Literacy Practices in and out of School in Karagwe

The case of primary school literacy education in rural Tanzania

Åsa Wedin

Centre for Research on Bilingualism
Stockholm University
Abstract
This study has investigated the question of relation between literacy practices in and out of school in rural Tanzania. By using the perspective of linguistic anthropology, literacy practices in five villages in Karagwe district in the northwest of Tanzania have been analysed. The outcome may be used as a basis for educational planning and literacy programs.

The analysis has revealed an intimate relation between language, literacy and power. In Karagwe, traditional élites have drawn on literacy to construct and reconstruct their authority, while new élites, such as individual women and some young people have been able to use literacy as one tool to get access to power. The study has also revealed a high level of bilingualism and a high emphasis on education in the area, which prove a potential for future education in the area. At the same time discontinuity in language use, mainly caused by stigmatisation of what is perceived as local and traditional, such as the mother-tongue of the majority of the children, and the high status accrued to all that is perceived as Western, has turned out to constitute a great obstacle for pupils’ learning.

The use of ethnographic perspectives has enabled comparisons between interactional patterns in schools and outside school. This has revealed communicative patterns in school that hinder pupils’ learning, while the same patterns in other discourses reinforce learning. By using ethnography, relations between explicit and implicit language ideologies and their impact in educational contexts may be revealed. This knowledge may then be used to make educational plans and literacy programmes more relevant and efficient, not only in poor post-colonial settings such as Tanzania, but also elsewhere, such as in Western settings.
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Literacy Practices in and out of School in Karagwe
Chapter One

Theoretical Framework

1.1 Introduction

Universal literacy and primary school education for all have for a long time been intimately connected with human rights. In plans aimed at development in post-colonial settings, literacy education has often been an important part. Earlier research on literacy attainment and evaluations have usually taken a psycho-linguistic and cognitive perspective, and research on literacy in post-colonial contexts has predominantly been of a quantitative type, presenting data such as enrolment rates, test results and rates on frequency of reading and writing among participants. This study takes another perspective on literacy, focusing on literacy as a multi-layered, cultural and social phenomenon that is created by, and exists in, interaction. This perspective on literacy has mainly been developed within an ethnographic research framework, both to contest and to complement the more traditional psychological and cognitive approaches which have been prominent in educational contexts. The study has been carried out in five villages in Karagwe district in Kagera, Tanzania, and focuses on the roles and uses of literacy.

Literacy is a lifelong continuum and is deeply involved in social practice and cultural traditions. In countries in the West literacy is often in a popular sense taken as essayist literacy. However, literacy is situated in time, place and discourse and is related to power. Literacy is neither only a phenomenon consisting of separate skills existing in the brain, nor does literacy only exist in the text itself, but is something that exists between the mind and the text, a collective recourse which is utilised in a range of different ways. These assumptions about literacy and literacy research will in many ways contrast traditional perceptions of literacy (for example in education and in research) and have been the objective of extensive research carried out during the 1980s and the 1990s. Researchers such as Sylvia Scribner and Michael Cole (1981), Shirley Brice Heath (1983), Bambi Schieffelin and Elinore Ochs (1986), Caroline Liberg (1990), Don Kulick and Christopher Stroud (1993), Brian Street (1993, 1995), David Barton (2001) and Marilyn Martin-Jones (2000) have opposed the
traditional views of literacy as an autonomous phenomenon consisting of a number of separate skills which may be studied separately, outside their contexts. Thus, taking literacy as the social and cultural phenomenon it is means that one should study literacy in its context and as an irreducible whole. Attempting to study literacy in its environment from the point of view of history, culture and power is, with Caroline Liberg, to “take a look into the ephemeral and variable, i.e. the practise of life” (Liberg, 1990: 33).

In this first chapter of the thesis the objectives and the theoretical base are given. Methods and approaches will be discussed in chapter two. The setting, that is the field of the study, will be presented in chapter three with the focus on the history of education in Karagwe. In chapter four language ideologies in Karagwe is analysed, while chapter five focuses on teachers’ language ideologies. Chapter six presents different types of literacy practices in Karagwe and relates them to the issue of power. The context discourse in different types of networks that are important for literacy will be analysed in chapter seven. Chapters eight and nine analyse how children are socialised in relation to literacy in these different discourses and relate this to schooled literacy. In chapter ten, the results are discussed. A summary is given in chapter 11.

The aims and objectives of the study will be presented under 1.2. Then the theoretic framework of a study is provided. It opens with a discussion of the notion of literacy as representing reading and writing embedded in social contexts, constituting social structures and related to aspects of power, under 1.3. In 1.4 a summary of research traditions in the field of literacy is provided. The effects of ethnography in research on literacy will be discussed under 1.5. Some important implications of ethnography on literacy are discussed more closely. Relations between literacy and power and literacy and multi-culturalism will be discussed under 1.5.1 and 1.5.2 respectively. Schooled literacy and plurality is discussed under 1.5.3 and pedagogic implications of an ethnographic perspective of literacy under 1.5.4. A summary of the chapter is provided in1.6.

1.2 Aims and objectives

This is a study of the connection between what happens in Tanzanian schools and the surrounding society. The focus is on roles and uses of literacy in Karagwe District in Kagera Region. This means that literacy practices both in the schools and in the communities and people’s understanding of literacy will be studied. As literacy is one aspect of language, closely connected with knowledge and learning, the study will also focus on people’s understanding of and relation to language, knowledge and learning. The main questions that will form the base for the research are:

- What different literacy practices are there in the Karagwe District?
- In what ways do local educational traditions and language ideologies in the area influence what happens in school?
What does the communication system between school and society look like?

