INFLUENCE OF MOTHER TONGUE AND CULTURE ON THE

TEACHING AND LEARNING OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE: A STUDY

OF PRIMARY DAY SCHOOLS IN ISUKHA OF WESTERN KENYA


BY:

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# ABSTRACT

The study set out to investigate the influence of mother tongue and culture on the teaching and learning of English as a second language in primary day schools among the Isukha of western Kenya. It sought to identify the linguistic and cultural challenges facing the teaching of English and establish the effect of instructional methods. The study aimed at examining how the Isukha language and culture as reflected in its people's character, values and customs; their artistic endeavours and how they educate their children, affects the teaching and learning of English language in primary schools.

The objectives of the study were to identify the linguistic and cultural challenges facing the teaching and learning of English language in primary day schools; establish the influence of instructional methods on the teaching and learning of English; identify the factors that hinder proficiency in English language in primary day schools among the Isukha.

Systematic random and purposive sampling techniques were employed to select the study sample. The study sample comprised 20 mixed primary day schools selected through systematic random sampling from a total of 60 schools. 100 teachers of English selected through purposive sampling technique participated in the study. The study employed multidisciplinary approaches of quantitative and qualitative research methods. Data for the study was obtained from the teachers of English in primary day schools through interview schedule, self-administered questionnaire, as well as general observation. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics.

The study findings revealed that a child's first language and culture have educational value and role in formal education. Mother tongue is beneficial to a child's mental growth, personal development and educational progress. It was found out that pupils perform more successfully when instructional strategies acknowledge, respect and build upon the language and culture of the home. The study recommends that there is need to provide a greater and swifter move towards strengthening mother tongue education in order to create a solid literacy base for later education in English.

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# DECLARATION

DECLARATION BY THE CANDIDATE

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university. No part of this work may be reproduced without the permission of the author and/or Moi University.

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# DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to Rose Omamo, Gifton Omamo and Brighton Omamo.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS USED IN THE STUDY

- **LAD:** Language Acquisition Device

- **L1:** First Language, native language, mother tongue, primary language

- **L2:** Second Language, non-native language

- **MOEST:** Ministry of Education, Science and Technology

- **MOFAP:** Ministry of Finance and Planning

- **NCELA:** National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition

- **SPSS:** Statistical Package for Social Sciences

- **UG**: Universal Grammar

- **UNESCO**: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

- **UNICEF**: United Nations International Children Education Fund

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background to the Study

It is important at the outset to acknowledge that surges in immigration and other demographic trends in Isukha have had dramatic influences upon both the number and diversity of pupils referred to as English language learners. What was once a more narrowly defined group has become tremendously diverse, representing a broad variety not only in linguistic and cultural background, but also in educational and socioeconomic characteristics (Kenya Online, 1999). .

The complex and interrelated differences have a tremendous influence on the ways these individuals learn English and even more importantly, on the time required for them to reach academic-level proficiency in English. Currently, there are more than forty two different ethnic groups in Kenya. These cultural/ethnic groups have their unique traditional arts and crafts, architecture in homestead designs, clothing and jewellery, food, language, history, lifestyle, social and economic activities. Each community's language is rich and its culture respectful (Webb and Kembo, 2000).

Isukha speech community use both spoken and sign language. Their culture is a mix of diverse cultures and traditions. In spite of strong foreign influence, the Isukha language and culture has an identity of its own, which impacts on the teaching and learning of English (Kenya Online, 1999). This study examined how Isukha language and culture as

amply reflected through its people, their customs, traditions, society, art, dance and music, impacts on the teaching and learning of English language.

Mother tongue, according to Webb and Kembo (2000), is necessary for the preservation of cultural identity. This study examined the role mother tongue plays among the Isukha in the inculcation of cultural values of the community. Cross-cultural conflicts have been identified as critical factors influencing proficiency in and attitudes towards any language. According to this view, acquiring or learning a language is also learning the culture. Therefore, an inclination towards cultural values of a group is seen to influence, positively, the acquisition of that group's language.

This study sought to investigate and shed light on the influence of mother tongue and culture on the teaching and learning of English in primary schools among the Isukha, a Luhya sub-tribe of Western Kenya. The main variables in the study included language attitudes, level of education, gender, and language background. As Kembo (1994) asserts, these variables influence the teaching and learning of English as a second language in primary schools.

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

In Kenya, the language policy stipulates that in the lower primary classes, the language to be used as the medium is that of the catchment's area of the school. This is generally either the mother tongue or in mixed areas, Kiswahili. English may be used in a few areas (mainly urban) where it is commonly spoken at home (MOEST, 1989). The ministry of

education promotes the use of vernacular languages as medium of instruction in rural schools while English / Kiswahili are favoured in urban institutions.

Catchment's area languages are favoured in rural schools because they are building blocks to a foreign tongue so that pupils from rural settings are gradually weaned off mother tongues through incremental introduction to Kiswahili and English. Apparently, this policy was intended to cushion children from the culture shock of instantaneous exposure to foreign languages.

However, it is argued that this policy is unfortunately incoherent, discriminative and harmful to ideal proficiency in our national and official language (English) to a section of our children (rural). It has been argued that there is something fundamentally wrong with this policy. That it is patronizing and insulting to rural children. That it suggests a measure of learning deficiency and therefore inferiority of a particular group.

That there is overwhelming evidence that mastery of a second language is intimately linked to age at which the same is introduced to a potential learner; that there is a strong relationship between acquired proficiency and the stage of growth at which the learner is exposed to the language. That delayed exposure to English is largely to blame for comparatively weaker grasp of the language among graduates of rural schools. That it is to blame for the manifest "shrubbing" common among them. That it is difficult to escape mother tongue interference, especially in spoken English, if exposure is delayed until the

upper primary classes as the current policy dictates. That by then, the tongue has acquired certain inflections that might be difficult to tame.

That teaching in mother tongues amplifies ethnic identities that may not always be desirable as the post election violence of the year 2008 proved. That we therefore need to take stock of the COST-versus-GAIN of such a policy, which necessitated countries like Ghana and Namibia that had hitherto policies similar to Kenya's to do away with vernacular as a medium of instruction in schools in favour of English.

As a result of using local languages, it is thought that children may advance quickly enough in the official medium of instruction. When this is an examinable subject, and even a prerequisite for promotion to secondary school, capability to read and write to an expected standard could prevent drop out, repetition and general demotivation. However, the practice in Kenyan primary schools is that emphasis is put on the mastery of English while vernacular is thought to be a hindrance in the learning and teaching of English. Mother tongue is taken lightly as a subject timetabled, allocated limited time and not used as a medium of instruction as expected. Language policy only exists in theory and not in practice.

The occasional use of local terms assists in the process of moving back and forth between relevant concrete examples and the abstract. Since most agricultural practices, processes and concepts exist in vernacular languages, this means that they can be used effectively to explain natural phenomena, and thus enhance understanding. In addition, where

agriculture is used as a basic theme in an integrated curriculum, learning will not be confined only to everyday situations, but will facilitate the acquisition of a wide range of skills (Cleghorn (1989).

It has been pointed out that one of the reasons why primary school children in Kenya appear to face difficulties with Science and Mathematics is that the language of instruction is unfamiliar to them (Eisemon, 1997). Solomon (1987) notes that most cross-cultural studies in Science Education lean heavily upon the use of language to explore different meanings. This cultural variation implies different ways of perceiving nature, and also, that different languages directly affect how nature is understood.

Strevens (1976) observes that most studies in the philosophy and practice of Science Education embody two unstated assumptions: first that all the learners are members of the same culture, and also that they have the same common mother tongue. These assumptions are false in the case of developing countries. For example, in many rural schools, there might be different dialects spoken by teachers and pupils. There are cases when teachers have been posted to schools where a completely different language is spoken to their own. How does this discord between language and culture influence the teaching and learning of English in primary schools?

Some difficulty occurs when textbooks and learning materials are written in a different dialect or language than the first language of the children. Consequently, these pupils are disadvantaged in terms of language, not because their own is inferior or inadequate, but because they are required to conceptualize using words unfamiliar to them (Quirk, 2007).

Quirk (2007) asserts that English in various regions represents a disjunction between the native cultures and the medium of communication in the communities. The exotic life has to be expressed through new linguistic symbols and the consequence is mutual interlink between language and culture. That is, as the local people wrestle with the cultural elements in the new language to signify their indigenous conceptualizations of the world as accurately as possible.

Quirk (2007) observes that one has to convey in a language that is not one's own the spirit that is one's own. One has to convey the various shades and omissions of a certain thought – movement that looks maltreated in an alien language. We are instinctively bilingual. Many of us writing in our own language and English cannot write like the English we should. We can write only as Kenyans (or Isukha). How is this inner struggle of pupils expressed when writing and speaking English as a second language?

It is important at this point to acknowledge that while some Kenyans have a positive attitude towards mother tongue and culture, others view it in a negative light. The study set out to bridge the existing discrepancy on the influence of first language and culture on the teaching and learning English language in primary schools. It sought to establish the difference of opinion on whether vernacular is detrimental to a child's mental or personal development and educational progress.

It was to find out whether optimal first language provides a rich cognitive foundation for the acquisition and learning of English as a second language. This study seeks to bridge

the existing gap on whether first language and culture interferes with English fluency and accuracy, or is a vital resource in the teaching and learning of English

It is important at this point to acknowledge that while some Kenyans have a positive attitude towards mother tongue and culture, others view it in a negative light. It sought to establish the difference of opinion on whether vernacular is detrimental to a child's mental or personal development and educational progress. This study seeks to bridge the existing gap on whether first language and culture interferes with English fluency and accuracy, or is a vital resource in the teaching and learning of English.

## 1.3 Purpose of the Study

English language learners come to the classroom with unique knowledge and experiences built upon their first language and culture. Cultural differences can often be subtle; however, they do influence pupils' learning. The purpose of this study is to identify various aspects of language and culture, and how they influence the teaching and learning of English language in primary schools.

This study seeks to identify the community's activities, behaviour and personalities that in the view of the teachers have a direct influence on pupils' attitude towards English language. This is important because the most natural way to learn a new language is to use it in some form of involvement with community life: within the school community itself or in the wider community outside the school. This means involvement of pupils in the language community in which their real lives are lived. This creates a language

environment which makes it possible for children to understand something of what is going on around them and what is expected of them. This experience is more resourceful where pupils understand their language and where this language can be shared with others.

## 1.4 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are to:

a) Establish the influence of Isukha language and culture on the teaching and learning of English language in primary schools.

b) Identify the linguistic and cultural challenges facing the teaching and learning of English language in primary schools.

c) Establish the influence of instructional methods on the teaching and learning of English in primary schools.

d) Identify the factors that hinder proficiency in English language in primary schools among the Isukha.

## 1.5 Research Questions

To achieve the above objectives, the following research questions were formulated:

a) What is the influence of Isukha language and culture on the teaching and learning of English in primary schools?

b) What linguistic and cultural challenges face the teaching and learning of English language in primary schools?

c) How do instructional methods influence the teaching and learning of English in primary schools among the Isukha?

d) What factors hinder proficiency in English language in primary schools among the Isukha?

## 1.6 Assumptions of the Study

The following are the assumptions of the study:

a) All learners have the same common mother tongue and culture.

b) All pupils have equal exposure and competency in their first language.

c) Mother tongue is a strong language in family interaction

d) All pupils receive similar instruction in English.

e) The respondents will be honest in their responses.

f) The teachers are trained and use proper instructional methods.

## 1.7 Significance of the Study

This study is expected to reveal the influence of mother tongue and culture on the teaching and learning of English in primary schools. It is geared to provide insight into specific challenges facing teachers of English language posed by linguistic and cultural diversity.

The new understanding is to provide a greater and swifter move towards strengthening mother tongue education in order to create a solid literacy base for later education in English as a second language. This is because learning a second language also means

acquiring a second culture, which involves learning different ways of thinking, processing information, interacting and communicating.

It is hoped that the findings of this study will go along way in enabling educators and policy makers to advocate for greater use of African languages which will lead to the growth of more balanced citizens, both culturally and educationally. Those competent in their mother tongues will have a more positive self-image and greater respect for other languages and their speakers. They will be more culturally flexible, socially balanced and accommodating. There will thus be fewer chances of political and cultural polarity if people are exposed to more languages than if they are putting up barriers against certain languages.

## 1.8 Justification of the Study

Educational policies have provided a new context from which to view the teaching process. Since the language and the spirit of the pupil are that of inclusion, it seems natural that teachers use the language the child understands to communicate the content to be learned in schools. In addition, teachers are encouraged to use alternative models of instruction to fit the needs of all children (Silvana, 2007).

As the standard for assessment requires a tight coupling between the goals of instruction and assessment of a pupil's academic achievement, it is assumed the child would understand the language used for instruction and the language used in the assessment

instrument. Meaningful feedback from timely assessment is to give classroom teachers important data to improve their instructional practices (Quirk, 2007).

The goal of any bilingual program is grade level content mastery in the two languages – in this case, English and the pupils' native language. Yet, because of the well documented developmental nature of literacy and second language acquisition, care should be taken to select teaching strategies that reinforce the pupils' strengths and affirm their cultural background, rather than implementing politically expedient teaching practices (Annick, 1990). The findings in this study will be used to shed more light on the value of first language and culture on the teaching and learning of English as a second language in primary schools.

## 1.10 Scope of the Study

The study restricts itself to the influence of mother tongue and culture on the teaching and learning of English in primary day schools. It excludes pupils and teachers of early childhood centres and pre-primary classes. It focuses only on the Isukha as a homogenous group. Other linguistic and ethnic groups were not included. The parameters used include level of education, age and gender.

## 1.11 Limitations of the Study

The following factors limited the scope of this study:

a)  It was not possible to specify all the ways in which a learner's background, first language and culture influence his/her learning of English.

b) It was not possible to get responses from all the teachers of English in the primary schools.

c) Lack of harmony in the school programmes to match the actual demands of the English curriculum gave varying results.

d) The manner in which motivation, access to educational experience, interactional dynamics and other sociolinguistic factors affected the gendered identities of pupils endeavouring to learn English as a second language.

## 1.12 Theoretical/Conceptual Framework

The study is based on the social learning theory of Bandura (1986) and the theory of language acquisition and learning by Krashen (1988). A conceptual framework was based on the theories of Bandura (1986) and Krashen (1988).

## 1.12.1 Theories of Language Acquisition and Learning

Research and theory of second language learning tends to be intertwined with the development of cognition (Brown, 1980; Caroll and Freedle, 1972; Hayes, 1970). Cognitive theories suggest that schema, rule structures and meaning are distinctive characteristic of language learning.

Memory has been singled out as the basis for language comprehension. Theories of discourse (Brown, 1980) argue that interaction with other speakers is the critical dimension in learning a language. It is argued that all cognitive processes, including those involved in language learning, arise from social interaction.

**1.12.2 Social Learning Theory**

The Social Learning theory of Bandura (1986) focuses on the learning that occurs within a social context. It considers that people learn from one another, including such concepts as observational learning, imitation and modelling. It asserts that people can learn by observing the behaviour of others and the outcome of such behaviour. That cognition plays a role in learning and that learning may or may not result in behaviour change.

Bandura (1986) suggested that the environment reinforces modelling. This is in several possible ways:

(i)     The observer is reinforced by the model. For example, an Isukha child learns and speaks Isukha as his first language in order to be accepted by the ethnic group and fit in others.

(ii)    The observer is reinforced by a third person. The observer might be modelling the actions of someone else, for example, a teacher or an outstanding pupil of English.

(iii)   The imitated behaviour itself leads to reinforcing consequences. The behaviour we learn from others produces satisfying or reinforcing results, for example, the pupil in class would observe how a classmate speaks English with fluency. This pupil would do the same and receive enjoyment.

(iv)    Consequences of the model's behaviour affect the observer's behaviour vicariously. For example, if a model is reinforced for a response, then the observer shows an increase in that same response.

**1.12.3 Contemporary Social Learning Theory of Reinforcement and Punishment**

Contemporary social learning theory of Bandura (1997) proposes that both reinforcement and punishment have indirect effects on learning. It states that reinforcement and punishment influence the extent to which an individual exhibits a behaviour that has been learned.

It asserts that the expectation of reinforcement influences cognitive processes which promote learning. Therefore attention pays a critical role in learning and attention is influenced by the expectation of reinforcement. An example would be where the teacher tells a group of Isukha pupils that Isukha language and culture carries no serious educational value. Consequently, the pupils will shift their attention from Isukha language and culture to something exotic.

**1.12.4 Cognitive Factors in Social Learning**

(i)     Learning without performance: Bandura (1997) makes a distinction between learning through observation and the actual imitation of what has been learned.

(ii)    Cognitive processing during learning: Social learning theorists contend that attention is a critical factor in learning.

(iii)   Expectations: As a result of being reinforced, pupils form expectations about the consequences that future behaviour is likely to bring. They expect certain behaviours to bring reinforcement and others to bring punishment.

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(iv)     Reciprocal causation: Bandura (1997) proposes that behaviour can influence both the environment and the person. In fact, each of these three variables (the person, the behaviour and the environment) can influence each other.

(v)      Modelling: Bandura (1997) mentions conditions necessary for effective modelling to occur. These are attention, retention, motor reproduction and motivation. Learners must want to demonstrate what they have learned.

## 1.12.5 Krashen's Theory of Language Learning

According to Krashen (1988), many factors influence the development of a second language. These include age at first arrival, first language proficiency, and type of instruction including contextualized instructional situations and opportunities to use language. Pupils must be exposed to rich learning environments with regular opportunities to practice language and literacy skills in the new language.

Krashen (1988) asserts that the best methods of second language teaching and learning are therefore those that supply 'comprehensible input' in low anxiety situations, containing messages that learners really want to learn. These methods do not force early production in the language, but allow learners to produce when they are 'ready', recognizing that improvement comes from supplying communicative and comprehensible input, and not from forcing and correcting production.

