterproductive. It should be done in such way that the children are finally assisted to reunite with their families and also to join the formal school so that they learn like all the others.

However, as Appel & Muysken, (1987:70) explain, we can only evaluate specific types of bilingual education, one at a time for a particular period. This is in an attempt to answer specific questions such as: "To what extent do the modifications in the language behaviour in this school population in these classes enable this group of learners to achieve this particular linguistic or educational objective?" This means that it is extremely difficult to carry out methodologically flawless evaluation studies in this area. Problems arise in finding a control group of monolingual students who are in all respects similar to the ones from the experimental bilingual programme. It is also difficult because other variables may influence such programs, e.g. the attitude of the children towards the languages in questions and educational materials.

6. Conclusion

The goal of the present article was to propose, show how to use a bilingual education approach and present the challenges faced in rehabilitating street children in Kenya. The paper has presented and analysed portions of some lessons recorded at the Eldoret Children's Rescue Centre where Kiswahili and English mixing was used. From the analyses, it has come out that bilingual education for children from minority, despised groups has positive outcomes in all areas, namely mastery of language skills and other subjects plus the enhancement of social and emotional aspects. However, it has challenges whose solutions have been proposed. In spite of the challenges, it has come out clearly that it is important that the Kenya government formally adopts a policy on bilingual education for the rehabilitation of street children.

About the Authors

Julius Jwan holds a M.Phil degree in Sociolinguistics from Moi University, Kenya and another M.Phil in Education Communication and Management from NLA, Bergen, Norway. His research interests include bilingual education, education communication and management, among others. He is currently a lecturer in the Department of Communication Studies at Moi University, Kenya.

Email: jjwan99@hotmail.com

Nathan Oyori Ogechi holds a PhD in African Linguistics from the Institute of African and Asian Studies, University of Hamburg, Germany. He is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Kiswahili & OAL, Moi University. His research interests and publications include bilingualism, language contact phenomena - codeswitching and Sheng - publishing, ethnosemantics, language rights and communication.

Email: ogechinathan@yahoo.com

List of abbreviations used

BL	Base Language
CRE	Christian Religious Education
GHC	Geography History and Creativity
GTZ	Gessellschaft fuer Technishe Zussamenarbeit
ML	Matrix Language
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
P	Pupil
PC	Pupils Chorus Answers
T	Teacher
UBEP	Undugu Basic Education Programme

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