With the result as a base, an understanding of how different social groups take knowledge from the world and of the connection between local discourse patterns in the society and in the schools may be found.

1.3 What is literacy?

The point of departure for the study is that literacy is a heterogeneous phenomenon and that there are different conceptions of literacy. Much of the literacy debates during the 1970s and the 1980s focussed on low levels of literacy, both in the so-called developed world and in post-colonial states. In these debates the perspective was mainly on literacy as specific technical skills. Too many people were supposed not to have acquired literacy skills at a sufficient level. This technical view of literacy has been opposed by researchers who stress the function of literacy as a socio-cultural phenomenon, such as, among others, Liberg (1990), Edelsky (1991), Lundberg (1991), Street (1993, 1995), Kulick and Stroud (1993), Stroud (1994), Eriksen-Hagtvet (1994), Besnier (1995), Prinsloo and Breier (1996), Schieffelin (1996, 2000) Barton, Hamilton and Ivanic (2000) and Martin-Jones (2000). Brian Street (1993) opposes what he calls the “autonomous view” of literacy, where literacy is viewed as a set of technical skills learnt in formal education, and instead adopts an “ideological” view of literacy to emphasise both the social nature of literacy and the multiple nature of literacy practices. “The relationship between written and oral language differs according to context, there is no one universal account of ‘the oral’ and ‘the written’” (Street, 1995: 1). Street has taken an ethnographic perspective on literacy and assumes that gaining an understanding of literacy requires detailed, in-depth accounts of actual practice in different cultural settings.

According to Mastin Prinsloo and Mignon Breier (1996), the autonomous view assumes that Western genres and forms of literacy are fixed, universal and given when they are actually historically and culturally constructed. Prinsloo and Breier view reading and writing as cultural products and underline the importance of finding ways to bridge the gap between public and private literacies. Ingvar Lundberg (1991: 17) states that literacy is a social phenomenon and should as such be studied as an irreducible whole and Caroline Liberg (1990: 33) in her thesis on emergent literacy takes a sociological perspective, seeing literacy, like language, as part of semiotic interaction and maintenance of cultural and individual meaning. Edelsky states that “written language is language – and learned as language, it is socially shared and socially organised and can not exist without context” (Edelsky, 1991: 80). She also stresses the political role of schooling and literacy and states that literacy may be a tool for empowerment, but not if literacy in school is only used for evaluation. She
brings the myth down that literacy always brings with it social and individual gain. Factors such as gender and social affiliation are more important than literacy level for success in terms of economic prosperity. Gender is actually an important determinant of forms of literacy and should be totally integrated in the development of literacy practices.

Following the important studies of Scribner and Cole (1981) and Scollon and Scollon (1981), researchers such as Heath (1983), Duranti and Ochs (1984), Schieffelin and Ochs (1986), Ochs (1988), Bloch (1993), Kulick and Stroud (1993), Street (1993, 1995), Besnier (1995), Schieffelin (1996, 2000), Barton and Hamilton (1998) and Barton, Hamilton and Ivonic (2000) have studied literacy in the social context by using ethnographic perspectives and methods. Shirley Brice Heath (1983), in her study in Piedmont Carolina, USA, showed how different groups approach literacy and disjunction between homes and school. In her study of three communities, one white middle-class community, one white working class community and one black working class community, she observed how children were socialised in relation to learning, language and literacy. In the white middle-class community, parents used interactional patterns and socialised children to perspectives to literacy that were in accordance with literacy education in schools. In the white working class community children were socialised towards literacy and learning. However literacy practices and interactional patterns in this community was not in accordance with those dominant in school. In the black working class community, socialisation of children was not geared at literacy, although adults were frequently involved in literacy activities. Among other speech events, children in this community were socialised in relation to imaginative story-tellings with collective interpretation of the story.

Recent research on literacy usually includes non-written aspects of literacy, such as numeracy and formal talk (see for example Prinsloo and Breier, 1996). In this work, however, I have chosen to use a narrower definition of literacy. Following Edelsky (1991) I use the simple definition of literacy as using print as print. This is a useful definition insofar as handwriting is included in the definition. Using this definition of literacy means that we exclude different types of signs, such as traffic signs, even if there is no clear demarcation line between script and sign. On the border between signs and scripts we find devices such as the Morse alphabet and flag-signalling and also the graphic symbol-system developed by the Western Apache shaman Silas John in 1904, referred to in Collins and Blot (2003) in which the symbols represent both language and action through detailed clues.

The definition of literacy as using print as print also means that we include in literacy both pre-reading, such as when a child “reads a book” to another child without actually decoding what is written, and pre-writing, such as when a child “writes” a letter to someone without using accepted letters but merely “scribbling”. Although the child actually neither reads nor writes in the
commonly accepted sense by coding/decoding the text, she or he is still “using print as print”, although not following the commonly accepted norms. In literacy we also include the type of literacy described in Prinsloo and Breier (1996) where an elder man leads the sermons in his church, holding the Bible in his hands, and “reading” what the book says without actually decoding the text (in fact a quite clear case of using “The Script”) and the type of literacy which is common in many societies in Africa where someone has a letter written or read for him or her by a relative or a neighbour. Furthermore literacy will include when small children recite parts of the Qur’an in the madrasa, the Muslim religious schools, without understanding the meaning, at least not linguistically. As these are examples of “using script as script” they have to be regarded as examples of literacy practices.