**1.12.6 Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework of this study is based on the social learning theory of Bandura (1986) and the second language learning theory by Krashen (1988).

Bandura (1986) posits that people learn from one another via observation, imitation and modelling. The teacher must ensure that the essential conditions exist: attention, retention, motor reproduction and motivation. Pupils learn through observing others' behaviour and outcomes of such behaviour. Pupils often learn a great deal simply by observing other pupils, teachers and other people.

A teacher must model appropriate behaviour and expose pupils to a variety of other models. This is especially important to break traditional stereotypes and negative influences of first language and culture on the teaching and learning of English as a second language in primary schools.

Interaction with other speakers is essential in learning a second language. Similarly, the learning of English as a second language by pupils whose first language is Isukha, arise from social interaction with teachers and other pupils. Based on the theory of Krashen (1988), pupils' age at first arrival in primary school, proficiency in first language (Isukha) and type of instruction at school will impact on the learning of English as a second language.

**Conceptual Framework Visual Model**

OBSERVATION
Attention
Age at first arrival

MODELLING
Motivation
Type of instruction at
school
Reinforcement

THE LEARNER
(Behaviour and
Environment)

IMITATION
Retention
Motor reproduction
Proficiency in
Mother tongue
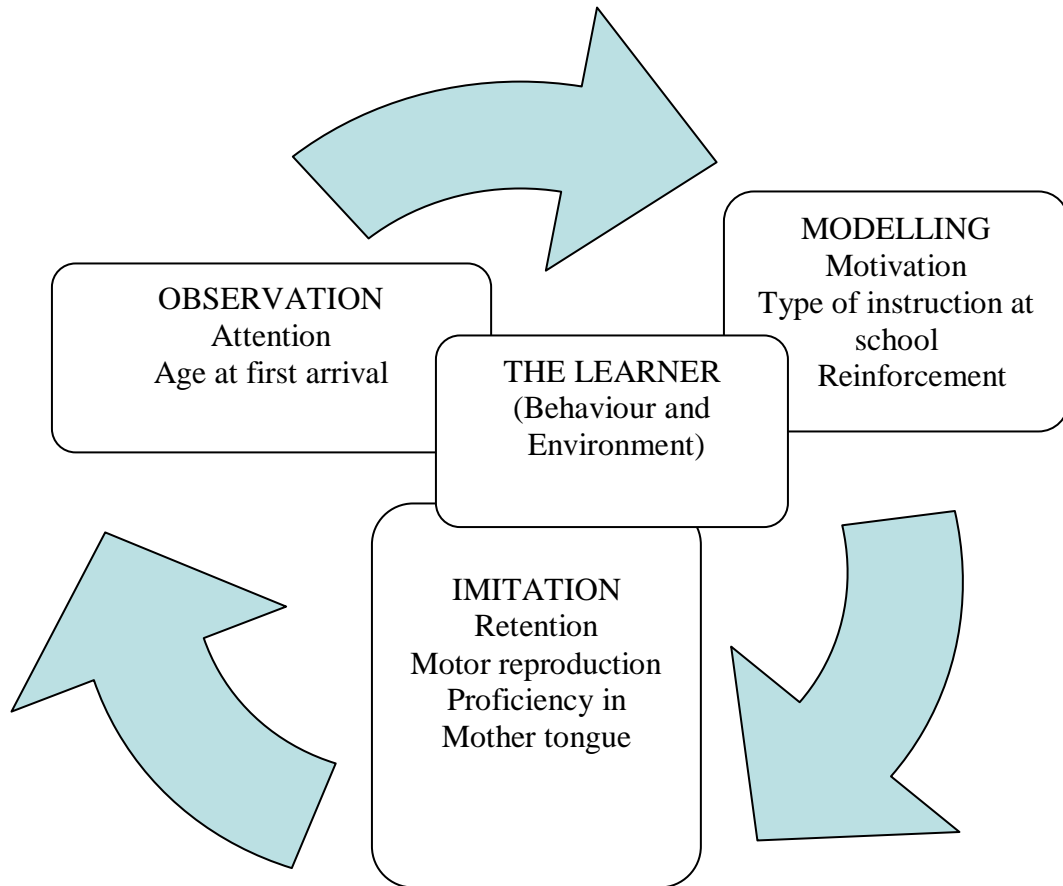
Source: Bandura (1986) and Krashen (1988)

Pupils must be exposed to rich learning environments with regular opportunities to practice English language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing). All of this information is useful, but without assistance and a low affective filter, the pupil cannot achieve learning. This information will help a teacher of English to be a better teacher for second language learners.

## 1.13 Summary

This chapter examined issues on first language and culture that influence the teaching and learning of English as a second language in primary schools. It noted that each community's language is rich and its culture respectful. The objectives of the study and research questions were stated. The assumptions, justification and significance of the study were outlined.

A brief description of the framework and limitations of the study was given. The theoretical framework was based on the theory of Bandura (1986) and the different hypotheses of Krashen (1988). In addition, personal philosophy on how these theories relate to the influence of first language and culture on the teaching and learning of English was provided. In the following chapter, literature review for this study and other related studies is done.

## 1.14 Operational Definition of Key Terms in the Study

- **Culture:** A people's way of life as depicted in dominant habits and norms of language use.

- **First language:** Mother tongue / vernacular

- **Isukha:** A linguistic group of the Luhya speaking people, inhabiting Kakamega district of Western Kenya.

- **Kinesics**: The study of body movement, posture, gestures, eye-behaviour, and facial expression.

- **Paralanguage**: A category of non-verbal communication which consists of non-linguistic accompaniments of speech such as voice, rate, volume, tempo, pitch and intensity as well as intruding sounds, hesitations and pauses.

- **Speech Community**: A social group of people who share a set of norms and rules for the use of language.

# CHAPTER TWO

# LITERATURE REVIEW

## 2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, literature review for this study is done along the following sub-headings: Language and culture in primary schools; Uses of language in primary schools; Paralinguistic and non-linguistic communication in primary schools; Language and gender in primary schools. This chapter also reviews literature of studies related to the influence of first language and culture on the teaching and learning of English as a second language. This was drawn from books, journals, periodicals and the internet.

## 2.2 Language and Culture

English language learners come to the primary school classroom with unique knowledge and experiences built upon their first language and culture. Cultural differences can often be subtle; however, they do impact pupils' learning. For example, learners from different cultures can have different views on classroom behaviour, pupil-teacher interaction as well as different views on the value of education (Muhoho, 2006).

Cultural differences can also affect how pupils understand content, because pupils from different cultures may not have in common the cultural experiences needed to comprehend many texts. The same holds true for language. Language is imbedded in culture and culture influences how people think and use language. Thus, a learner's first

language and culture affects the ways in which they learn English language (Romaine, 1994).

It is also important, however, to recognize that culture is not fixed within the learners permanently. Over time, English language learners in primary school will develop their own cultural sensibilities in local contexts. Learning a second language also means acquiring a second culture, which involves learning different ways of thinking, processing, interacting and communicating (Fukushima, 2005).

In other cultures, people tend to value individual achievement or may feel time is of essence, that is, the faster the better. An awareness of these differences may help educators be more understanding of the English learners' difficulties and more helpful to students going through the process of acculturation and second language acquisition (Morgan, 2006).

### 2.2.1 Age and Educational Background

Just as with culture and language, the age and educational background of English language learners in primary schools will also have a significant effect upon the way in which they will develop proficiency in English. Research indicates that children and adults learn in very different ways; this is especially true for language learning (Bickerton, 1981).

Learners of different ages have different needs and approaches to learning, and thus the language teaching methodologies employed must be appropriate for each age group. Research in the field of second language acquisition has consistently shown that strong language and literacy skills in a learner's first language greatly enhance second language (English) learning (Brown, 1980).

With classrooms in Kenyan primary schools becoming increasingly diverse, it can no longer be assumed that English language learners come to programmes with similar educational backgrounds and the same level of native language literacy. Although they may be the same age, their educational backgrounds and native language literacy skills are vastly different, which affects their educational needs as well as the rate at which each develops English language proficiency (Graddol, 1993).

Chomsky (1965) contented that the child is born with an innate knowledge of or a predisposition towards language, and that this innate property (the Language Acquisition Device-LAD or Universal Grammar-UG), is universal to all human beings. Learning (nurture) complements innateness (nature). The linguistic and cultural environment the child is in determines the efficiency and success of learning a second language.

As pointed out by Chomsky (1965), learning (nurture) complements innateness (nature). Thus the linguistic and cultural environment the child is in determines the efficiency and success of learning English as a second language. Pupils learn in stages. This accounts for the learning situation where learners proceed from lower to upper primary school.

Bickerton (1981) found evidence across a number of languages, of common patterns of linguistic and cognitive development. He proposed that human beings are programmed to proceed from stage to stage. This accounts for the learning situation where learners proceed from one developmental age to another in stages.

### 2.2.2 Influence of Mother tongue on Teaching

Stern (1984) states that in language learning, an individual in his lifetime, without any specific tuition, acquires new terms, meanings, jargons, slang, codes, or 'registers'. He may learn new patterns of intonation, new gestures, postures or a new dialect. Stern (1984) further defines language teaching as the activities which are intended to bring about language learning.

Language teaching includes formal instruction, individualised instruction, self-study, computer-assisted instruction, and the use of media. It also includes supporting activities like the preparation of teaching materials, teaching grammar, dictionaries, training teachers and administrative provision inside and outside the educational system.

Language teachers can be said to regard themselves as practical people and not as theorists. A language teacher can express his theoretical conviction through classroom activities as much as through the opinions he voices in discussions at professional meetings. The keen interest aroused by conferences and discussions on professional problems indicates that there is no shortage of opinions and ideas. Even the general

public - especially where language questions are politically sensitive – is often drawn into the language teaching debate (Stern, 1984).

Witness the perennial complaints about the unsatisfactory state of language teaching, its ineffectiveness, about the waste of money and energy on something that does not produce commensurate results. The need for constructive theorising is revealed by restlessness in the language teaching profession, the vain search for panacea, the impatience with language instruction among parent groups, and the disappointment and resentment expressed by unsuccessful learners (Stern, 1984).

The rapid turn over of ideas on language teaching, the long history of method battles, the so-called discoveries and breakthroughs, and the subsequent disenchantment, all form a sad but telling cavalcade of theorising through the ages. Understandably, experienced language teachers have become sceptical of 'new' theories, method reforms, and other innovations (Wilkinson, 1978).

Stern (1984) observes that language teaching requires a concept of the nature of language. Implicitly or explicitly the teacher works with a theory of language. It demands a view of the learner and of the nature of language learning. Language teaching also implies a view of the language teacher as it occurs in a given context. The interpretation of context is an essential part of a given theory. Language learning and teaching must always be viewed in a context, setting or background.

Second language teaching – like any other enterprise – represents an investment in human and financial resources. It engages large numbers of people full time and for many it is a life-time career. It occupies many hours of pupil's time. Considerable investment is required for facilities, technical equipment and teacher education, and for the production of instructional materials such as textbooks, dictionaries and audiovisual aids. Planning, decision-making, practice and innovation in this area should therefore, not exclusively rely on tradition, opinion, or trial-and-error but should be able to draw conclusions on rational enquiry, systematic investigation, and, if possible controlled experiment (Jordan, 1983).

Languages primarily reflect rather than create socio-cultural regularities in values and orientations. Language is essentially rooted in the reality of culture, the tribal life and customs of the people and it cannot be explained without constant reference to the broader contexts of verbal utterances. An utterance becomes only intelligible when it is placed within its context of situation (Stern, 1984).

As schools become even more culturally and linguistically diverse, it is critical that all educators understand the influence this diversity has upon teaching and learning in primary schools. Moreover, decision makers at all levels must also understand and appreciate the impact this diversity has upon education policy, especially as it relates to English language learners in primary schools (Silvana, 2007).

Due to the increasing diversity in the English language learner population, educational policies that focus on singular methodologies, reliance on standardized assessment and limited time frames for learning will not effectively serve these learners (Eisemon, 1997). Educational and assessment policies must be flexible to give diverse English language learners equal access to greater educational content and opportunities for success. There is need for consultation between researchers, educators, decision makers, teachers of English and other stakeholders in the formulation of sound education policy as it relates to English language teaching and learning in primary schools (Silvana, 2007).

It is important at this point to acknowledge that while some Kenyans have a positive attitude towards mother tongue and culture, others view it in a negative light (Webb and Kembo, 2000). The main objections to mother tongue are based on the following beliefs:

- That it carries little or no serious educational value.
- That it creates more tasks for the brain than is necessary.
- That it leads to mental confusion as the child doesn't know when to use which language in communication.
- That it slows down or hinders proper acquisition of the second language.
- That it leads to a split personality.
- That it creates cultural and political divisions when there are many vernacular languages alongside a second language.

Webb and Kembo (2000) observe that vernacular is not merely a source of problems, but in fact a valuable resource:

- Knowledge of the indigenous African languages provides access to a vast reservoir of wisdom and skills contained in the speakers.

- Besides the fact that knowledge of a local language allows us to communicate with so many people in that community, the vast amount of knowledge that the people possess is often only effectively accessible through a particular language.

- The transition between home and school is easier for the child.

- The use of mother tongue makes what is taught meaningful to the pupil, since it relates to his previous experience.

- It makes for a close relationship between the teacher and the pupils.

- It allows the pupils to participate in class activities by responding to instructions and answering questions even in very early stages.

- Pre-reading activities and initial reading are done in a language which the pupils can already speak well.

## 2.3 Uses of Language in Primary Schools

The various uses of language in primary schools influence the learning and teaching of English. Sociologically, the extended functional range of language usage underlies the positive regard for it and its importance to the school community. Language is important because it provides access to essential social and education benefits (Graddol, 1993).

It has been pointed out that language is used in establishing rapport. Language has the power of bringing pupils and teachers together to start a social and academic interaction. For teachers and pupils to meet and start talking is so normal that we tend to assume that

it happens naturally, without any deliberate action by the participants. We are familiar with fixed expressions, such as the greetings that are exchanged between pupils and teachers, but seldom give thought to what they are meant to do for us (Webb & Kembo, 2000).

Exchanges may at times, sound like idle chat but are acceptable and respectable. The function of such exchanges is to initiate dialogue, and prepare the stage for the other language functions to follow. It is a useful 'starter' before other linguistic transactions begin. This is normally called phatic communication. It provides the vital social contact and psychological atmosphere that the pupils and teachers need before information exchange can take place, and ensures that other communicative transactions proceed smoothly. The phatic function is found in greetings in all languages, and their meanings are culturally determined (Romaine, 1994).

In addition, language is used in expressing feelings and emotions. Language not only enables us to talk about the world and to display our knowledge and thoughts; it also provides us with a facility to express our intimate feelings, opinions and attitudes. Language also makes it possible for teachers to influence pupils to feel as they do. A participant's emotions cannot be judged as true or false, although we may or may not agree with them (Graddol, 1993).

Another basic use of language is to give information. This communicative function is so basic that some teachers and pupils regard it as the only one. It is, therefore, common to

come across claims that language is the means by which members of a school communicate, or that language is a system of communication (Quirk, 2007).

As a medium of communication, language can be used to affirm or refute propositions, to present arguments, to make suggestions, and so on. Teachers and pupils thus use language to describe their world and to reason. In fact, the ability to give incorrect or false information is often cited as one of the distinguishing features of human language (Lwagula, 2006).

Language is useful in exercising authority. The power relationships between teachers and pupils in a conversation can be detected in the selection of words, pitch levels and loudness of voice. The more powerful a participant is, the more latitude he or she has in the choice of what to say, and, more importantly, how to say it. A speaker must know which language to use when, where and with whom (Amato, 1996).

Associated with the use of language to exercise authority is its use to regulate the behaviour of others. Teachers give commands and orders, or persuade pupils to do what they want. Teachers also prohibit pupils from doing or saying certain things. Teachers do this by deliberately manipulating their linguistic knowledge (Gallagher, 1986).

Language also functions as a symbol of individual and group identity. At an individual level, children use language from a very early age to define their personalities in relation to others, and to separate themselves from objects in the physical world. Later on in life,

they continually use language to define themselves as they play various roles in the school community (Lwagula, 2006).

## 2.4 Paralinguistic and Non-linguistic Communication in Primary Schools

These reflexes influence the teaching and learning of English language in primary schools. Webb and Kembo (2000) point out that in addition to linguistic reflexes of the cultural context of language and language use, there are also paralinguistic and non-linguistic reflexes. Paralinguistic reflexes refer to features that co-occur with linguistic features, but which are not grammatical by nature, such as the tempo and loudness of speech and tone voice.

Non-linguistic reflexes of culture refer to aspects such as gestures, facial expressions, eye-contact, and the proximity between discourse participants, which are clearly not linguistic aspects, but which are nevertheless crucial for meaningful communication. Non-verbal factors at work in intercultural communication are those that are not expressed in linguistic form. One example is the physical proximity or distance between a teacher and a pupil in a communication interaction (Wikipedia, 2007).

In primary schools, physical distance is determined by rank, or social hierarchy or differentiation. It may not be appropriate for a child to be too close to an adult in a discussion, for a subordinate to be too close to a chief, or for a pupil to be too close to a teacher, unless they are authorized to come closer. In the same manner, depending on interpersonal relationships, it may not be wise for a boy to stand too close to a girl in a

communication interaction. If this were to happen, it could lead to misunderstanding that could hamper the smooth running of the conversation (Vygotsky, 1978).

There is also the issue of posture during communication. In some ethnic groups in Uganda, children are expected to kneel when addressing elders. In certain other cases, a speaker may not stand up straight when addressing a person of a higher rank. Out of respect, they should adopt a slightly hunched posture, with drooping shoulders.