Then the words “reading” and “writing” may be kept for literacy practices including both decoding/coding and meaning. Thus reading is (following Höien and Lundberg, 1988: 21) decoding and understanding script and consequently writing is coding and conveying meaning to script. This means, following Edelsky (1991), that we can talk about literacy without reading, for example when we are at the opticians or when children decode meaningless syllables or single words in school activities such as exercises or assessments, and literacy without writing, for example in school activities such as copying, fill-in exercises or exercises in handwriting.

1.4 Traditions in literacy research

Through history literacy has played an important role in the development of man and human socio-cultural and economic life. Literacy was one of the crucial factors that lead to industrialisation in the Western part of the world, together with inventions such as the printing press and the steam engine, although whether literacy constituted a primary or a secondary factor may be disputed. The impact of literacy in the building of science and human knowledge is also great. However there have been disputes around the impact of literacy on human thinking and human culture at least since the days of Plato and Socrates. Plato speculated on the effects of literacy on thought and in Phaedrus and his Seventh Letter he argued that literacy was likely to damage memory in the way that it would make man more forgetful and depending on external aid for memory (Scribner & Cole, 1981; Ong, 1982). That there is a “great divide” between literate people and non-literate, both on individual and community level, was argued by many researchers especially in the 1960s and 1970s. One example is in UNESCO Regional Report on Literacy 1972 where we read:

The illiterate man’s thought [...] remains concrete. He thinks in images and not in concepts. His thought is, in fact, a series of images, juxtaposed or in sequence, and hence it rarely proceeds by induction or deduction. The result is that knowledge acquired in a given situation is hardly ever transferred to a different situation to which it could be applied (UNESCO in Scribner and Cole, 1981: 4)
Literacy was perceived quite separate from, and usually also as a higher form than, orality. Cognitive skills such as abstract thinking and reasoning were seen as a result of literacy and thus illiterates were supposed to lack these skills. Walter Ong in his book *Orality and literacy* (1982) argued:

> Without writing, the literate mind would not and could not think as it does, not only when engaged in writing but normally even when it is composing thoughts. More than any other single invention writing has transformed human consciousness. (Ong, 1982: 78)

Literacy was associated with abstract thinking and what were considered higher order intellectual skills. However research that claimed to show this effect of literacy on mind, such as research by Greenfield (1971) and Olson (1977), was based on comparisons between children who had learned literacy through schooling and children that were non-schooled, but schooling and literacy are not synonyms and have different effects on mind. This was shown in the important findings by Sylvia Scribner and Michael Cole in their research among the Vai-people in north-western Liberia (Scribner & Cole, 1981). The Vai have developed a local literacy in the syllabic Vai-script which is taught and used informally, mainly among men. Parallel to the Vai-script Arabic is taught and used in religious settings while English literacy is taught in school and used in official settings. Different people used different scripts; the most commonly mastered script among men was Vai, many were biliteral in Vai and Arabic, while only a few that were literate in English were biliteral. This gave Scribner and Cole the opportunity to compare those literate in English, that is those that were schooled, with those literate in the other two scripts, the non-schooled. Scribner and Cole found that there was evidence for the position that literacy, as well as schooling, has identifiable cognitive consequences but that there are no deep psychological differences between literate and non-literate populations. Literacy promotes certain cognitive skills but is not a necessary and sufficient condition for these skills. Different types of literacy, in fact, have different effects on people’s minds. The far most important factor influencing the highly specialised skills and logical thinking that is commonly linked with literacy is the amount of schooling. Bernardo (1998) found that the degree of literacy integration in the community affects cognition and that “the cognitive consequences of literacy are mediated, such that even illiterates who participate in the literate practices seem to benefit” (ibid: 134).

Literacy has also traditionally been seen as the separator between traditional and modern ways of life and between so-called “primitive” and “civilised” people. However Scribner and Cole (1981) managed to show that the association between literacy and what was perceived as modernisation is not obvious. A far more important factor for so-called modern thoughts was the connection to urban life or having a job in the “modern sector”. Still the assumption that there is a direct connection between literacy and modern thinking and between literacy
skills and economic benefits is often unquestioned in official documents (see, for example, OECD, 1997).

1.5 Implications of ethnography on literacy research

Research taking an ethnographic view on literacy studies literacy as situated in context. This implies that there is no Literacy with a capital L, but that there are a multitude of literacies (Stroud, 1994). In the same way that there are dialects and sociolects in oral language, there are different types of literacy existing parallel to each other. Research using an ethnographic perspective on literacy makes use of terms such as literacy practices, literacy events and situated literacy.