Physical contact is another significant non-verbal factor. Among the Tiriki of Western Kenya, one may not touch (or shake hands with) one's father-in-law or mother-in-law of the opposite sex. This is a kind of taboo. As regards eye-contact, in many African societies a woman may not look directly at the face of a man, particularly one she is not very familiar with. If she does so, he may totally misinterpret her intentions. Similarly, a child may not look an adult in the face (Webb and Kembo, 2000)

In many African societies, people do not kiss in public. In Uganda, women may kiss young children, especially babies. By contrast, it is natural for the French to kiss those with whom they are familiar on the cheeks, regardless of gender. This is done during the greeting interaction, or while saying goodbye. Dress is another non-verbal factor in communication that is of considerable significance in many societies. It is clear that we dress to fit the occasion. These dress 'codes' are also determined by culture (Webb and Kembo, 2000).

Among the paralinguistic factors, we can also mention the pitch of voice. In some Kenyan ethnic groups, particularly among the Bantu-speakers, the voice of the speaker tends to become higher (i.e. the pitch tends to rise) when they wish to be kind, especially persons of equal or lower rank, or towards children (Sesanu, 1995).

In some societies, loudness or softness of the voice can also signal different messages in various circumstances. In one culture, loudness could mean joy, in a second anger, while in a third it could signal fear or respect. The speed or tempo at which the speaker conducts the communication interaction can also carry different meanings (Webb and Kembo, 2000).

In many African societies, a feature of greetings is that they tend to be too long. This is probably due to the African concept of time, which does not necessarily correspond with the European notion of time. Another reason may be that many Africans are village dwellers, and the tempo of life in the village or rural locality is generally very different from that found in towns and cities. All these paralinguistic and non-linguistic factors influence the teaching and learning of English language in primary schools (Kembo, 1994).

## 2.5 Language and Gender in Primary Schools

Gender issues, especially the marginalized role of females in African cultures, influence the teaching and learning of English in primary schools. Any discussion of language and

sex would imply that observed differences between the speech of boys/men and girls/women are biological rather than social.

According Romaine (1994), girls tend to use higher-status variants more frequently than boys. Girls tend to hypercorrect than boys. Girls, regardless of other social characteristics such as class, age, etc, use more standard forms of language than boys. On average, boys have lower pitched speaking voices than girls. Girls are therefore more excitable and emotional than boys. They are therefore seen as unsuitable for conveying information about serious topics such as news.

Another issue related to language and gender is the world-view of man-made language. Girls are seen as deviant and deficient. Words for girls have negative connotations, even where the corresponding male terms designate the same state or condition for men. Moreover, to call a boy 'a woman' is an insult; to call a girl 'a woman' is unmannered, but to call a girl 'a man' is not an insult (Sesanu, 1995).

Historically, boys have been allowed greater freedom to use taboo terms in public than have girls. Noticeably, girls have a tendency to resort to euphemism to mask otherwise unpleasant words and expressions which may be seen as offensive, obscene or somehow disturbing to listeners or readers. Such gender issues related to language and culture influences the teaching and learning of English language in primary schools (Romaine, 1994)

**2.6 Review of Related Studies**

Several studies are related to the influence of first language and culture on the teaching and learning of English as a second language in primary schools. Webb and Kembo (2000) point out that Kenya is a multilingual country in which over forty two languages are spoken. Multilingualism is a valuable resource. Knowledge of the indigenous Kenyan languages provides access to a vast reservoir of wisdom and skills contained in the body of speakers.

In *Decolonizing the Mind,* Ngugi (1986) points out the importance of language and culture to one's childhood. According to the view of Ngugi (1986), one can't study African languages and literature without studying the particular cultures and oral traditions from which Africans draw their plots, styles and metaphors. He asserts that the blindness to the indigenous voice of Africans is a direct result of colonization.

Ngugi (1986) explains that during colonization, missionaries and colonial administrators controlled publishing houses and the educational context of novels. This meant that only texts with religious stories or carefully selected stories which would not tempt young Africans to question their own condition were propagated. Africans were controlled by forcing them to speak European languages – they attempted to teach children (future generations) that speaking English was good and that native languages were bad by using negative reinforcement.

Ngugi (1986) notes that language was twisted into a mechanism that separated children from their own history because their own heritage was shared only at home, relying on orature in their native language. At school, they were told the only way to advance was to memorize the textbook history in the colonizer's language (English). By removing their native language from their education, they were separated from their history which was replaced by European history in European languages. This put the lives of Africans more firmly in the control of the colonists.

Ngugi (1986) argues that colonization was not simply a process of physical force. Rather, the bullet was the means of physical subjugation while language was the means of the spiritual subjugation. In Kenya colonization propagated English as the language of education and as a result, indigenous languages withered away. This was devastating because, as Ngugi (1986) asserts, language carries culture and culture carries the entire body of values by which we perceive ourselves and our place in the world. Therefore, how can the African cultures and experiences be expressed properly in another language?

The issue of which language should be used to express a truly African culture is thus one replete with contradictions. Ngugi (1986) argues that writing in African languages is a necessary step toward cultural identity and independence from centuries of European exploitation. In response to the infamous declaration of the Kenyan writer Ngugi (1986) that African writers should write in African languages, Achebe (1990) commented (in a talk at West Chester University), that the British did not push language into his face while he was growing up. That he chose to learn English and eventually to write in English as a

means of infiltrating the ranks of the enemy and destroying him from within. It doesn't matter what language one writes in as long as what is being written is good.

Yet, Achebe (1975) fully recognizes that English is symbolically and politically connected with the despoiler of traditional culture with intolerance and bigotry. Achebe (1990) argues that language is a weapon, and it should be used. He says that there is no point in fighting a language.

Achebe (2000) would not consent to have his novel, *Things Fall Apart*, translated into his 'linguistic travesty' Union Igbo (his mother tongue). Consequently, one of the world's great novels, which has been translated into more than thirty languages, is unable to appear in the language of the very culture it celebrates and mourns. This irony seems an apt symbol for the complex ways Western Christianity has both blessed and marred the cultures of Africa.

Ngang'a (2006), a Kenyan politician who has researched issues of ethnicity asserts that intermarriage, ethnic fights and the penchant by the government for multi-ethnic languages such as English and Kiswahili pose a threat to native languages and cultures. These, he says, have been promoted at the expense of the vernaculars, especially in the urban areas, ensuring a slow but steady eradication of some local languages.

According to Oduol (2006), one of the Kenya's top journalists, learning a new language means an introduction of a new cultural identity and history. He argues that language is

one of the cornerstones of any culture and society. It cements the unique identity of a group, history, and expresses that particular group's concerns and needs in its vocabulary.

Diamond (2006), an American professor of physiology at the University of California, agrees as he comments on UNESCO's report (2006), that languages carry the culture, the literature and the music of that particular community. He says that because language is the vehicle of culture, when a people lose their language, they tend to lose their cultural identity and often end up demoralized, have a low image of themselves, and become a burden rather than a contributor to the national income.

Hirsch (2006), an environmental correspondent with the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), observes that there is a definite linkage between language and a community's survival. Hirsch (2006) notes that language is very powerful as it holds vital secrets about the environment in which a community lives. This thereafter impacts on the teaching and learning of English as a second language in primary schools.

Cleghorn (1989) highlights one major advantage associated with the use of local languages at primary school level. As a result of using local languages, it is thought that children may advance quickly enough in the official medium of instruction. When this is an examinable subject, and even a prerequisite for promotion to secondary school, capability to read and write to an expected standard could prevent drop out, repetition and general demotivation. Some argue for the teaching of Standard English. However, not all children have access to the model English speaker.

Cleghorn (1989) further notes that in rural Kenyan schools, using vernacular languages and terms to explain abstract concepts appear to contribute towards literacy in the sense that children pay more attention to the topic, understand better what they read, and are therefore able to relate it and better transform it to knowledge. Combining the use of the vernacular language as a means to induce understanding with English may expand the children's awareness of word meaning and language differences. This in turn helps to develop their English competence while also the fostering understanding of concepts being taught.

The occasional use of local terms assists in the process of moving back and forth between relevant concrete examples and the abstract. Since most agricultural practices, processes and concepts exist in vernacular languages, this means that they can be used effectively to explain natural phenomena, and thus enhance understanding. In addition, where agriculture is used as a basic theme in an integrated curriculum, learning will not be confined only to everyday situations, but will facilitate the acquisition of a wide range of skills. This eventually helps school leavers to achieve social mobility, should they desire it (Cleghorn, 1989).

One of the reasons that primary school children in Kenya appear to face difficulties with Science and Mathematics is that the language of instruction is unfamiliar to them (Eisemon, 1997). Cleghorn (1989) describes the situation in Kenya where restrictions on the use of languages other than English during instruction may ultimately hamper pupil understanding of important concepts. When instruction is in a second language and when

the concepts being taught lack equivalence in the pupils' language and culture, teaching involves a process of 'dual translation'.

Solomon (1987) notes that most cross-cultural studies in Science Education lean heavily upon the use of language to explore different meanings. This cultural variation implies different ways of perceiving nature, and also, that different languages directly affect how nature is understood. It seems to be mother tongue, rather than the language of the school, which most affects the conceptual profile of children.

Vygotsky (1978) held that children's language 'turns inward' to become the basis of inner speech and so of thought itself. This is not a problem where the curriculum is taught in the local language, but there are cases where subjects such as Science and Mathematics are taught in English, which is not the first language of the child.

Strevens (1976) made the point that most studies in the philosophy and the practice of Science Education embody two unstated assumptions: first that all the learners are members of the same culture, and also that they have the same common mother tongue. These assumptions are false in the case of developing countries. For example, in many rural schools in Kenya, there might be different dialects spoken by teachers and pupils. There are cases when teachers have been posted to schools where a completely different language is spoken to their own.

Another problem occurs when textbooks and learning materials are written in a different dialect or language than the 'first' language of the children. Consequently, these pupils are disadvantaged in terms of language, not because their own is inferior or inadequate, but because they are required to conceptualize using words unfamiliar to them (Quirk, 2007).

Strevens (1976) observes that the following problems are particularly common:

- Unanalyzed difficulties of mutual comprehension between teachers and pupils, especially in spoken English;
- The absence in the learners' own language of a word expression equivalent to one in English;
- The absence in the learner's own language or culture, of a necessary concept;
- Word order difficulties e.g. syntax, lack of familiarity with common everyday scientific vocabulary, lack of precision in the use of language;

Cleghorn (1989) points out that when language restriction does not operate strongly in practice, as in the case of Kenya's rural schools, locally relevant examples are more easily brought into the lesson along with the occasional local term' hence meaning is better communicated. Children could also relate abstract concepts which are alien to their own culture through the medium of their experience of agriculture and local practices. Connections can be made between the concrete cultural world outside the school and semantic organization of the abstract world being constructed through science lessons.

Strevens (1976) points out that in many cultures measures are seldom exact, since approximation is more practical. In other cultures, weight and measures of weight are new ideas. The essential point, however, is that although a society and language may not employ concepts and terms that are identical with those of Western Science, they will certainly have some concepts and terms which refer to number, measurement, agriculture, architecture, engineering, medicine, botany and other fields of scientific activity.

The cognitive task for the learner of Science through English for example, the acquisition of fresh attitudes towards observation and of terms for ideas which are partly new to him or her and just different from those already familiar (Vygotsky, 1978).

Quirk (2007) asserts that English in various regions represents a 'disjunction' between the native cultures and the medium of communication in the communities. The exotic life has to be expressed through new linguistic symbols and the consequence is mutual in interlink between language and culture. That is, as the local people wrestle with the cultural elements in the new language to signify their indigenous conceptualizations of the world as accurately as possible.

Quirk (2007) observes that one has to convey in a language that is not one's own the spirit that is one's own. One has to convey the various shades and omissions of a certain thought – movement that looks maltreated in an alien language. He asserts that we are instinctively bilingual. Many of us writing in our own language and English cannot write

like the English we should. We can write only as Kenyans (or Isukhas). This inner struggle is expressed by writers and speakers of English as a second language.

Kembo (1994) observes that language is one of the cornerstones of any culture and society. Therefore, the learning of a second language means the introduction of a new culture, history and identity. It was also stated that there is an overwhelming evidence that English is preferred in most of the crucial public domains (mass media, education, official correspondence, etc) and gradually entering the private domains (with family members, writing to brothers/sisters, husband/wife).

Kembo (1994) further points out that most of the interaction between children and parents is carried out in mother tongue. The family is an informal domain requiring the use of the language of warmth and solidarity, which only mother tongue can fulfil. He asserts that English is increasingly becoming the language of the home for educated Kenyans; English is preferred in writing even to parents, followed by Kiswahili and finally mother tongue. However, mother tongue still remains a strong language of oral interaction and intimacy.

The preference for a language for one's children is one way of expressing one's beliefs about a language. The majority of people still consider their mother tongue as the language their children should learn first. This is in conformity with the general belief that anyone who does not speak his community language is cultureless and in fact, he is sometimes considered as a social reject (Terell, 1992).

Kembo (1994) observes that linguistic choices reflect on who is speaking, who is being spoken to, the social distance, and the status. For example, English is preferred for communication with people outside the family e.g. priest, doctor, colleagues at work and other formal encounters. Moreover, people invariably work with stereotypes. This means that they often rely on oversimplified characterizations of the participants in a particular discourse.

The domain of business has always been associated with Kiswahili and it is still the 'trade language' of the country. English, Kiswahili and mother tongue are assigned different roles in a speech community but with a few points where their uses overlap. English is the typical code for academic discourse in Kenya. It is only in discussing 'politics' and the 'latest news', that at times it is shared by Kiswahili. The general picture is that English is the preferred language for academic discussion, with Kiswahili only marginally resorted to in some areas, and mother tongue definitely not found suitable in this context (Webb and Kembo, 2000).

The question is: Should we condemn pupils' deviation or not? Is it a deviation or mistake? A deviation can be contextualised in the *'unEnglish'* sociolinguistic context in which English actually functions. Its' meaning must, therefore, be derived with reference to the use and the usage appropriate to that cultural context. A mistake, on the other hand, does not necessarily have an underlying sociolinguistic explanation. It may be essentially a marker of acquisition inadequacy. It may indicate a stage in language acquisition. Can the deviation be traced to pupils' mother tongue rules? Is it a form propagated through

some official documents or the local and international mass media? Is it expressing a particular local cultural meaning? (Mora, 2006)

What is called the 'standard' of any language is the idealised form usually best exemplified in written texts and highly formal situations of speech interactions, for example, scientific conferences, courtroom discourse or tutorial discussions. In view of the global application of English as an international lingua franca, what form should be adopted to ensure cross-cultural understanding and effective international communication, but at the same time providing a realistic national model for education and intra-national communication? (NCELA, 2006)

Where a language is a native tongue, one of the competing dialects is selected and then developed through rigorous corpus, status and acquisition planning and then codified as the standard language. The choice has been in most cases, the variety spoken at the capital by the ruling class, although the variety spoken by a non-controversial minority group can be the most prudent choice (NCELA, 2001).

This is important because the most natural way to learn a new language is to use it in some form of involvement with community life: within the school community itself or in the wider community outside the school. This means involvement of pupils in the language community in which their real lives are lived. This creates a language environment which makes it possible for children to understand something of what is going on around them and what is expected of them. This experience is more resourceful

where pupils understand their language and where this language can be shared with others (Morgan, 2006).

In an attempt to provide teachers with informed guidelines regarding correctness, 'deviations' and 'mistakes' must be critically considered in order to isolate the 'motivations' of the forms and not be satisfied with superficial explanations of 'origin'. For example, it is so easy to trace the origin of a second language learner's performance error to his mother tongue, but it is not easy to explain why mother tongue interference occurs at every point that it does in a construction. With regard to acceptance of a form, it is not a question of anything that goes in the name of 'nativity' (Mora, 2006).

According to Quirk (2007), the second language learner is entitled to the 'best'. Unfortunately, his 'best' is the native speaker model. However, to accept any deviation entails the attitude that the second language learner cannot achieve the 'best' after all. The best goal for the non-native speaker is the English of the most educated and articulate speakers of English in his own linguistic group.

It has been suggested that the English spoken must be internationally intelligible, locally acceptable, and culturally relevant. The greatest advantage of such a view is that it is realistic, achievable by the learner, demonstrable by the teacher and easy to identify with by the learners. What should the teacher of English regard as a 'mistake' requiring correction? What should be used to determine the level of proficiency in English? (Richards, 1992)

In Kenya, at the end of every cycle (primary and secondary) in the education system, there is an external examination administered by the Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC) and the results are used to determine whether a candidate is to be promoted to the next cycle or not. The standard used to do this is largely the standard British English with a few exceptions mainly based on lexical borrowing from local languages and neologism e.g. *a matatu* meaning a passenger vehicle; *mwananchi* meaning a citizen; *duka* meaning a small retail shop (Mora, 2006).

As the standard for assessment requires a tight coupling between the goals of instruction and assessment of a pupil's academic achievement, it is assumed the child would understand the language used for instruction and the language used in the assessment instrument. Meaningful feedback from timely assessment is to give classroom teachers important data to improve their instructional practices (Quirk, 2007).

The goal of any bilingual program is grade level content mastery in the two languages – in this case, English and the pupils' native language. Yet, because of the well documented developmental nature of literacy and second language acquisition, care should be taken to select teaching strategies that reinforce the pupils' strengths and affirm their cultural background, rather than implementing politically expedient teaching practices (Annick, 1990).

Sociologically it has been noted that the extended functional range of English usage underlies the positive regard for it and its importance to the speech community. Language is important because it provides access to essential social and academic benefits. It is also

useful in establishing rapport, expressing feelings and emotions, giving information, exercising authority and as an identity marker in schools (Morgan, 2006).

As Stern (1984) asserts among different learners at different stages of learning, second language competence or proficiency ranges from zero to native-like proficiency. The zero is not absolute because the second language learner as a speaker of L1 knows language and how it functions. Complete competence is hardly reached by L2 learners, and is widely acknowledged among practitioners and theorists that in most cases it would be wasteful and perhaps undesirable to attempt to reach it.

Wilkinson (1978) observes that the first reaction of the intelligent layman if asked to define *'poor English'* might be to say *'bad grammar'*. Perhaps he might have in mind those obsessions of the purist, but more probably he would mean simple and common deviations from accepted forms.