The concept of literacy practices is a powerful way of conceptualising the link between different literacies and the social structure in which they are embedded and which they help shape (Scribner & Cole, 1981; Heath, 1983, Wagner, Messick & Spratt, 1986; Street, 1993, 1995; Barton & Hamilton, 1998, and Martin-Jones, 2000). Wagner et al. define literacy practices as: “... anything which involves one or more of the following: reading (from decoding individual letters to reading for comprehension); writing (from copying in allographic style on a luha\(^1\) to creative prose to numerical calculations on a scrap of paper in a local market); manipulation of written materials or books with the intent to use them for some purpose, or other activities in the material culture of literacy ...” (Wagner et al., 1986: 240). Street uses literacy practices to refer to “both behaviour and the social and cultural conceptualisations that give meaning to the uses of reading and/or writing” (Street, 1995: 2). Barton, Hamilton and Ivanic (2000: 7) define literacy practices as “the general cultural ways of utilising written language which people draw upon in their lives” or simply “what people do with literacy”. Literacy practices exist in relations rather than individuals. Research has shown that literacy practices often consist of a mixture of written and oral language, often involving other skills such as numeracy (Barton, 2001).

Heath (1982: 93) uses the term literacy events\(^2\) to refer to “any occasion in which a piece of writing is integral to the nature of the participant’s interactions and their interpretative processes” and as “any action sequence, involving one or more persons, in which the production and/or comprehension of print plays a role”. Following this, literacy practices are units of behaviour that are not directly observable while literacy events are the observable activities that involve written texts. Street states that the issue is to “characterize the shift from observing literacy events to conceptualising literacy practices” (Street, 2003: 1524). He has further elaborated the distinction so that literacy practices refer to “the broader, cultural conception of particular ways of thinking about and doing reading and writing in cultural contexts”.

\(^{1}\) A luha is a writing-slate used in Moroccan Qur’anic schools.

\(^{2}\) This may be connected with the notion of speech event which is frequently used in socio-linguistics.
In research focusing on situated literacy it is important to suspend judgement and to value different literacies in their context without prejudices about what constitutes “good” or “bad” literacies. It is important to realise that what is commonly seen as unsuccessful reading and writing may be only literacy practices that are dominated and not mainstream, as stressed by Barton (2001).

1.5.1 Literacy and power

In practise, however, different literacies have different status. Usually some literacies dominate others and are supported and sanctioned by the mass media, religion and institutions such as the school system. There is often a “standard” form which is socially accepted as “better” than others. Parallel to these mainstream literacies there exists a multitude of other literacies that are often devalued and overlooked and sometimes hidden. In Western societies such devalued literacies can be, for example, scribbling on walls in public toilets, graffiti on trams and subways or notes attached to refrigerator doors by fancy magnets. Also inside the school system there are devalued literacies such as secret notes, love letters and cribs passed secretly between pupils during lessons. New literacies have appeared following the IT-boom such as chatting on the internet, communicating through SMS and hacking.

The relation between literacy and power is strong and complex. Following the traditional “autonomous” view of literacy as a technical skill it was presumed that there was a direct link between literacy and empowerment (Street, 2001). However the case of Sweden shows us that acquiring literacy skills does not automatically imply getting access to power (Gee 1996; Isling, 1991). As early as in the sixteenth century the peasantry in Sweden was made literate and a basic knowledge of how to read was probably almost universal at the end of the eighteenth century\(^3\) (Wagner, 1990: 24; Isling, 1991: 141). However this did not in any way give the peasants in the feudal Sweden access to power.

Power is, following Street (2001), not a property of the object but is contested in dialogue and is always being changed and transformed. Power may be exercised in different ways, for example through force (military) or discourse (language, social institutions or words). Power is also socially and culturally contested and is already involved in the process of learning itself (Street, 2001: 295). When studying literacy practises it is important to address questions such as: For what purpose is literacy used? By whom? In whose interests? Who sets the norms for ‘good’ and ‘bad’ literacy? What are the reasons behind choosing those norms?

Historically, in many settings, a ruling class has utilised literacy, creating or adopting it according to their own interests to help them rule and organise

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\(^3\) Note that the definition of being able to read was not the same at that time as today. Those who assessed people’s reading proficiency were the priests who at the same time were interested in being able to show “good results”. One may suspect that some of those assessed as being able to read were in fact memorising or repeating what they had learnt by heart.
society. In Sweden, for example, the Protestant church and the ruling nobility class forced the peasants to learn how to read to make them submissive and obedient, as subjects who could read the Bible were easier to rule. Illiterates were punished in different ways and even imprisoned (Isling, 1991). The availability of texts to read for the masses was controlled and writing skills were not encouraged, as subjects able to express themselves in script were seen as a threat. It was not until the industrialisation created a need for workers with writing skills that writing became emphasised in education for the masses (Isling, 1991; Gee, 1996). In these cases literacy was used by the ruling class as a tool to control and suppress the masses. Another way to use literacy for suppression is found in many so-called modern states today. Illiteracy is claimed to be the reason for and source of problems such as under-development, poverty, bad health and bad economy. From this follows that also the individuals, the illiterate, may be seen as ignorant and as the cause of these problems. Also in industrialised countries illiteracy has often been perceived as the source of problems. In Sweden in the 1990s it was often claimed in the mass media that illiteracy correlated with criminality and the assumption was that illiteracy was the cause. It was seldom discussed if there could be other factors involved, causing both illiteracy and criminality, such as family background and other social and economic factors. As many criminals have endured severe problems during their childhood and adolescence, involving problems with schooling, low literacy rates should not be too unexpected among this group. Instead of seeing illiteracy as a source of problems it may be more relevant to recognise illiteracy as a manifestation of the systematic exclusion of minorities and the poor from economic, political and educational opportunity (Torruelas, Benmayor, Goris & Hyarbe, 1991).