A second comment might be *'poor vocabulary'*. A linguistically disadvantaged child has words to carry on the communication required of him at home or in the playground. It is when different things are required of him in a different situation, such as the school, that his vocabulary will seem inadequate. Someone's English is *'all right'* when he is talking to friends, but otherwise he doesn't seem to be able to manage his accent or pronunciation very well.

Jordan (1983) states that second language teaching consists of any activity on the part of one person intended to facilitate the learning by another person of a language which is not his. Pupils' needs in language learning are dependent on societal demands and career opportunities. English is a very idiomatic language and with a lesser bias towards extraction from African languages. This is why literal translations of L1 sentences usually sound odd, if not meaningless, particularly in every day conversations.

## 2.7 Summary

In this chapter, it was noted that knowledge of indigenous Kenyan languages provides an access to a vast reservoir of wisdom and skills contained in the body of the speakers. It was pointed that African cultures are expressed in the particular languages, i.e. language carries culture and culture carries the entire body of values. This in turn influences the teaching and learning of English as a second language in primary schools.

In addition to linguistic reflexes of the cultural context of the language and language use, paralinguistic and non-linguistic reflexes were also discussed. Language and gender was also highlighted with a mention of man-made language and euphemism. All these discourse features (linguistic, paralinguistic, non-linguistic, interpretative, contextualization cues and stereotypes) are culturally determined and influence the teaching and learning of English as a second language in primary schools. The chapter that follows discusses the research design and methodology used in conducting this study.

# CHAPTER THREE

# RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

## 3.1 Introduction

The focus of this chapter is on the study area, design, population, sample, procedures, research instruments, data collection and analysis. Descriptive items which were used to collect information and help probe deeply are also examined.

## 3.2 Research Design and Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey design involving collection of data from a cross-section of respondents. Gay (1976) defines descriptive survey research as collecting data in order to test hypothesis or to answer questions concerning the current status of the subject of the study.

Descriptive survey design was chosen because it is appropriate for educational fact finding and yields a great deal of information which is accurate. It enables the researcher to gather data at a particular point in time and use it to describe the nature of the existing situation (Cohen & Marion, 1980).

The study adopted the ex-post-facto research methodology in which the respondents' perception of the present influence of first language and culture on the teaching and learning of English language was investigated.

## 3.3 Study Area

The area of study was Kakamega district of Western province among the Isukha sub-tribe of the Luhya. Kakamega district borders Vihiga district to the south, Butere/Mumias districts to the West, Nandi district to the East and Malava/Lugari districts to the North (MOFAP, 2002).

This research study was physically carried out in primary day schools among the Isukha of Western Kenya. Isukha is a linguistic group of the Luhya, Bantu-speaking people. They inhabit part of Kakamega district of Western province. Isukha language was selected for study on the strength of the community embracing strongly its culture and language as depicted in activities like bull fighting, cock fighting, traditional practices, words and actions going together, among others.

Twenty primary day schools were studied. Data from two categories of respondents (teachers of English at *lower primary* and *upper primary*) was gathered. These groups of respondents provided useful insights into issues related to the influence of Isukha language and culture on the teaching and learning of English in primary schools.

## 3.4 Study Population

The study population was drawn from 4 divisions of the old Kakamega district for the purpose of this research, namely, Shinyalu, Ileho, Municipality and Ikolomani. The target population for this study consisted of 100 teachers of English selected from twenty

primary day schools among the Isukha of Western Kenya. These were teachers whose pupils' first language is the Isukha dialect of the Luhya language.

It is believed by the researcher that such teachers were better placed to give well thought out perceptions of how Isukha language and culture influences the teaching and learning of English language. They could therefore give well defined views of the value of first language and culture and the challenges faced in teaching and learning of English as a second language.

### 3.5 Study Sample and Sampling Procedure

Tuckman (1978) notes that the primary issue in choosing a sample size is that it should be sufficient to assure the researcher that the sample will be representative of the population from which it is drawn. Systematic random sampling and purposive sampling techniques were employed to select the study sample.

Systematic random sampling was used to select the 20 primary day schools out of a total of 60 schools to participate in the study. Purposive sampling was employed by the researcher to identify 100 teachers of English in the selected primary day schools that were thought to have the required information with respect to Isukha language and culture. Five (5) teachers of English (2 teachers of lower primary and 3 teachers of upper primary classes) were selected from each school.

Out of the 5 teachers of English selected, 3 had Isukha as their first language while 2 were non-Isukha speakers. Of the 2 teachers at lower primary, 1 Isukha teacher and 1 non-Isukha teacher of English participated in the study. Of the 3 teachers at upper primary, 2 Isukha teachers and 1 non-Isukha teacher took part in the study. Thus out of a total of 100 teachers of English who participated in the study, 60 had Isukha as their first language while 40 were non-Isukha teachers of English.

Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) point out that after deciding on the sample size, the researcher formulates a procedure of selecting the subjects or cases to be included in the sample. To select a representative sample, a researcher must first have a sampling frame. A sampling frame is a list, directory or index of cases from which a sample can be selected. Subjects or cases selected from the sampling frame form the units of observation of a study.

The population of the teachers was divided into two categories: teachers of lower primary and teachers of upper primary classes. Systematic random and purposive sampling techniques were employed. In systematic sampling, every $K^{th}$ school in the total population of 60 schools was selected. Purposive sampling was used to hand pick teachers of English because they have the required information on the influence of first language and culture on the teaching and learning of English.

## 3.6 Research Instruments

To collect data, the study uses the following instruments and procedures: the questionnaire, interview schedules, observation and document analysis.

## 3.6.1 Questionnaire

Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) observe that the questionnaire is commonly used to obtain important information about the population. Each item in the questionnaire is developed to address a specific objective, research question or hypothesis of the study. The researcher must therefore know how information obtained from each questionnaire item will be analysed. The questionnaire must not confuse or discourage respondents.

This study used both open-ended and structured questionnaires in collecting data from teachers of English in primary schools. The structured (closed-ended) type of questionnaire was used to enable the teacher of English to objectively select one fixed item in the questionnaire that best describes his/her situation. The closed-ended questionnaire is easy to administer, economical to use and easier to analyse.

The open-ended (unstructured) questionnaire gives the respondent complete freedom of response to express his/her opinion on the influence of language and culture on the teaching and learning of English as a second language among the Isukha of Western Kenya. These free response questions permit an individual to respond in his or her own words. They permit a greater depth of response, are simpler to formulate, stimulate a person to think and give an insight into his feelings, background, hidden motivation, interests and decisions. (Mugenda and Mugenda, 1999)

The questionnaire was pre-tested to 20 teachers of English from 5 primary schools which were not used in the actual study. Two (2) teachers of lower primary and 2 teachers of upper primary from each of the 5 schools were used in pre-testing the questionnaire. Deficiencies in the questionnaire were revealed, corrected and improved. This enhanced the validity of the questionnaire.

The respondent was to provide the background information covering school, class level taught (upper or lower), gender (male or female) and first language (Isukha or non-Isukha), before proceeding.

The questionnaire was divided into three sections. The first section consisted of statements about first language and culture. The second section consisted of statements about teachers' views on the influence of bilingualism in the teaching and learning of English. Likert scale was used to rate the statements on a 5 point scale. The respondents were to state whether they strongly agreed, agreed, were neutral (undecided), disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statements.

The third section of the questionnaire consisted of open-ended questions about the influence first language and culture on teaching. The respondents were to provide their views based on their experience as teachers of English (**appendix 2**).

### 3.6.2 Interview

Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) define interview as an oral administration of a questionnaire. Interviews are therefore face–to-face encounters. To obtain accurate

information through interviews, a researcher needs to obtain the maximum co-operation from respondents. The researcher must therefore establish a friendly relationship with the respondent prior to conducting the interview. Interviews provide in-depth data using probing questions which is not possible to get using a questionnaire.

An interview is a conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research-relevant information and focused on the content specified by research objectives of systematic description, prediction or explanation (Cohen and Manion, 1989).

An interview schedule is a set of questions that the interviewer asks when interviewing. The schedule makes it possible to obtain data required to meet specific objectives of the study. Interview schedules are also used to standardize the interview situation so that interviewers can ask the same questions in the same manner (Mugenda and Mugenda, 1999).

This study made use of unstructured interview. Face to face interview was used to enable the researcher probe the respondents further. This was used alongside the questionnaire to elicit more information to corroborate data collected through the questionnaire.

The interviewing technique was used to get clarity and capture views that might have been left out on the questionnaire for the respondents. The teachers of English were to explain how various variables affected the teaching and learning and suggest ways in

which Isukha language could be strengthened in order to positively complement the teaching and learning of English (**appendix 3**).

### 3.6.3 Observation

Tuckman (1979) points out that a researcher utilizes an observation checklist to record what he or she observes during data collection. The researcher must define the behaviour to be observed, develops a detailed list and checks off each as it occurs. Pre-testing the observation form helps to correct any mistakes that may be discovered.

The study used observation check list to observe the effect of paralinguistic and non linguistic features of communication on the teaching and learning of English in the classroom. These features of communication included tempo of the teacher, loudness of speech, tone of voice, gestures, facial expressions, eye-contact, proximity, posture, physical contact and dressing of the teacher.

The observation checklist also helped in witnessing how various cultural values influence the teaching and learning of English language in primary schools. The researcher (a non-participant observer) observed the participation of pupils as the teacher presented the lesson (**appendix 4**).

### 3.6.4 Document Analysis

In this study, the content of documents analyzed through an exploratory data analysis included both print and non-print materials about the Isukha. The use of this method enabled the researcher to read from literature about the Isukha and scanned news on

current issues on the influence of first language and culture on the teaching and learning of English. The researcher was able to obtain information on the theories of language learning and general literature on culture from the Internet and personal libraries of some academicians in the field of Sociolinguistics relevant to this study.

## 3.7 Validity and Reliability

The instruments used in this study to collect data yielded accurate, relevant and correct data which were used by the researcher to accurately answer the research questions and hypotheses.

### 3.7.1 Validity

Validity is the accuracy and meaningfulness of inferences, which are based on the research results. It is the degree to which results obtained from the analysis of data actually represent the phenomenon under study (Tuckman, 1979). To ascertain validity, accurate randomization was done to ensure that there is no characteristic difference among the subjects in study. The instruments were accurately developed and the data collection procedures standardized in order to obtain valid results.

### 3.7.2 Reliability

Reliability is a measure of the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results or data after repeated trials (Cohen and Manion, 1980). To increase the reliability of data collected, accurate coding was done and clear instructions given to the

respondents. The test-retest method of assessing reliability of data was administered. Test retest technique was used to establish the reliability of the research instruments.

## 3.8 Pilot Study

Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) mention that in a pilot study researchers analyze the instruments to see if the methods of data collection and analysis are appropriate. Pre-testing helps in enhancing the reliability and validity of the instruments.

A pilot study was done in 5 sample primary day schools among the Idakho of Western Kenya prior to the actual study. Four (4) teachers of English (2 teachers of lower primary and 2 teachers of upper primary) were selected from each school to participate in the pilot study. A total of 20 teachers of English participated in the pilot study.

Reliability coefficient of the instruments piloted was judged as per the values ranging from 0.00 to 1.00. A reliability coefficient value of 1.00 indicates perfect reliability while 0.00 indicates no reliability. A reliability coefficient value of 0.8 of the instruments piloted was obtained hence considered sufficient and reliable for use in the research.

In order to ascertain content-validity, the research instruments were also adjusted to suit the study topic. This was in liaison with experts from the Department of Curriculum, Instruction and Educational Media, Moi University.

**3.9 Data collection**

After clearance of the proposal by the school of Education, Moi University, the researcher got a permit for the research from the Ministry of Education. The Provincial Director of Education (Western Province) and the District Education Officer (Kakamega) were also notified of the research and the particular schools sampled. An introductory letter was attached to the questionnaire and hand delivered by the researcher to the schools sampled out for the research (**appendix 1**).

The respondents were given ample time to answer the questions. The questionnaires were collected by the researcher after two weeks of dispatch. The Head teachers were informed of the dates of visit and the permission to interview the teachers of English and make observations in the classroom. The researcher thanked the respondents and assured them of confidentiality of information given.

Data for the study was collected from the teachers of English in primary schools using the questionnaire, face-to-face interview and observation. Both qualitative and quantitative data was obtained from this study. Data collected was coded and entered in the computer for analysis using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS Version 11.5).

**3.10 Analysis and Presentation of Data**

The data collected by the questionnaire was coded, tabulated and tallied to get frequencies which were converted to percentages and presented using tables and charts.

The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics (e.g. frequencies, percentages and means). Interpretation was done with the help of appropriate descriptive statistics generated from the data collected from the respondents. Suggestions in the questionnaire and interviews were categorized into selected themes.

## 3.11 Variables

The main variables in the study included language attitudes, language background, level of education, gender, age, cultural beliefs, and motivation. The interaction between these variables revealed the actual influence of language and culture on the teaching and learning of English as a second language in primary schools among the Isukha of Western Kenya.

## 3.12 Summary

This chapter highlighted the design and methodology of data collection from a cross-section of respondents. Simple random and purposive sampling techniques were employed in selecting the sample. Research instruments were outlined and their reliability and validity ascertained. The qualitative and quantitative data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics. Variables in the study were also identified. The chapter that follows makes a presentation, gives an interpretation and provides an analysis of data.

# CHAPTER FOUR

## PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

### 4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, data collected is presented, interpreted and the results analyzed. Data collected by the questionnaire is analyzed using descriptive statistics by the help of the computer programme SPSS version 11.5. Copies of the questionnaire were given to a total of 100 teachers of English sampled from 20 primary day schools among the Isukha of Western province.

Copies of the completed questionnaire were collected by the researcher after two weeks. Ninety nine copies of the questionnaire given to teachers were collected and analyzed while 1 questionnaire given to a teacher of English was not returned as she got a transfer to another station outside Kakamega district. The researcher interviewed and observed a total of 99 teachers of English from the 20 selected primary day schools. Five teachers of English (2 teachers of lower primary and 3 teachers of upper primary classes) were interviewed and observed in the classroom from each primary school.

Out of the 5 teachers of English in each primary school who participated in the study, 3 had Isukha as their first language while 2 were non-Isukha speakers. Of the 2 teachers at lower primary, 1 Isukha teacher and 1 non-Isukha teacher of English participated in the study. Of the 3 teachers at upper primary, 2 Isukha teachers and 1 non-Isukha teacher took part in the study. Thus out of a total of 99 teachers of English who participated in

the study, 60 had Isukha as their first language while 39 were non-Isukha teachers of English.

## 4.2 Data Presentation

The data collected in this study is presented in figures while percentages are in brackets.

A Likert scale was used to code the attitudinal responses of the teachers.

**Coding formulation used for the attitude scale**

| Strongly Agree | Agree | Undecided | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---|
| **5** | **4** | **3** | **2** | **1** |

## 4.2.1 The Influence of First Language and Culture on English

The first section of the questionnaire contained statements on the influence of first language and culture on the learning and teaching of English language in primary schools. The respondents provided their views based on a Likert scale. The responses to the specific attitude scale statements are presented in Table 4.1.

Statement (**a**) sought to establish whether teachers enjoy teaching English alongside Isukha language. The statement yielded a mean score of 3.06 depicting that teachers were undecided whether they enjoyed teaching English alongside Isukha language. This influences the teaching and learning of English as it slows down momentum in teaching when there is an aspect of teaching they are doing compulsively.

Statement (**b**) sought to establish whether Isukha language is difficult to read and write. The statement yielded a mean score of 2.48 depicting a favourable opinion. This affects the teaching and learning of English because when teachers view Isukha language as being easy to read and write they end up creating a positive attitude towards languages in their students and this fosters the teaching and learning of English.

Statements (**c**) and (**f**) sought to establish whether Isukha language carries little educational value and whether Isukha language and culture has no role in formal education. The statements yielded mean scores of 2.16, both depicting an unfavourable opinion. Teachers of English believe that Isukha language has an educational value and an important role to play in formal education in the teaching and learning of English.

Statement (**d**) sought to establish whether the acquisition of Isukha language slows down proper acquisition of English as a second language. The statement yielded a mean score of 2.27 showing that teachers viewed Isukha language as a stepping stone to the teaching and learning of English.

Statement (**e**) sought to establish whether Isukha pupils are approachable and ready to learn. The statement yielded a mean score of 3.42 depicting a favourable opinion. This influences the teaching and learning of English positively as when pupils are eager to learn the learning process is easy and successful.

Statements (**g**) sought to establish whether Isukha language and culture provides valuable foundation in English learning. The statement yielded a mean score of 4.19 depicting a favourable opinion. Hence the Isukha language aids in the teaching and learning of English by providing a valuable foundation in English learning.

Statement (**h**) sought to establish whether bilingualism is a hindrance in learning English. The statement yielded a mean score of 2.16 yielding an unfavourable opinion. Hence teachers do not view Isukha language as an obstacle in the learning of English but rather as a springboard in the teaching and learning of English.

Statement (**i**) sought to establish whether pupils who have a strong cultural identity in addition to solid academic skills are more likely to stay in school until graduation. The statement yielded a mean score of 3.55 depicting a favourable opinion. Hence Isukha language fosters English learning by ensuring that pupils are consistently present in school until graduation.

Statements (j), (k), (l), (m), (n), (o), (p) and (q) which all yielded a favourable opinion as follows:

- Statement (**j**) indicates that both English and a child's native language (Isukha) should be used as a medium of instruction at different points throughout the programme for different functions and purposes with a mean of 3.76;
- Statement (**k**) shows that the development of literacy skills in the first language reduces the risk of reading failure with a mean of 3.63;

- Statement (**l**) established that pupils who come to school with fully developed language other than English benefit from the use of their first language as a medium of instruction with a mean of 3.79;

- Statement (**m**) shows that the child's first language provides a valuable foundation for learning English with a mean of 4.39;

- Statement (**n**) reveals that education in two languages builds connectors between the home and the school to enhance learning with a mean of 4.06;

- Statement (**o**) shows that pupils' knowledge in their first language increases their ability for learning English with a mean of 3.78;

- Statement (**p**) indicates that pupils who struggle with linguistic and cultural issues demonstrate a low level of English language proficiency with a mean of 3.59;

- Statement (**q**) established that pupils perform more successfully when instructional strategies acknowledge, respect and build upon the language and culture of the home with a mean of 4.13 (**Table 4.1).**

**Table 4.1 Table showing teachers' responses to the specific attitude scale statements**

| Statement | Mean score |
|---|---|
| **a)** Whether the teacher enjoys teaching English alongside Isukha language | 3.06 |
| **b)** Whether Isukha language is difficult to read and write | 2.48 |
| **c)** Whether Isukha language carries little educational value | 2.16 |
| **d)** Whether the acquisition of Isukha language slows down proper acquisition of English as a second language | 2.27 |
| **e)** Whether Isukha pupils are approachable and ready to learn | 3.42 |
| **f)** Whether Isukha language and culture has no role in formal education | 2.16 |
| **g**) Whether Isukha language and culture provides valuable foundation in English learning | 4.19 |
| **h)** Whether bilingualism is a hindrance in learning English | 2.16 |
| **i**) Whether pupils who have a strong cultural identity in addition to solid academic skills are more likely to stay in school until graduation | 3.55 |
| **j)** Whether both English and a child's native language should be used as a medium of instruction at different points throughout the programme for different functions and purposes | 3.76 |
| **k)** Whether developing literacy skills in the first language reduces the risk of reading failure | 3.63 |
| **l)** Whether pupils who come to school with fully developed language other than English benefit from the use of their language as a medium of instruction | 3.79 |
| **m**) Whether a child's first language provides a valuable foundation for learning English | 4.39 |
| **n)** Whether education in two languages builds connectors between the home and the school to enhance learning | 4.06 |
| **o)** Whether pupils' knowledge in their first language increases their ability for learning English | 3.78 |
| **p)** Whether pupils who struggle with linguistic and cultural issues demonstrate a low level of English language proficiency | 3.59 |
| **q)** Whether pupils perform more successfully when instructional strategies acknowledge, respect and build upon the language and culture of the home | 4.13 |

The third section of the questionnaire comprised questions on first language and teaching. In question one, teachers were to provide their views on whether or not they feel Isukha children should learn their native language before learning English. It was established from 54 (62%) of the respondents that the native language provides a foundation for the learning of English, 24 (28%) mentioned that it helps pupils to learn effectively, 3 (3%) indicated that it enables pupils to value their native language while 6 (7%) said it was for cultural preservation **(Figure 4.1).**

It is worth noting therefore that vernacular is not merely a source of problems, but in fact a valuable resource in that:

- Knowledge of the indigenous African languages provides access to a vast reservoir of wisdom and skills contained in the speakers.

- Besides the fact that knowledge of a local language allows us to communicate with so many people in that community, the vast amount of knowledge that the people possess is often only effectively accessible through a particular language.

- The transition between home and school is easier for the child.

- The use of mother tongue makes what is taught meaningful to the pupil, since it relates to his previous experience.

- It makes for a close relationship between the teacher and the pupils.

- It allows the pupils to participate in class activities by responding to instructions and answering questions even in very early stages.

- Pre-reading activities and initial reading are done in a language which the pupils can already speak well.

**Figure 4.1 Bar chart showing why Isukha children should learn their native language before learning English**
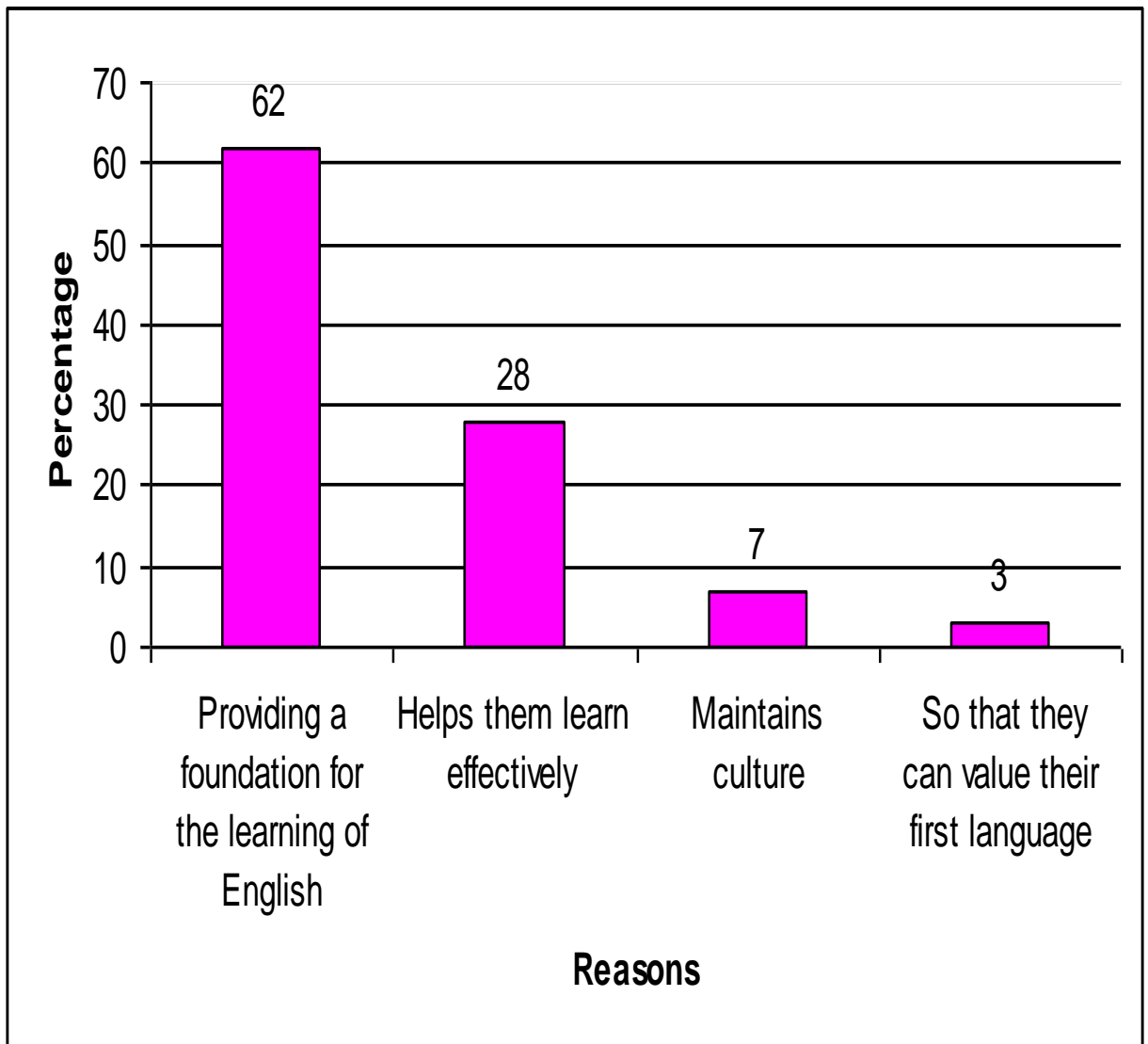
Question two in the third section of the questionnaire, teachers were asked to provide their views on the speaking of Isukha language in relation to English learning. It was noted from 6 (7%) of the respondents that Isukha language is an obstacle to the learning of English, 63 (66%) commented that Isukha language aids in the learning of English, 9 (9%) of the respondents' considered Isukha as an inferior language, 12 (13%) viewed it as a means to preserve the Isukha culture while 6 (6%) of the respondents considered Isukha language as a means of socializing (**Figure 4.2).**

**Figure 4.2: Bar chart showing teachers' views on the speaking of Isukha**
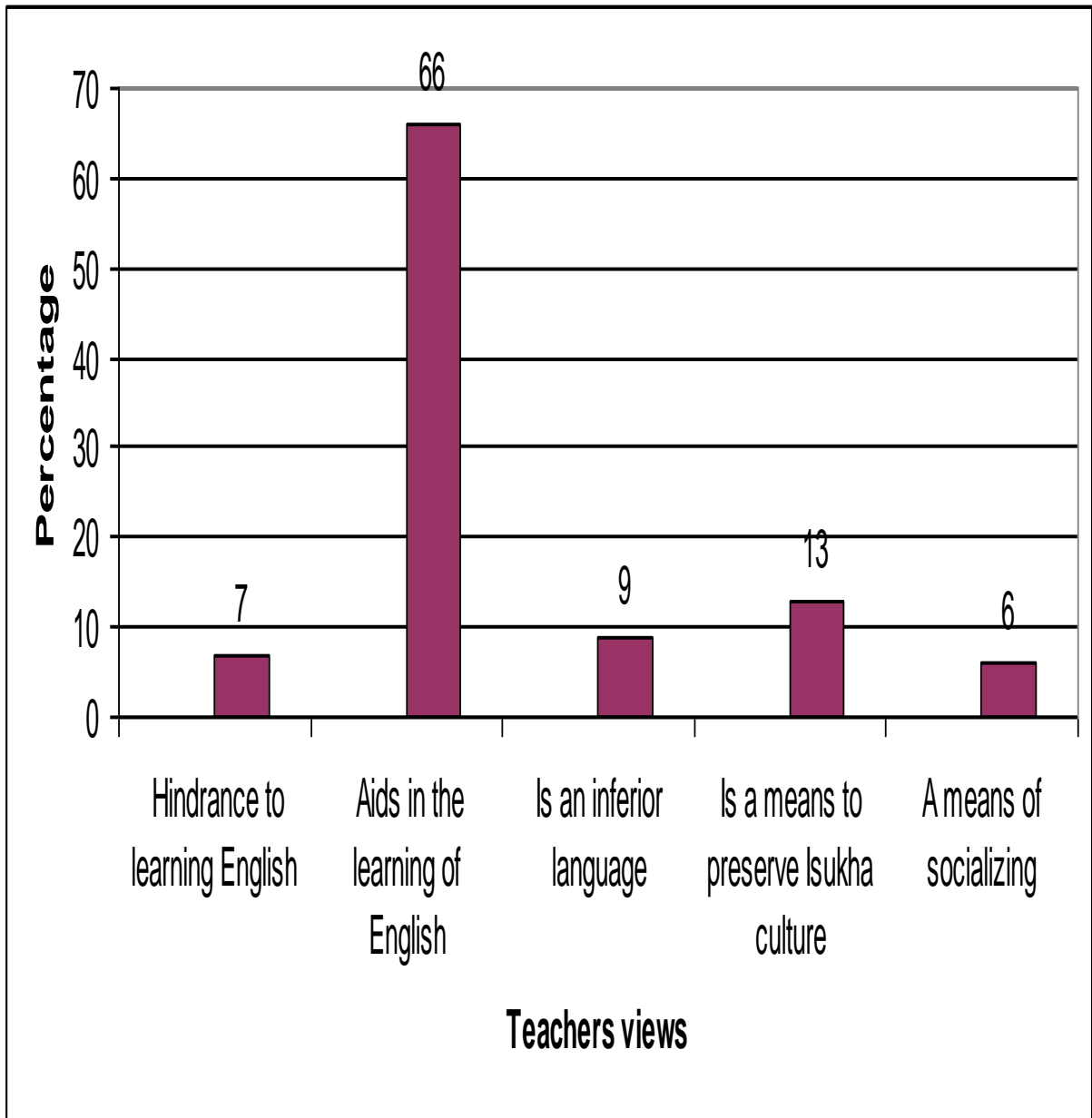
In the second section of the questionnaire, teachers were to give their views on the influence of bilingualism on the teaching and learning of English. The respondents gave various benefits of bilingualism. It was established from 15 (16%) of the respondents that knowledge of two languages leads to good speaking skills, 18 (19%) mentioned that it enables faster reading and comprehension, 12 (13%) commented that it assists in the provision of examples from the first language, 27 (28%) asserted that it enables the relation of information, 9 (9%) alluded that it helps in pronunciation while 15 (16%) said that it makes learning more interesting (**Table 4.2).**

**Table 4.2 Table showing benefits of bilingualism**

| Benefits | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| **a)** Enhances good speaking skills | 15 | 16 |
| **b)** Enables faster reading and comprehension | 18 | 19 |
| **c)** Assists in the provision of examples from the first language | 12 | 13 |
| **d)** Enables the relation of information | 27 | 28 |
| **e)** Helps in pronunciation | 9 | 9 |
| **f)** Makes learning more interesting | 15 | 16 |
| **Total** | **96** | **100.0** |

In Question 3, the respondents were to provide their views on what they perceived were the effects of the speaking of Isukha as a first language on the teaching and learning of English. It was established from 52 (51%) of the respondents that it aids pronunciation and diction of English while 48 (49%) of the respondents said that it fosters English learning by providing connectors **(Figure 4.3)**.

**Figure 4.3: Pie chart showing effects of first language on the teaching and learning of English**
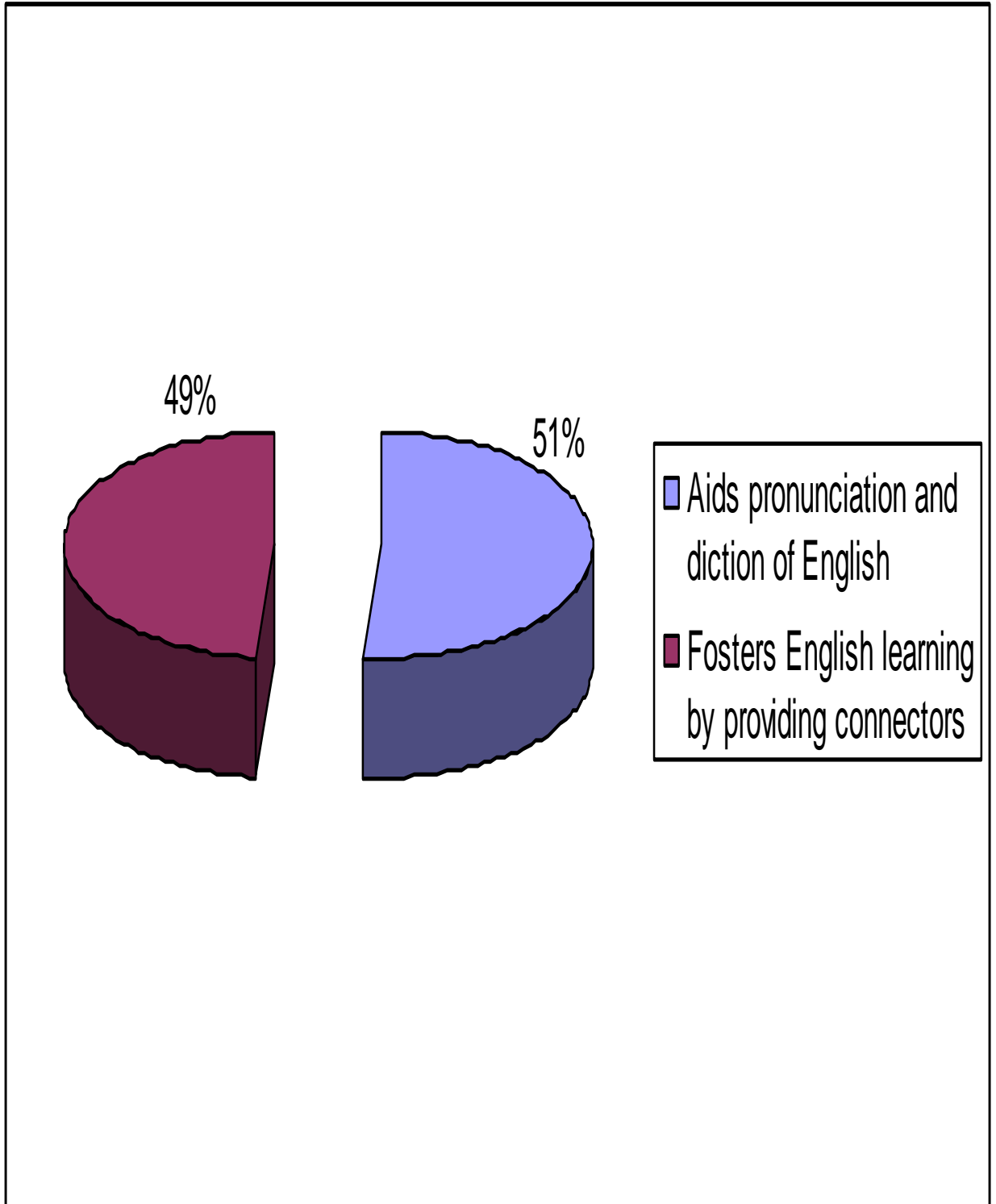
Question 1 on the interview schedule required teachers to explain how the various variables affect the learning and teaching of English. One of the variables was the length and type of exposure to native language. It was noted from 3 (3%) of the respondents that it inhibits the development of diction and vocabulary, 6 (6%) said that it leads to the development of a negative attitude towards English, 3 (3%) commented that short exposure does not inhibit the development of diction, 72 (75%) commented that it hastens English learning by providing connectors while 12 (13%) responded that long exposure to the native language makes pupils passive in learning English. (**Table 4.3**)

**Table 4.3 Table showing how length and type of exposure to native language affects English**

| Effects | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| **a)** Inhibits development of diction and vocabulary | 3 | 3 |
| **b)** Development of a negative attitude | 6 | 6 |
| **c)** Short exposure does not inhibit the development of diction | 3 | 3 |
| **d)** Hastens English learning by providing connectors | 72 | 75 |
| **e)** Long exposure makes pupils passive in learning | 12 | 13 |
| **Total** | **96** | **100.0** |