In the 19th century when explorers and missionaries were sent to “civilise” and “christianise the savages” of the world, one of their main tools was to introduce literacy. They built schools where they started to teach children and adults to read the religious texts. One important work of the missionaries was to reduce local languages to literacy. The main reason for this was to have people read the Bible in their vernacular which simultaneously gave the missionaries a possibility to control what was read by the locals. Thus, at the same time as the inhabitants achieved literacy, they were also exposed to Western perceptions of life and an alien social and cultural system. However literacy has not always been used for suppression but also has the potential of liberation. The Vai in Liberia invented their own syllabic writing to enable private communication separated from outsiders (Scribner & Cole, 1981). Also the Cree in Northern Canada have their own script which they use for private matters (Bennett & Berry, 1987). In the footsteps of educators such as Pablo Freire, liberated people

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4 The terms local language and vernacular are in this text used to denote the language spoken by local people at the arrival of the Westerners although in the African context these terms have often been used in a derogatory sense.
all over the world have striven to achieve schooled education and above all literacy. Liberation movements often organise education and set up schools as one way to achieve liberty. Also working class emancipation often has education in their programmes. Individual competence in literacy among the citizens is seen as an important prerequisite for development and a strong effort is put into literacy campaigns. However, if literacy is to be used as a tool for liberation, and as the tool for development and democracy which it is claimed to be, a necessary prerequisite is that the decision of what constitutes “good literacy”, including norms and restrictions, is in the hands of ordinary people and not only in the hands of the élite. This includes power to choose standards, such as what dialect and/or sociolect should be utilised for literacy, and political control over education, the mass media and economic funds for printing and editing. Generally this was not the case during colonialism and neither colonialists nor missionaries had the interest to give the “heathens” these tools. Even though there were individuals among the missionaries who were devoted to the task of “helping the poor”, generally the inhabitants were treated as ignorant, backward and less knowing, while missionaries ensured that power was retained in the hand of the colonialists and a hand-picked few of the locals, for example by using the colonial language as the medium for higher education.

Researchers such as Street (1993, 1995), Kulick and Stroud (1993), Camitta (1993), Bloch (1993), Martin-Jones (2000), Wilson (2000) and Barton (2001) have shown that people do not passively receive literacy but that they may create literacies of their own, adapting them to their own needs and views. Anita Wilson found that prisoners in some prisons in Great Britain used literacy to create and maintain “an environmental and Discoursal space which might be the difference between keeping or losing your mind” (Wilson, 2000: 68). Don Kulick and Christopher Stroud showed how local ideologies and understandings determine people’s understandings of literacy in a Papua New Guinean society. They argued that there are vernacular literacies despite national pressure for uniformity. People do not passively receive literacy but make sense of it in their own way. Bloch compared literacy practices in school and in the village and the role of education in the home-culture in Madagascar. David Barton stated that “people make literacies their own, turning dominant literacies to their own use, by constant incorporation and transformation of dominant practices” (Barton, 2001: 34).

The anthropologist Amy Stambach showed that the relation between colonial power and the world-view students acquire from schooling is complex. In her study on adolescents in secondary school in the Kilimanjaro region in Tanzania she stated that pupils both acquire visions of the natural world from the colonial power while they in the same time transfer and adapt these views in different ways to their own concepts.

Thus to say that schooling in Africa involves transmission of Western values into African culture (or its currently more prevalent formulation, that schooling “violates” an indige-
nous cultural system) attributes the problem to only one side – the external. It overlooks how external factors are first objectified and then given meaning from within. (Stambach, 2000: 159)

Hence we can understand that people are affected by the ways in which they are introduced to literacy while they simultaneously adapt these views to their own world-view and perspectives.

1.5.2 Literacy and multi-culturalism

Nationalism, symbolically represented by the ideas of “one language/one culture/one territory as an ideal organisation of society” (Bloomaert 2003b), has been the norm for many countries in the West over the latest centuries. Step by step the traditional policy of mono-culturalism has given way for an official policy of multi-culturalism. In most countries in the world, however, multi-culturalism has been the reality rather than the exception. This is not least the case in the so-called developing countries, in the South. Tanzania constitutes an excellent example of a multi-cultural country where a multitude of ethnic groups have existed at the same time in the same area for thousands of years. There are 120 or so vernacular languages and the coastal areas have been in extensive contact with countries round the Indian Ocean for thousands of years (which has had the result that languages such as Urdu, Gujarati, Hindi and Panjabi are spoken among groups in the country). Three imperial languages have had great influence on the area, English, German and Arabic\(^5\) and Tanzania has received flows of refugees from Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi during the second part of the 20th century.

What is the effect of multi-culturalism on literacy and vice versa? When discussing multi-culturalism one has to bear in mind that cultural differences not only exist between nations, but that there are also cultural differences between different social groups and classes within nations, as discussed by Bill Cope and Mary Kalantzis (2000). Multi-culturalism also includes these types of groupings. The four archetypical forms of modern education given by Cope and Kalantzis: exclusion, assimilation, multi-culturalism and pluralism may also be applied to forms of relations between literacy and multi-culturalism.

Literacy as exclusion would mean that minorities or sub-ordinated groups are excluded in different ways. They may not get access to literacy at all, perhaps because literacy is in a language they do not command or because they do not have access to schools, to reading materials and so on. It might also be the case that their own perception of and use of literacy, their literacy practices, are stigmatised or even forbidden. The consequence of exclusion is someone else’s inclusion and it affects what employment people will have and what kind of citizens they will become.