Question 4 of the interview schedule required the respondents to mention how the use of the native language in the classroom helps in teaching and learning of English in primary school. It was established from 39 (41%) of respondents that it helps in relating English words to their mother tongue, 9 (9%) mentioned that it instils confidence in the learners of English, 21 (22%) indicated that it both aids in faster speaking of English, 6% mentioned that it makes learning interesting while 21 (22%) said that it helps in explaining complexities **(Figure 4.4)**

**Figure 4.4: Pie chart showing how the use of the native language in the classroom helps in teaching and learning of English in primary schools**
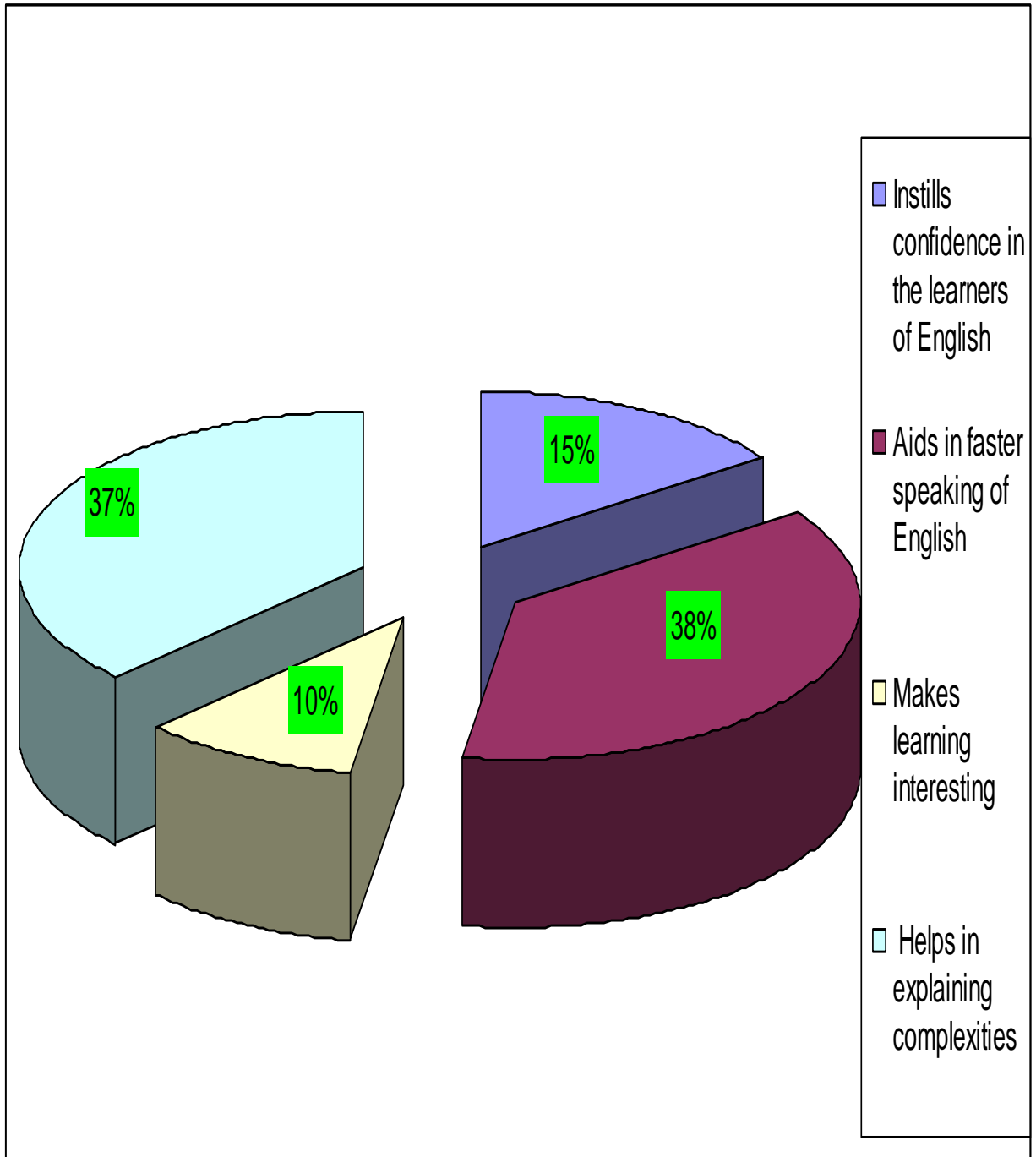
**4.2.2 Linguistic and Cultural Challenges to the Teaching and Learning of English**

In section B of the questionnaire, data was collected on the linguistic and cultural challenges facing the teaching and learning of English language in primary schools from the respondents as presented in *Figure 4.5*.

Statement (**a**) sought to establish whether Isukha language is difficult to read and write in comparison to English and Kiswahili. The statement yielded a mean score of 2.48 depicting an unfavourable opinion. This impacts on the teaching and learning of English because when teachers view Isukha language as being a challenge to read and write they end up creating a negative attitude towards languages in their students and this hampers the teaching and learning of English.

Statement (**b**) sought to establish whether the acquisition of Isukha language slows down proper acquisition of English as a second language. The statement yielded a mean score of 2.27 showing that teachers viewed Isukha language not as a hindrance to the teaching and learning of English.

Statement (**c**) sought to establish whether pupils who struggle with linguistic and cultural issues demonstrate a low level of English language proficiency. The statement yielded a mean score of 3.59 depicting a favourable opinion. This indicates that teachers agree that pupils struggling with linguistic and cultural issues demonstrate a low level of English language proficiency. Hence it implies that the lack of proficiency in Isukha language is a challenge on the teaching and learning of English.

**Figure 4.5: Bar chart showing Isukha linguistic and cultural challenges**
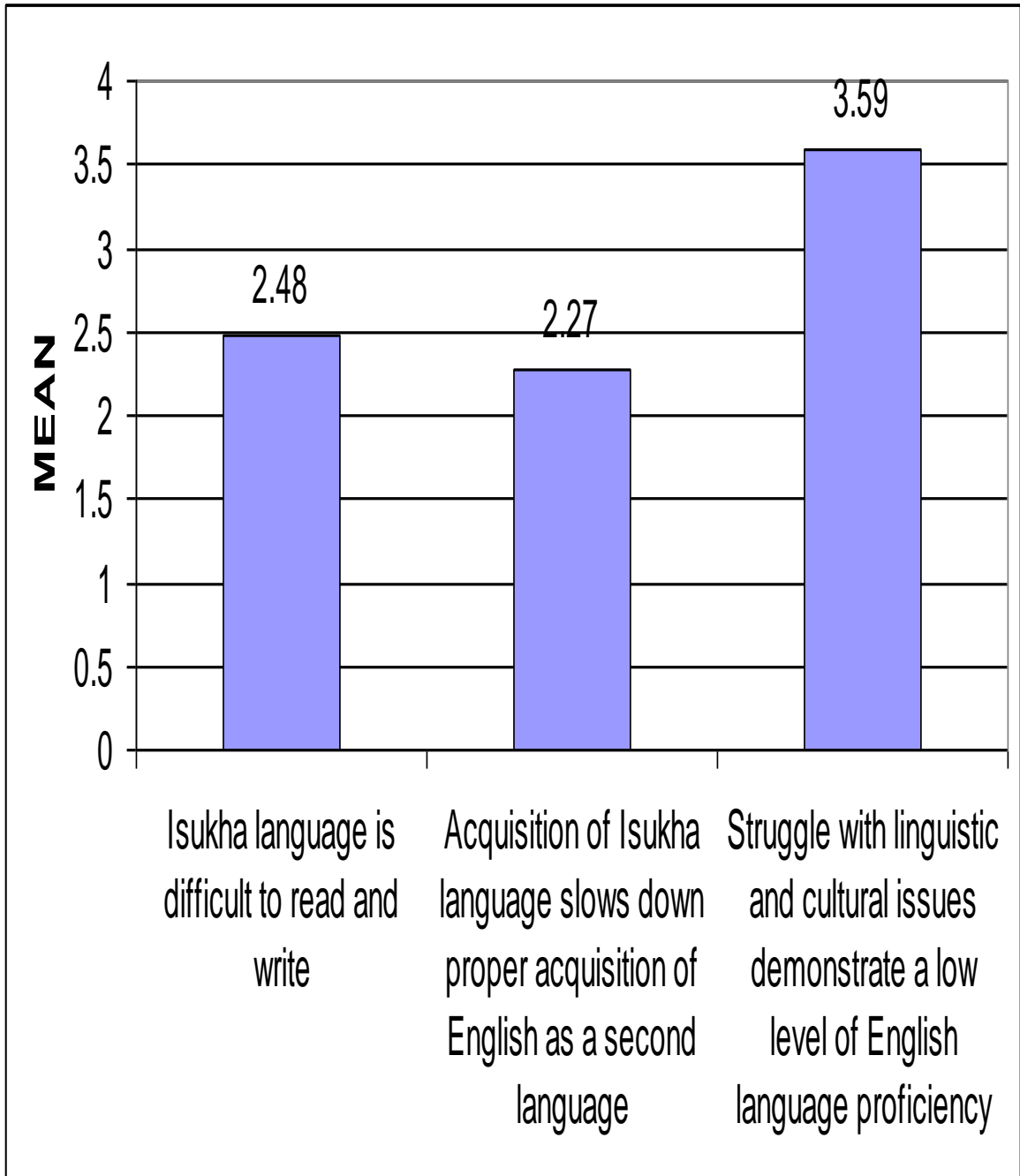
Data was collected on *factors hindering fluency in English*. This is shown in *Table 4.4*. It was established that 42 (42.4%) of the respondents said that incompetence in first language is a hindrance to the teaching and learning of English. Thus competence in mother tongue is a prerequisite for competence in English. It was mentioned by 6 (6.1%) of the respondents that the unfavourable linguistic environment of the pupils, lack of native role models who have excelled in English and pupils' lack of practice, as hindrances to the teaching and learning of English.

Another 15 (15.2%) of the respondents noted that teachers' inadequate mastery of the language is a hindrance to the teaching and learning of English, 12 (12.1%) pointed at pupils' lack of interest as a hindrance while 3 (3%) responded that pupils' negative attitude and 9 (9.1%) gave lack of instructional materials as hindrances to the teaching and learning of English (**Table 4.4**)

**Table 4.4 Table showing factors hindering fluency in English**

| Factors | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| **a)** Incompetence in first language | 42 | 42.4 |
| b)Unfavourable linguistic environment of English | 6 | 6.1 |
| **c)** Teachers' inadequate mastery of the English language | 15 | 15.2 |
| **d)** Lack of native role models who have excelled in English | 6 | 6.1 |
| **e)** Lack of interest in English | 12 | 12.1 |
| **f)** Lack of practice in English | 6 | 6.1 |
| **g)** Negative attitude towards English | 3 | 3.0 |
| **h)** Lack of instructional materials in Mother tongue | 9 | 9.1 |
| **Total** | **99** | **100.0** |

In Question 1(a), the respondents were required to explain how pupils' attitude affects the teaching and learning of English. It was established that 18 (18.2%) of the respondents treat English as a threat to Isukha language and culture, 51 (51.5%) have a lack of interest in English while 30 (30.3%) view English as a difficult foreign language. These views towards English were mentioned as presenting hurdles to the teaching and learning of English as a second language (**Figure 4.6**)

**Figure 4.6: Pie chart showing effect of pupils' attitudes on teaching and learning of English.**



Legend:
- a) View of English as a threat to Isukha language and culture
- b) Lack of Interest in English
- c) View of English as a difficult foreign language

30%  18%  52%
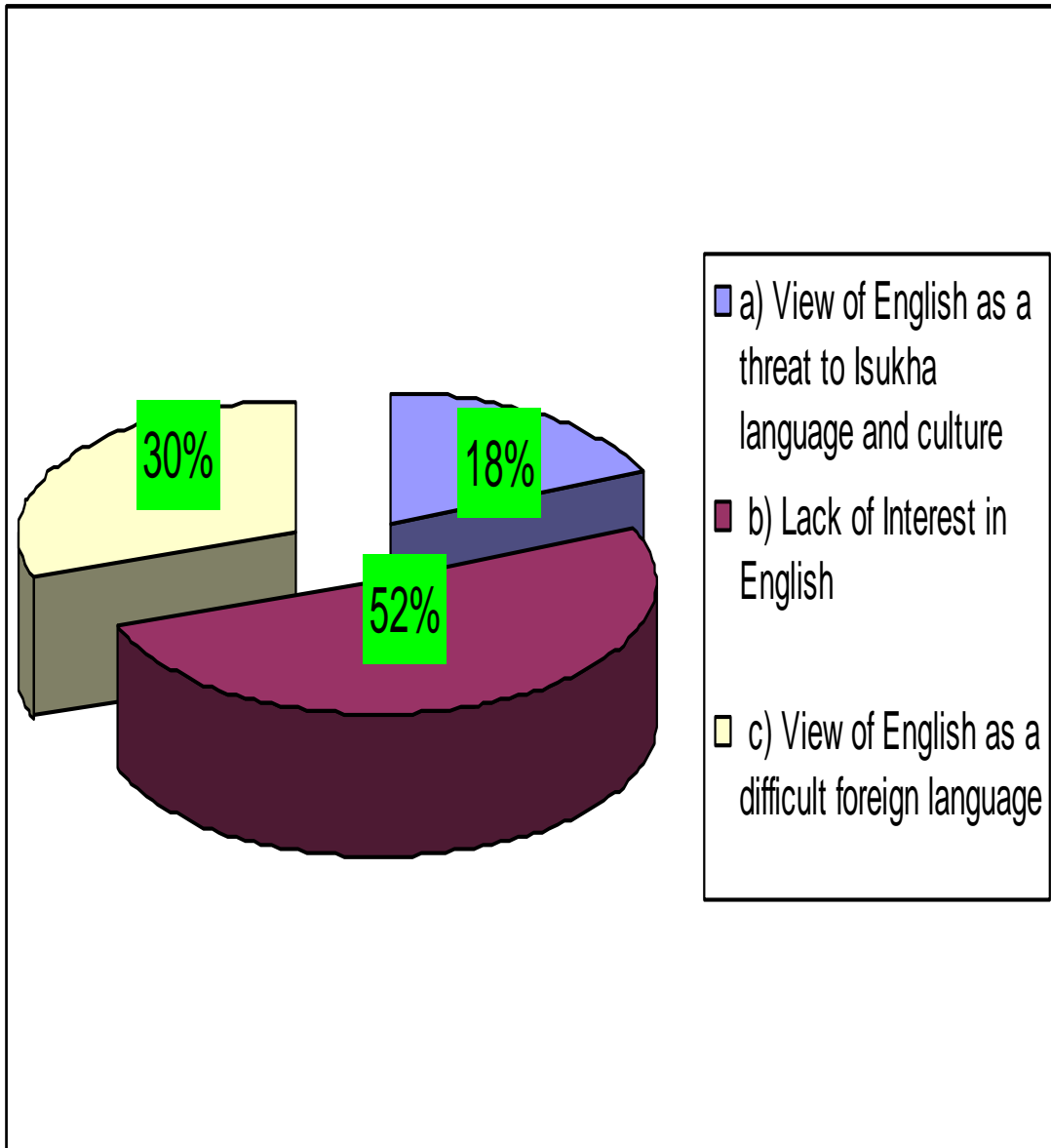
Question 1(g) required respondents to explain how pupils' cultural beliefs affect the teaching and learning of English. It was pointed out that 33 (34.4%) of respondents view English as a threat to be avoided, 6 (6.3%) view English as easy to girls and not to boys, 9 (9.4%) mentioned that the speaking of English outside the school is discouraged, 27 (28.1%) view English as a superior language while 21 (21.9%) view English as a language not useful to Africans (**Figure 4.7)**

**Figure 4.7: Bar chart showing pupils' cultural beliefs that negate teaching and learning of English**
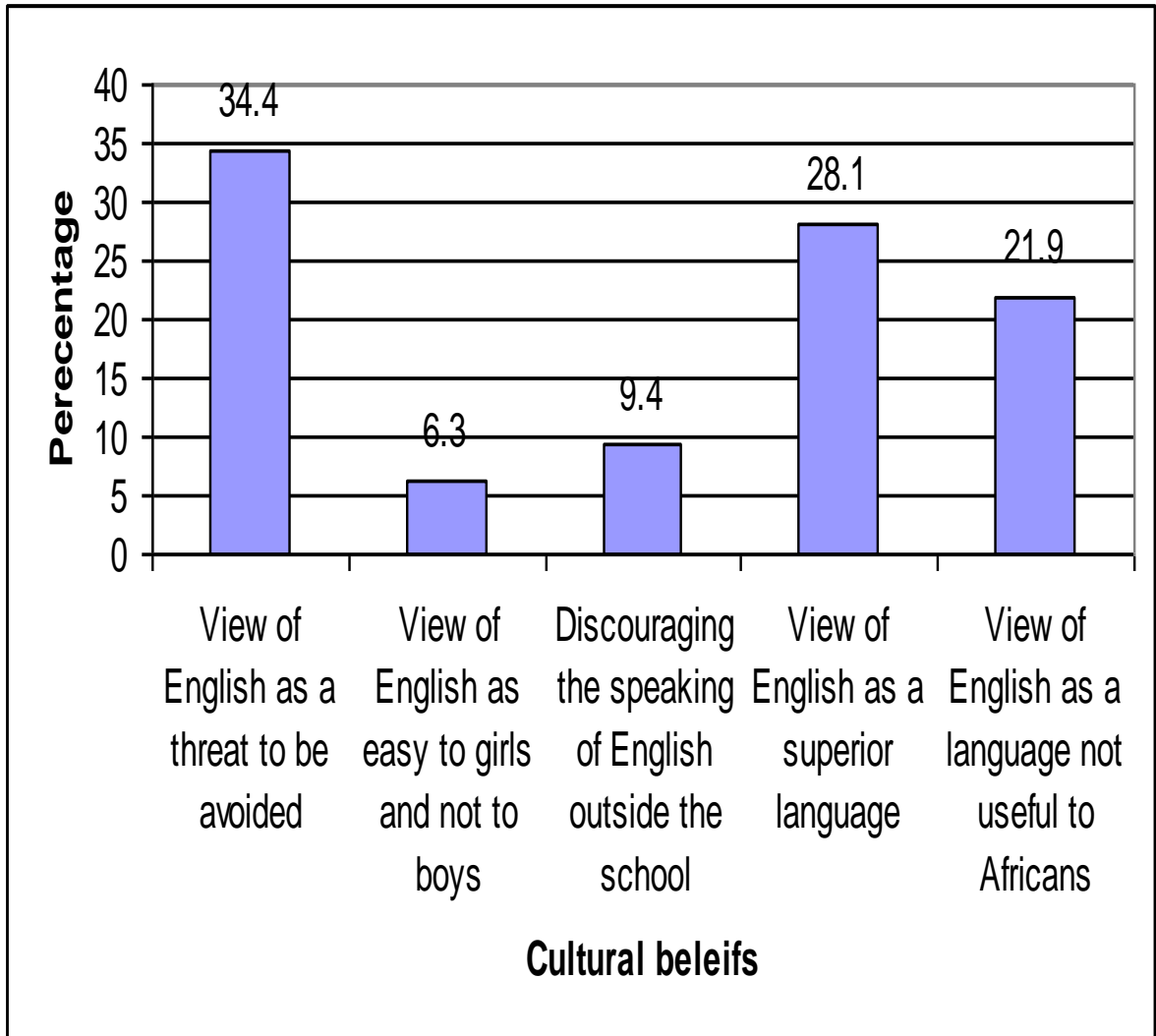
**4.2.3 The influence of Instructional Methods on the Teaching and Learning of English**

Data was collected on the influence of instructional methods to the teaching and learning of English language in primary schools from the respondents and is given in *Table 4.5*

Statement (**a**) sought to establish whether English should be the only medium of instruction for second language learners in primary schools. The statement yielded a mean score of 2.09 depicting an unfavourable opinion. This implies that the respondents favoured the use of both the pupil's first language and English as the medium of instruction for second language learners in primary schools.

Statement (**b**) sought to establish whether both English and a child's native language should be used as a medium of instruction at different points throughout the programme for different functions and purposes. The statement yielded a mean score of 3.76 depicting a favourable opinion. This means that the respondents favoured the use of both English and a child's native language as a medium of instruction at different points throughout the programme for different functions and purposes

Statement (**c**) sought to establish whether pupils who come to school with a fully developed language other than English benefit from the use of their language as a medium of instruction. The statement yielded a mean score of 3.79 depicting a favourable opinion. The respondents therefore were concurring that the full development of a first language benefits pupils in the use of English as a medium of instruction.

Statement (**d**) sought to establish whether pupils perform more successfully when instructional strategies acknowledge, respect and build upon the language and culture of the home. The statement yielded a mean score of 4.13 depicting a favourable opinion. This implies that the respondents were of the opinion that pupils perform more successfully in learning English when instructional strategies acknowledge, respect and build upon the language and culture of the home.

**Table 4.5 Table showing the influence of instructional methods**

| Statement | Mean score |
|---|---|
| **a)** Whether English should be the only medium of instruction for second language learners in primary schools. | 2.09 |
| **b)** Whether both English and a child's native language should be used as a medium of instruction at different points throughout the programme for different functions and purposes. | 3.76 |
| **c)** Whether pupils who come to school with fully developed language other than English benefit from the use of their language as a medium of instruction. | 3.79 |
| **d)** Whether pupils perform more successfully when instruction al strategies acknowledge, respect and build upon the language and culture of the home. | 4.13 |

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**4.2.4 Factors that Hinder Proficiency in English Language in Primary Schools among the Isukha**

Data was collected on the factors that hinder proficiency in English language in primary schools among the Isukha from the respondents as shown in *Table 4.6*

Statement (**a**) sought to establish whether the acquisition of Isukha language slows down the proper acquisition of English as a second language. The statement yielded a mean score of 2.27 depicting an unfavourable opinion. This means that the respondents were in disagreement that the acquisition of Isukha language slows down the proper acquisition of English as a second language.

Statement (**b**) sought to establish whether bilingualism is a hindrance in learning English. The statement yielded a mean score of 2.16 depicting an unfavourable opinion. This shows that the respondents were of the opinion that bilingualism is not a hindrance in learning English.

Statement (**c**) sought to establish whether pupils who struggle with linguistic and cultural issues demonstrate a low level of English language proficiency. The statement yielded a mean score of 3.59 depicting a favourable opinion. This implies that the respondents were in agreement that a struggle in linguistic and cultural issues leads to a low level of English language proficiency.

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**Table 4.6 Table showing factors that hinder proficiency in English**

| Statement | Mean score |
|---|---|
| **a)** Whether the acquisition of Isukha language slows down the proper acquisition of English as a second language | 2.27 |
| **b)** Whether bilingualism is a hindrance in learning English | 2.16 |
| **c)** Whether pupils who struggle with linguistic and cultural issues demonstrate a low level of English language proficiency | 3.59 |

Question 1(d) required the respondents to provide their views on how the level of education affects the teaching and learning of English with an increase in age. The responses are given with their respective percentages. It was pointed out by 38 (40%) of the respondents that there is more eagerness to learn as pupils advance in education and age.

It was established from 40 (41%) of the respondents that pupils learn more vocabulary and improve their diction as they advance academically while 18 (19%) observed that pupils get motivated to use more English as they advance from lower to upper primary classes (**Figure 4.8**)

**Figure 4.8: Pie chart showing effect of level of education on the teaching and learning of English**



| | |
|---|---|
| 19% | |
| 41% | 40% |

Legend:
☐ There is more eagerness to learn
☐ Learning of more vocabulary and diction
☐ There is more use of English
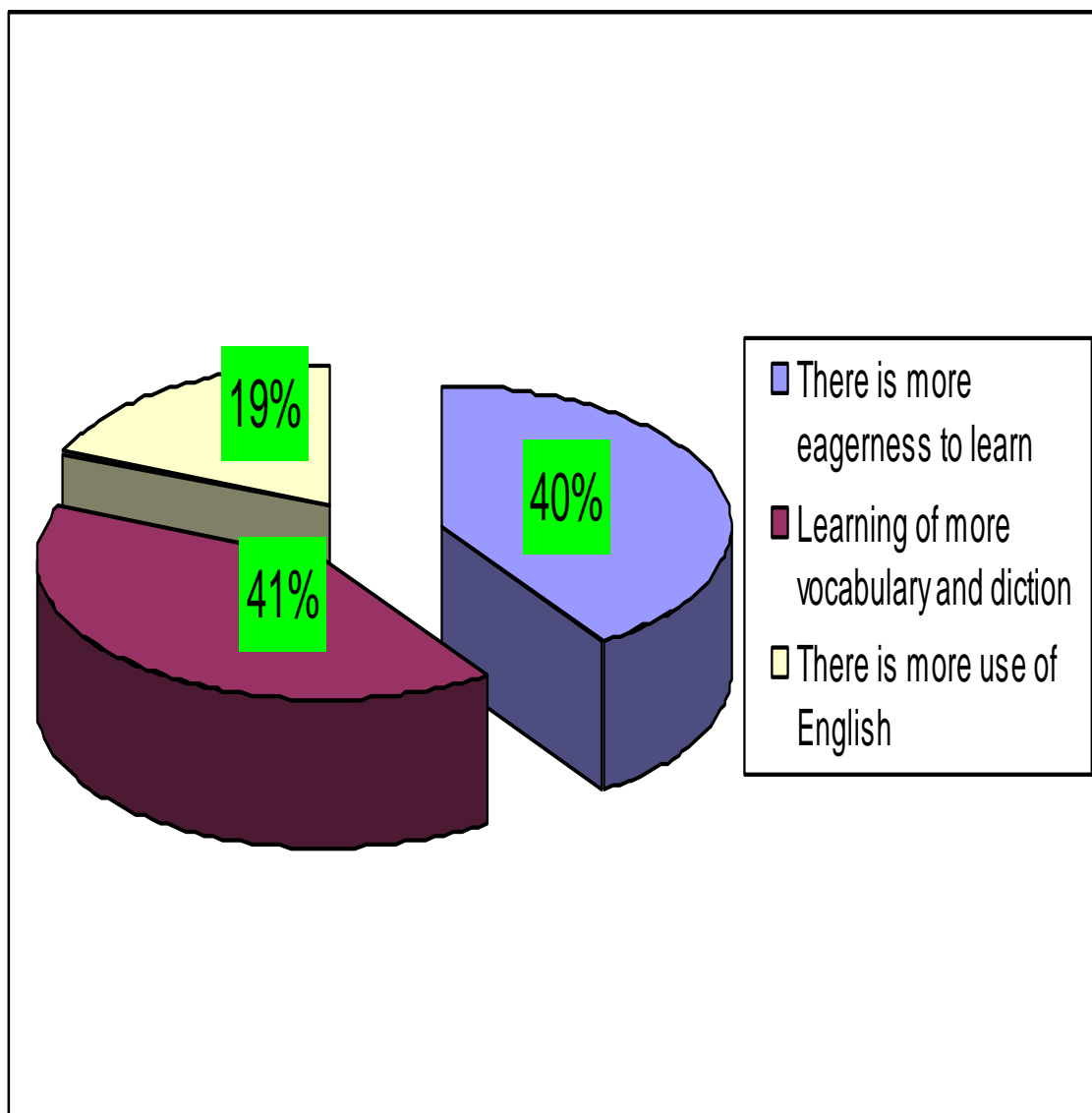
Question 1(e) required the respondents to state how pupils' gender affects the teaching and learning of English. It was mentioned by 6 (6.3%) of the respondents that boys have a negative attitude towards the study of English as a second language. Forty five (46.9%) of the respondents pointed out that girls learn English faster than boys of the same level of education and age.

Another 12 (12.5%) of respondents observed that girls take the study and use of English language seriously than boys. It was established from 21 (21.9%) of respondents that boys are hesitant to participate in learning activities while girls are active participants. On the other hand, 12 (12.5%) of respondents said that gender has no effect in the teaching and learning of English (**Table 4.7**)

**Table 4.7 Table showing effect of pupils' gender on teaching and learning of English**

| Effect | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| **a)** Boys have a negative attitude towards English | 6 | 6.3 |
| **b)** Girls learn English faster than boys | 45 | 46.9 |
| **c)** Girls take English seriously while boys do not | 12 | 12.5 |
| **d)**Boys are hesitant to participate while girls are not | 21 | 21.9 |
| **e)** Gender has no effect | 12 | 12.5 |
| **Total** | **96** | **100.0** |

Question 1(h) required the respondents to explain how pupils' location (urban or rural) affects the teaching and learning of English. It was noted from 42 (43.8%) of the respondents that pupils who stay in urban settings have more exposure to English than their rural counterparts. Urban pupils have easy exposure to the media, theatre and other technological advancements as compared to their rural counterparts

It was also established from 12 (12.5%) of the respondents that pupils in urban areas find it easy to adapt to English than those in the rural areas. This is because they regularly use English, at home, with peers and at school. Rural pupils use English only at school while mother tongue is the language of the home and interaction with friends.

It was mentioned by 9 (9.4%) of respondents that 'sheng' hinders the development of diction and vocabulary. This puts urban pupils in a state of linguistic confusion. The rural pupils benefit as both English and mother tongue can be used as a medium of instruction at different points throughout the programme for different functions and purposes.

Another 9 (9.4%) observed that rural pupils are more keen and interested to learn English than pupils in the urban setting. They view English language as a symbol of superiority. It was pointed out by 24 (25%) of the respondents that rural pupils lack practice in the use of English language. Mother tongue is constantly used to get things done (**Figure 4.9**)

**Figure 4.9: Bar chart showing effect of pupils' location on the teaching and learning of English**
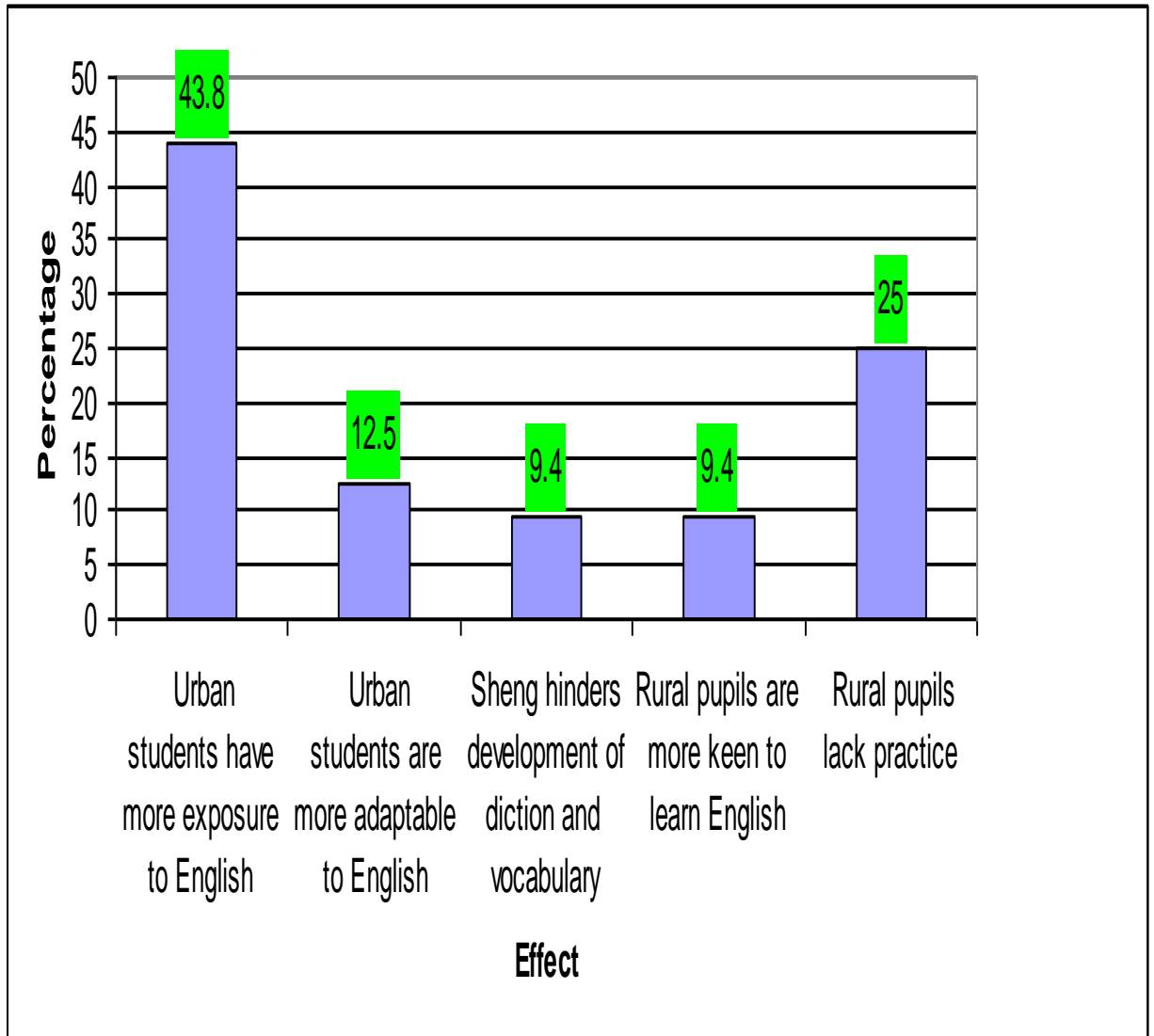
**4.3 Interpretation**

From the analysis of the findings of the study the following interpretations were made with reference to the study objectives:

(i) It is apparent that Isukha language and culture fosters the teaching and learning of English language in primary schools as it provides a solid foundation, has educational value and role in formal education.

(ii) There are linguistic and cultural challenges facing the teaching and learning of English language in primary schools. These include pupils' attitudes, societal stereotypes and technological advancements.

(iii) Instructional methods affect the teaching and learning of English in primary schools. Pupils learn English successfully when instructional strategies acknowledge, respect and build upon the language and culture of the home.

(iv) Factors that hinder proficiency in English language in primary schools among the Isukha are: lack of instructional materials, pupils' negative attitude towards English, lack of practice by pupils in English use, pupils' lack of interest, lack of role models of English, inadequate mastery of English by teachers, unfavourable linguistic environment of the pupils and incompetence in first language.

**4.4 Summary**

In this chapter, data collected was presented, the results analysed and interpreted. Data collected by the questionnaire was analyzed using descriptive statistics by the help of the computer programme SPSS version 11.5. The next chapter discusses the findings from the data, gives a summary of the study undertaken, provides conclusions and makes recommendations based on the study findings.

# CHAPTER FIVE

## DISCUSSION, SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 Introduction.

The present study was designed to examine the influence of first language and culture on the teaching and learning of English language in primary schools in Isukha of western Kenya. In this chapter, the conclusions arrived at are stated and recommendations made in the quest to examine the influence of first language and culture on the teaching and learning of English language in primary schools in Isukha of western Kenya.

### 5.2 Discussion

To begin with, it is evident from the study findings that Isukha language and culture fosters the teaching and learning of English language in primary schools. First language is beneficial to a pupil's mental growth, personal development and educational progress.

Pupils competent in L1 have a more positive self image and greater respect for other pupils and their language. L1 also lays a valuable and rich cognitive foundation for English learning by providing connectors upon which the pupil can build on and readily gives examples from the first language.

L1 also helps in relating English words to the pupils' first language and this instils confidence in the learners of English. It aids in the development of literacy skills and reduces reading failure. Learners benefit from their first language thus increasing their

ability to learn English. Knowledge of L1 aids in English learning by fostering good speaking skills, faster reading, comprehension, relating of information and makes learning more interesting.

In the second place, there are linguistic and cultural challenges facing the teaching and learning of English language in primary schools among the Isukha. First, English is viewed as a threat to the first language, it is considered a difficult language to speak, read and write which makes the pupils not to engage frequently in the speaking of English.