\(^5\) Also Portuguese and Persian conquerors raided the coast, but their influence did not extend to the interior and their linguistic influence was small.
Literacy as assimilation means that minorities get access to literacy but in this process they have to leave their old selves and their life-worlds. They make a journey from their native\(^6\) to the dominating life-worlds. In many cases this also involves a shift of language. People who have acquired literacy in a second language through schooling may be unable to read in their own mother tongue.

Literacy as multi-culturalism honours different cultures and different life-worlds, at least on a surface level. Minorities can use literacy to write down their poems, their traditions and their stories but they still have to learn to live inside the mainstream culture. They have to master the dominant literacy. In reality this means that mainstream culture and literacy are the valued ones, and the ones that give access to education, job and status, while dominated cultures will continue to be dominated. Individuals may be biliterate but only one form of literacy is officially promoted.

In literacy as pluralism the mainstream is itself transformed. Learning to read and write does not mean that you have to leave your old self behind. People interact but do not necessarily leave their vernacular life-worlds. Learners’ own life-worlds are recognised and used as resources, for example in schools, to expand the collective knowledge and experience. This means that native languages, and sociolects, are recognised and accepted and also that native literacies and native ways of learning and of communication are recognised. Thus children from different social and ethnic groups may make use of their own pre-knowledge, of their perceptions of language, communication, knowledge and learning that they bring to school. Building on these, individual children achieve literacy and schooled knowledge together with knowledge from other cultures and life-worlds.

1.5.3 Schooled literacy and plurality

In a society with pluralist ambitions schooling takes pupils’ pre-conceptions into account. As literacy is closely connected with knowledge, learning and communication, this means that there should be an understanding in early schooling between the conceptions children bring to school, not only concerning literacy but also concerning what is relevant knowledge, how knowledge is taken in and of accepted communication patterns. Hugh Mehan (1992) argues for cooperative work with parents and educators to modify the schooled learning environment. He proposes that instead of arguing that there are deficiencies in children’s sociocultural environment, models be worked out for mutual accommodation in which both teachers and pupils modify their behaviour in the direction of a mutual goal. Karen Ann Watson-Gegeo (1992) argues that differences in language use and cultural understanding between home and school are the cause of low school success rates among children from working-class, ethnic minority and Third World backgrounds. She showed that when classroom organisation

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\(^6\) The term ‘native’ is used as a synonym for local and has no derogatory meaning in this text.
was adapted to communication patterns in the society in the Kamehameha Early Education Programme in Hawai‘i, children’s performance in reading improved greatly. By adapting the structure of lessons to a local communicative pattern, talk-story formats with co-narration, schooling was made easier for children. In her study together with David Gegeo on the Kwara‘ae from the Solomon Islands (Watson-Gegeo, 1992), she discovered the speech event “shaping the mind”, another speech event that could be adapted for classroom use making literacy education in school more relevant for pupils by building on the conceptions children brought to school. Susan Philips (2001) noted that the difference in communication patterns between children’s homes and classrooms in Warm Springs Indian Community was the reason why these children failed to participate verbally in classroom interaction. She stated that the fact that pupils knew English did not mean that they had been assimilated to the interaction pattern of English-speaking Americans. She argued that if these children were to be given a real choice of access to the patterns of mainstream Americans, then they had to be taught these interaction patterns. However, she argued, if culturally distinctive modes of communication are to be maintained and encouraged to flourish, then classroom interaction patterns will have to change to “allow for complementary diversity in the modes of communication through which learning and measurement of ‘success’ take place” (Philips, 2001: 317).

Also the study by Shirley Brice Heath (1983) showed that if school practices are connected with what happens in the home, education will be more effective and all children will benefit, especially children from non-mainstream environments. She found that the question pattern often used in school treated children from homes where other patterns were used unfairly. In Western schools the typical form to ask questions is question - answer - evaluation, that is the teacher asks a question, a pupil answers and the answer is evaluated by the teacher. The typical school-question is a What-question to which the teacher already knows the answer, a fact that pupils are supposed to be aware of, that is questions are used to test the knowledge of the children. This is a type of questions that is often found in middle-class families in the West. Parents ask children from a small age questions like:

- What is the child of the cow called?
- What does the dog say?

However, in families that are not focused on schooled knowledge in this way, this type of test-question is rare. Instead questions where parents ask for information they do not know are common, such as:

- Where did you put your socks?
- Are you hungry?
This difference in asking questions is one example of a difference in practices in home and school that can make schooled learning more difficult for children.

Heath, in her study in Piedmont, Carolina, also concluded that the ways stories are told differ between cultures and that this affects children’s socialisation in school (Heath, 1982, 1983). In a similar study on pre-school children from Turkish minority families in Sweden, Nauclér and Boyd (1994) showed that storytelling in interaction between the adult and the child differed from interaction in mainstream Swedish families. In the Turkish homes children were socialised to listening attentively without interrupting when being told a story while children in Swedish homes were expected to interact with adults and to answer questions. In pre-schools the interaction pattern was similar to the pattern in Swedish homes. As the interaction pattern of the Turkish homes differed from the interactional pattern in mainstream pre-schools, teachers perceived the performance of Turkish children as weaker than the performance by mainstream Swedish children. Children who have not been exposed to the mainstream type of interaction, such as question-patterns and ways of telling stories, may thus not have the same chances in school if their own interactional patterns are not recognised and they then run the risk of being under-evaluated by teachers.