English is also considered as a language to be used only in school and not outside the school environment. The speaking of English in the community being regarded as a sign of pride and a cause of cultural disintegration is another hurdle facing teaching and learning of English. Technological advancements such as the media have also pushed pupils into a state of linguistic and cultural confusion.

Instructional methods affect the teaching and learning of English in primary schools. This is because pupils learn English more successfully when instructional strategies acknowledge, respect and build upon the language and culture of the home. Teachers of English favour the use of both the pupils' first language and English as a medium of instruction at different points throughout the programme for different functions and purposes. Therefore, pupils who come to school with a fully developed language other than English benefit from the use of their language as a medium of instruction.

Several factors that hinder proficiency in English language in primary schools among the Isukha were identified from the study. These are: lack of instructional materials, pupils negative attitude towards English, lack of practice by pupils in English use, pupils lack of interest, lack of role models of English, inadequate mastery of English by teachers, unfavourable linguistic environment of the pupils and incompetence in first language.

Lack of instructional materials makes pupils lack materials to aid their learning of listening, speaking, reading and writing skills in English. The deficiency of native role models who have excelled in English is a challenge as it leads to lack of interest to excel in English among pupils. Inadequate mastery of English by teachers affects pupils' proficiency since many of the teachers lack fluency and accuracy in English. The learner imitates non-standard English hence compromising proficiency.

## 5.3 Summary of the Findings

The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of first language and culture on the teaching and learning of English language in primary schools in Isukha of western Kenya.

### 5.3.1 Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of the study were to:

i) Establish the influence of Isukha language and culture on the teaching and learning of English language in primary schools.

ii)     Identify the linguistic and cultural challenges to the teaching and learning of English language in primary schools.

iii)    Establish the influence of instructional methods to the teaching and learning of English in primary schools.

iv)     Identify factors that hinder proficiency in English language in primary schools among the Isukha

## 5.3.2 Findings of the study based on the questionnaire

The following findings were established based on the questionnaire:

i)      It was noted that Isukha language and culture provide an essential impetus on the teaching and learning of English language in primary schools. Isukha language and culture provide a valuable foundation for English teaching and learning.

ii)     It was indicated that both English and a child's native language could be used as a medium of instruction at different points throughout the programme for different functions and purposes.

iii)     It was found out that pupils who come to school with fully developed language other than English benefit from the use of their language as a medium of instruction.

iv)     It was mentioned that pupils perform more successfully when instructional strategies acknowledge, respect and build upon the language and culture of the home.

v)     It was pointed out that the several factors hinder proficiency in English language in primary schools among the Isukha. These factors include pupils' incompetence in L1, unfavourable linguistic environment of pupils, inadequate mastery of English by teachers, lack of native role models who have excelled in English, lack of interest by pupils, lack of regular practice in English by pupils, negative attitude towards English and lack of instructional materials.

## 5.3.3 Findings of the study based on the interview schedule

It was pointed out that the following variables affect the teaching and learning of English as a second language in primary schools:

- The attitude of pupils towards English language is significant. When pupils consider English as a language similar and of equal rank to their L1, then learning it become easy. When they regard English as a difficult and superior language of the elite, learning is hampered.

- The first language background of the pupils affects their learning of English as L2. Pupils with a favourable L1 background easily build upon it as the basis for learning English.

- The English language use and proficiency of the pupils fosters English learning. Pupils who regularly practice and use English become confident when learning it. They develop more interest in learning vocabulary and pronunciation.

- The level of education of the pupils is significant in English teaching and learning. As pupils advance in education with age, they easily comprehend English and even become eager to learn the language.

- The gender of pupils is significant to some extent. Boys tend to learn English slower, are not conscious of mistakes and don't mind being constantly corrected. Girls, on the other hand, learn English faster, are keen on mistakes and sensitive to corrections.

- The length and type of exposure to the native language affects the teaching and learning of English. Too long exposure to mother tongue makes pupils to over rely on L1 while very exposure makes them to lack confidence when learning English.

- The cultural beliefs of the pupils' community regarding English are noteworthy. When English is considered as a language for the school and not home, pupils tend to avoid it. However, when English is given equal treatment as L1, then both L1 and L2 complement each other, making learning easy.

- The location (urban/rural) of the pupils is worth mentioning. It is assumed that pupils in urban settings are fluent in English due to exposure to the media and English materials. It is believed that rural pupils are keener to learn English although they lack practice.

It was pointed out that first language can be strengthened in order to positively complement the teaching and learning of English in primary schools.

### 5.3.4 Findings based on the observation schedule in the classroom

It was observed that the following features of communication affect the teaching and learning of English in primary schools:

Tempo or speed at which the teacher conducts the communication interaction when teaching, carries different meanings. When a teacher of English is fast during lesson delivery, it hinders understanding of content. If the teacher is slow, the lesson becomes boring to pupils. Moderate speed therefore enables pupils to competently master the content.

Loudness or softness of voice of the teacher signals different messages when teaching. Voice variation enables pupils to efficiently follow the lesson and accurately listen to features of pronunciation. It is also a sign of confidence of the teacher during lesson presentation.

The tone or pitch of voice of the teacher while teaching keeps the class lively and makes the lesson interesting. Tonal variation fosters good listening skills. The pitch of the teacher tends to rise or lower to emphasize the content being taught. This captures the attention of pupils and keeps them alert throughout the lesson.

The gestures of the teacher while teaching create a lovely and an interesting learning environment. Gestures complement words and fill the gap where words can't express the needed meaning. This reinforces learning and enables an easy recall by pupils.

The facial expressions of the teacher while teaching helps in creating an enabling learning environment and mood. Pupils easily detect when the expressing joy, anger or excitement. This makes learning interesting.

The eye-contact of the teacher with the pupils aids in controlling the class. This enables the teacher to identify those pupils who are concentrating and those who are not keen. This maintains class attention.

The proximity or physical distance between the teacher and pupils creates a smooth learning environment. When a teacher moves too close to the pupils, they become nervous. When the teacher is far from the pupils, there is loss of attention.

The posture of the teacher while teaching is a significant feature of communication. It acts as a source of motivation and fosters the concentration of pupils in the classroom.

The physical contact of the teacher with the pupils is another non-verbal factor. It enables the teacher to identify pupils who need assistance and maintains concentration. It is also a source of motivation.

The dressing of the teacher is another non-verbal factor in communication that is of considerable significance in teaching and learning of English. Proper dressing is a source of inspiration while inappropriate dressing makes pupils not to concentrate during lesson delivery.

The findings of this study reveal that the learner's cognitive ability and cultural orientation may predict the level of the learner's educational success, if the learner's first language and second language skills are sufficiently supported by language educators and policy makers.

**5.4 Conclusions and Recommendations**

The findings of this study are the grounds upon which the following conclusions and recommendations were reached.

**5.4.1 Conclusions from the findings of this study**

The findings of this study have led to the following conclusions:

It has been observed that the children's native language should be actively incorporated in the teaching and learning of English at lower primary. A child's first language and culture have educational value and role in formal education. It aids in learning by providing a significant foundation for English teaching and learning in primary school.

In the second place, the local community should be sensitized of the benefits of holding both English and their native language in equal regard. First language is necessary for culture acquisition, preservation and transmission. Isukha L1 is interesting and its culture rich and unique. Most pupils enjoy when addressed in their L1. However, due to restrictions at school and over reliance on English and Kiswahili, some view their L1 as difficult to read and write. Cultural erosion is due to the weakening role of mother tongue.

In addition, teachers should be made conscious of the fact that instructional strategies that acknowledge, respect and build upon the language and culture of the home lead to the

teaching and learning of English in lower primary scale higher in excellence. L1 is beneficial to a child's mental growth, personal development and educational progress.

It has also been noted that both English and a child's native language could be used as a medium of instruction at different points throughout the programme for different functions and purposes. L1 carries serious educational value, doesn't task the brain, doesn't lead to mental confusion, and doesn't hinder the proper acquisition of L2. Pupils who therefore come to school with a fully developed language other than English benefit from the use of their language as a medium of instruction.

The study pointed out that pupils competent in L1 have a more positive self-image and greater respect for other pupils and their languages. They are culturally flexible, socially balanced and accommodating. Technological advancements such as the media have pushed pupils into a state of linguistic and cultural confusion.

Moreover, development of literacy skills in L1 increases ability for learning English and reduces reading failure as learners benefit from their first language. Bilingualism is beneficial as it aids in good speaking skills, faster reading and comprehension, provision of local examples, relating of information and makes learning interesting.

**5.4.2 Recommendations from the findings of this study**

This study makes the following recommendations:

To begin with, there is need to provide a greater and swifter move towards strengthening mother tongue education in order to create a solid base for later education in English. In order to strengthen mother tongue, it should be mandatory at lower primary, be used in drama, develop an Isukha dictionary, hold cultural days in schools, publish more text books in Isukha, establish resource centres having Isukha artefacts, organise seminars and workshops to sensitise people on the value of L1, encourage pupils to participate in Isukha cultural activities and reward best performers.

In the next place, educational and assessment policies should be flexible to give English language learners equal access to greater educational content and opportunities for success in English language use and proficiency.

Moreover, there is need for consultation between researchers, educators, decision makers, teachers of English and other stakeholders in the formulation of sound education policy as it relates to English language teaching and learning in primary schools.

## 5.5 Suggestions for Further Research

This study suggests the following areas for further research:

1. Research could be conducted to find out the influence of the type of school on the learning and teaching of English.

2. Difficulties encountered in Kenyan primary schools when Language Policy restricts the use of local vernacular terms.

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## APPENDIX 1: TRANSMITTAL LETTER

Moi University,
School of Education,
P. O. Box 3900,
Eldoret.
14/01/2008

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Retrieved on 21st of January, 2008

UNESCO (2006): *Languages Living on Borrowed Time 'Africa News'*. Nairobi.

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## APPENDIX 1: TRANSMITTAL LETTER

Moi University,
School of Education,
P. O. Box 3900,
Eldoret.
14/01/2008

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Teachers of English,
_____ Primary School,
Kakamega.

Through,
The Headteacher,
_____ Primary School.
Kakamega.

Dear Sir/Madam,

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I am a Masters student at Moi University in the School of Education, Department of Curriculum, Instruction and Educational Media (English Education) conducting research on the *Influence of first language and culture on the teaching and learning of English language: A study of primary day schools in Isukha of Western Kenya.*

As a teacher of English, your views and those of other teachers will greatly assist me in conducting research. The study will only use these views for research; therefore, do not write your name on the questionnaire. The information you give will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

Thanks in advance.

Yours faithfully,


Omamo Davies
EDU/PGCM/03/06

**APPENDIX 2: QUESTIONNAIRE**


INFLUENCE OF FIRST LANGUAGE AND CULTURE ON THE TEACHING AND

LEARNING OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE: A STUDY OF PRIMARY DAY SCHOOLS

IN ISUKHA OF WESTERN KENYA


NAME OF YOUR SCHOOL _____

CLASS TAUGHT: UPPER PRIMARY (   )     LOWER PRIMARY (   )

YOUR GENDER: MALE (   )   FEMALE (   )

YOUR FIRST LANGUAGE: ISUKHA (   ) NON-ISUKHA (   )


### A.  STATEMENTS ABOUT FIRST LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

This section of the questionnaire consists of statements about first language and culture.

Each of the statements below about the influence of first language and culture on English

are rated on a 5-point scale:

1.  Strongly Agree (SA)

2.  Agree (A)

3.  Neutral (N)

4.  Disagree (D)

5.  Strongly Disagree (SD)


Please rate the statements by ticking (√ ) the alternative that best describes how you feel

about the Isukha language and culture.

Example

Statement: Isukha language and culture provides a valuable foundation in English learning.

| 1 SA | 2 A | 3 N | 4 D | 5 SD |
|------|-----|-----|-----|------|
|      | √   |     |     |      |

The above respondent agrees with the statement and has indicated his/her response by ticking (√) the box for (A) as shown.


You can now proceed by providing your views about first language and culture as expressed in the following statements:

| Statement | SA | A | N | D | SD |
|-----------|----|----|----|----|----|
| **a)** Isukha language and culture is respectful. | | | | | |
| **b)** I enjoy teaching English alongside Isukha language. | | | | | |
| **c)** Isukha language is difficult to read and write. | | | | | |
| **d)** Isukha language carries little educational value. | | | | | |
| **e)** Isukha culture marginalizes pupils on the basis of gender. | | | | | |
| **f)** Acquisition of Isukha language slows down proper acquisition of English as a second language. | | | | | |
| **g)** Isukha language provides a rich foundation for the transmission of culture. | | | | | |
| **h)** Pupils competent in Isukha language have greater respect for other pupils and their languages. | | | | | |
| **i)** Isukha pupils are approachable and ready to learn English. | | | | | |
| **j)** Isukha language and culture has no role in formal education. | | | | | |
| **k)** A child who speaks Isukha language in school should be punished. | | | | | |
| **l)** Isukha language and culture provides a valuable foundation in English learning. | | | | | |

## B. <u>TEACHERS' VIEWS ON THE INFLUENCE OF TWO LANGUAGES</u>

This section is to get your views about the influence of bilingualism (knowledge of two languages) in the teaching and learning of English as a second language in primary schools. Read the statements and decide whether you

1. Strongly Agree (SA)
2. Agree (A)
3. Neutral (N)
4. Disagree (D)
5. Strongly Disagree (SD)

You can now proceed by ticking ( √ ) the rating of each item statement that best describes your perception of the influence of bilingualism in English teaching and learning.

| Statement | SA | A | N | D | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **a)** English should be the only medium of instruction for second language learners in primary schools. | | | | | |
| **b)** Bilingualism is a hindrance to learning English. | | | | | |
| **c)** Content-area knowledge is enhanced by the use of pupils' first language. | | | | | |
| **d)** A child's first language provides a valuable foundation for learning English. | | | | | |
| **e)** Both English and a child's native language should be used as a medium of instruction at different points throughout the programme for different functions and purposes. | | | | | |
| **f)** Within a bilingual classroom, children acquire varying levels of English proficiency and therefore they can interact in English and learn from each other | | | | | |
| **g)** Fluency in two languages benefits pupils in interpreting scientific and mathematical knowledge. | | | | | |
| **h)** Developing literacy skills in the first language reduces the risk of reading failure. | | | | | |

| Statement | SA | A | N | D | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **i)** The learner's first language and second language skills are sufficiently supported by peer and teacher interaction. | | | | | |
| **j)** Pupils who come to school with a fully developed language other than English benefit from the use of their language as a medium of instruction. | | | | | |
| **k)** Early learning of English in school will reduce drop out rates | | | | | |
| **l)** The home learning and cultural environment influence the learner's academic success and second language learning. | | | | | |
| **m)** Education in two languages builds connectors between the home and the school to enhance learning. | | | | | |
| **n)** Pupils who have a strong cultural identity in addition to solid academic skills are more likely to stay in school until graduation. | | | | | |
| **o)** Pupils' knowledge of their first language increases their ability for learning English. | | | | | |
| **p)** Pupils struggling with linguistic and cultural issues demonstrate a low level of English language competency. | | | | | |
| **q)** Pupils perform more successfully when teaching methods build upon the first language and culture of the home. | | | | | |
| **r)** Teaching methods should be culturally sensitive and address the child's language needs. | | | | | |
| **s)** English and the learner's first language hold a position of equal prestige and importance. | | | | | |

## C. QUESTIONS ON FIRST LANGUAGE AND TEACHING

This section of the questionnaire consists of questions about the influence of first language and culture on the teaching and learning of English as a second language. Please provide your views by filling in the blank spaces.

1. Do you feel Isukha children should learn the native language before learning English?

   Yes ( )   No ( )

   Why?

   _____

   _____

2. In your view, should pupils found speaking mother tongue in school be punished?

   Yes ( )   No ( )

   Why?

   _____

   _____

3. How do pupils and teachers perceive the speaking of Isukha?

    (a) Pupils

    _____

    _____

    (b) Teachers_____

    _____

4. What factors hinder proficiency in English language?

_____

_____

5. Which gender of pupils (boys or girls) tends to use vulgar language and obscene words/expressions more than the other? _____

Why?

_____

_____

_____

6. Mention ways in which fluency in two languages appear to benefit pupils

_____

_____

_____

**APPENDIX 3: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

1. Briefly explain how the following variables affect the teaching and learning of English as a second language in primary schools.

    (a)  Attitude of pupils towards English Language

_____

_____

    (b)  First language background of the pupils

_____

_____

    (c)  English language use and proficiency of the pupils

_____

_____

    (d)  Level of education of the pupils

_____

_____

    (e)  Gender of pupils

_____

_____

    (f)  Length and type of exposure to the native language

_____

_____

(g) Cultural beliefs of the pupils' community

_____

_____


(h) Location (urban/rural) of the pupils

_____

_____


2. When do teachers of English allow pupils to use mother tongue?

_____

_____


3. Suggest ways in which Isukha language can be strengthened in order to positively influence the teaching and learning of English language

_____

_____

_____


4. How does the use of the native language in the classroom complement the teaching and learning of English in primary schools?

_____

_____

_____

**APPENDIX 4: OBSERVATION SCHEDULE IN THE CLASSROOM**

The researcher to observe the effect of the following features of communication on the teaching and learning of English

  i.    Tempo/speed of the teacher

_____

_____

  ii.    Loudness of speech of the teacher

_____

_____

  iii.    Tone/pitch of voice of the teacher

_____

_____

  iv.    Gestures of the teacher while teaching

_____

_____

  v.    Facial expressions of the teacher

_____

_____

vi.     Eye-contact of the teacher with pupils

_____

_____


vii.     Proximity (physical distance) between the teacher and pupils

_____

_____


viii.     Posture of the teacher while teaching

_____

_____


ix.     Physical contact of the teacher with the pupils

_____

_____


x.     Dressing of the teacher

_____

_____

# APPENDIX 5: MAP OF KAKAMEGA DISTRICT



Chanzo: Kakamega District Development Plan 2002-2008

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