James Paul Gee gives an illustrative example of how the knowledge of children from minority groups may be devalued in school (Gee, 1996: 6-11). The following sentence was uttered by a 7-year-old girl from an African-American background, when she was telling a story in “sharing time” at school:

My puppy, he always be following me.

According to Gee this child would run the risk of being evaluated as not knowing how to speak English correctly. Teachers were likely to assume that she comes from an impoverished home which gives little or no support for education. Gee also recognises the risk that she would be assessed as a “slow learner”. However, Gee shows, in her variant of English, that is Black Vernacular English (BVE) spoken by young speakers, this is a grammatical utterance. In contrast with Standard English (SE) speakers, young BVE-speakers make a distinction between ongoing/repeated events which are of limited and extended duration. He gives two examples:

**Limited duration**

In health class, we talking about the eye.

(SE: In health class, we are talking about the eye.)

**Extended duration**

He always be fighting.

(SE: He is always fighting.)

In the first example the ‘absent be’ form is used, denoting limited duration, while in the second example the ‘bare be’ form is used denoting extended duration. This distinction between limited and extended duration is made in
many other languages but not in SE. In this actual case the variety spoken by the little girl thus makes a distinction that is absent in the standard variety.

If schooling is to be effective and literacy is to be a tool for people to use in their own lives, then communicative practices in school have to be connected with what happens outside school. The preconceptions children bring to school have to be taken into account as well as the literacy practices that will benefit them in life.

1.5.4 Socialisation to literacy

For skilled readers the process of encoding and taking meaning from text is rapid, automatic and seemingly effortless (Verhoeven & Snow, 2001). They use various comprehension strategies to support their reading, such as self-monitoring, rereading, and using information from pictures, from world knowledge, from genre familiarity and from syntactic analysis. The traditional view of literacy as a private and technical device, consisting of separate specific skills, has been connected to a view of literacy acquisition where these separate skills are supposed to be learned through separate exercising for later use. Edelsky strongly objects to the belief of this transfer – that practising separate skills of reading transfers to reading (Edelsky, 1991). As opposed to the traditional way of teaching literacy, many educational researchers, among others Kullberg (1994), Lundberg (1991, 1999), Liberg (1990, 1993) and Eriksen-Hagtvet (1994), have stressed the importance of treating literacy as a whole, and consequently the importance of teaching literacy in a natural setting to make children learn literacy functionally. Bente Eriksen-Hagtvet stresses that learning to read and write in a literate society is a social action. The literacy practices that exist in the society influence how children acquire literacy in school. Some cultures, for example, such as mainstream Western cultures, value taking a critical perspective on literacy while others value showing respect and honour towards the written word.

According to Verhoeven and Snow (2001: 3-4) ensuring literacy fluency presupposes that

- children already understand the uses, purposes, and value of literacy,
- children are enthusiastic about learning to read,
- children expect to succeed, and
- children have access to reading materials

Recognising literacy as a context-embedded phenomenon that should be studied holistically does not mean that one should not recognise that learning to read and write is a process of including learning different skills. Caroline Liberg (1990) and Birgit Kullberg (1994) in their respective research on individual children learning to read and write found that in a literacy-stimulating environment children acquire literacy in their own, individual way, combining bottom-
up strategies, beginning with single letters and sounds, and top-down strategies, starting from whole texts and utterances. Individual children use different strategies and invent new ones. Liberg (1993) makes it quite clear: Children learn to read and write by reading and writing. Taking seriously the importance of treating literacy as the social phenomenon it is, one recognises that the environment where children acquire literacy best is an environment which stimulates literacy and where literacy is used in natural settings. Consequently it is more adequate to talk about “literacy socialisation” than literacy acquisition, following Watson-Gegeo (1988). The substitution of literacy acquisition with literacy socialisation implies the perspective of literacy as learned through social interaction, thus focusing not only on acquisition of skills but also on the context of literacy, on acquiring a device of communication, and on what else is learned at the same time.

Traditionally the difference between oral and written language has been described as a dichotomy. Orality is usually characterised by features such as dialogue, contextualisation, implicitness, fragmentised language and focus on content, while literacy is represented by monologue, decontextualisation, explicitness, elaborate language and focus on form. In oral communication in homes, children usually get immediate feedback and through dialogue with elder children and adults, they get the support they need to convey their message. In writing, on the other hand, the writer is supposed to produce a text that “stands for itself” and includes all information as the reader is “in another time and place”, that is the text is usually decontextualised. Thus literacy is usually assumed to demand higher level language skills than oral language, such as advanced syntax, extended vocabulary and planned language. However this is to simplify too much. Formal oral forms, such as lectures and speeches, usually represent language of the second form while literal forms such as taking notes and chatting on the internet are closer to the first type of language. Bibers (1988) used large computerized textual data-bases to analyse written and oral language. This material has often been referred to as “standardized corpora” (Besnier 1995: 210) but Biber states that “Western sociolinguistic norms cannot be assumed to prevail in other cultures” (Biber 1988: 206) Among different ethnic groups there exist different oral events that use and teach advanced language skills, such as the earlier mentioned “shaping the mind” among the Kwara’ae (Watson-Gegeo, 1992). Following the ethnographic perspective, rather than analysing using the oral-literate dichotomy, it is more relevant to ask how a particular communication system is used to address various human needs (Brandt & Clinton, 2002).

Still, it is indisputably the case that children who are only used to daily communication in homes also have to learn elaborate language of the second

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7 Note however that the common way of interaction between caretaker and child in Western middle-class community, treating also infants as communicative partners, is not universal. In some cultures care-takers do not give response to children’s talk until they reach a certain level (see, for example, Ochs and Schieffelin, 2001).
type in school. This language they will need to be able to understand and express more complicated information. Instead of talking about oral language versus literate language, it would be more relevant to speak of language of the first type as situation embedded language and language of the second type as distanced language (following Kommittén för svenska språket, 2002). While it is not the case that children have to acquire distanced language to learn to read and write, as this can just as well be done in the type of language they have met in their homes, they will have to develop distanced language to be able to acquire the academic knowledge they are supposed to acquire in school and to be able to read and write advanced texts. Nevertheless, there are some differences between oral and written language that children have to master to learn to read and write. Although oral and written language are differently related to each other in different contexts, writing is not simply oral language written down. First oral language is sent from mouth to ear while written text is transferred from hand to eye. This means that children will have to learn to code spoken language into writing and to decode written language. They have to learn graphemes and conventions for writing and in the case the standard written language differs from their own spoken language they will also have to learn the standard variety. For many children, in particular in former colonies and from marginalized peoples, this means learning an entirely new language. Secondly, in a phonetic writing system, such as the Roman script, they will also have to learn to focus on form. A child making a mistake in oral communication is usually not corrected but listeners try to make the meaning out by focusing on the content and responding to the utterance accordingly. However, to understand written language children have to be able to switch between focusing on content and form. To code spoken language into written text one has to be able to leave the focus on meaning and focus on formal features such as phonemes and separate words, while simultaneously keeping the content in mind.

Researchers such as Lundberg (in Höien & Lundberg, 1988) have pointed out the importance of phonetic awareness as a pre-knowledge before children learn to read and write. Lundberg found that training focusing on phonetic awareness at pre-school age promotes early literacy development especially in children who are supposed to get problems with literacy acquisition (Lundberg, Frost & Petersen, 1988). Kjeld Kjertmann (1999) in Denmark showed that also encouraging pre-writing and pre-reading among children in pre-school-age has positive effects on the outcome of their literacy learning. As for development order Liberg has stated that it is natural for children to start to learn writing before reading, as they then already know the content and meaning. She also stresses the importance of continued development of literacy skills to higher levels, what she calls “developed effective reading and writing”. To reach this

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8 However this conclusion does not take different writing systems into account, but is based on phonetically based script. See for example Ingulsrud & Allen (1999) to compare with literacy acquisition in China.
level, opportunities for practise are crucial and developing high literacy skills continues through life. Verhoeven and Snow stress that plans for literacy instruction programmes have to include ensuring that learners get opportunities for practice as “the practise, combined with the learner’s understanding of the principles underlying the orthography that he or she is learning, ensures rapid processing” (Verhoeven & Snow, 2001: 3).

1.6 Summary

This chapter has presented the objectives and the theoretical framework of this study. Studying literacy from an ethnographic perspective as a social and cultural phenomenon and children’s socialisation to literacy implies studying and understanding literacy in its context. The ways people understand and make sense of literacy is related to their perspectives on knowledge, learning and language, and as such is also closely related to power. The awareness of how different literacy practices are valued, as prescribed or stigmatised, is important for literacy education. Taking seriously the idea that children acquire literacy, as language, while being socialised to literacy and language, one realises that the continuity between the ways children are being socialised in relation to literacy in homes and the ways that they are supposed to learn to read and write in school is important. For literacy education in schools to be relevant there has also to be a continuity between literacy practices in school and those used in the community. Likewise, for schooling to be a preparation for life, literacy practices in school should prepare pupils for the literacy practices they will need when they leave school.

This continuity should also apply to phenomena related to literacy, such as interactional patterns, language choice and perspectives on knowledge and teaching/learning. It is also crucial that the literacy education includes enough opportunity for students’ to exercise their skills to ensure the development of higher level literacy skills, such as automatisation, and the development of effective strategies.
Chapter Two

Methods and Approaches

With the focus mentioned above the most useful methods are to be found in the discipline of linguistic anthropology. In this part I will start by discussing ethnographic methods in general and ethical considerations in particular. The specific techniques used will be discussed under 2.3 and 2.4. How this was realised in the present study will be explained under 2.5 and discussed under 2.6.

Ethnographic research is concerned with the study and cultural interpretation of behaviour in naturally ongoing settings. This makes ethnographic methods particularly suitable for this as a linguistic study as I am primarily interested in understanding, not predicting, people’s behaviour (compare Agar, 1996: 237-238). The perspective of literacy with a focus on the users of literacy and of literacy as a socio-cultural phenomenon – on literacy practices – makes ethnographic methods, which strive to give a holistic/contextual, comparative and cross-cultural picture on the phenomenon in focus, most appropriate. Ethnography concerns issues of human choice and meaning, and in that sense it concerns issues of improvement in educational practice and is thus highly relevant for educational research (Ericsson, 1986). Through this interpretative approach information may be found that is needed in educational planning. Ethnography enables the researcher to make the familiar strange, which is often illustrated with the aphorism: “The fish would be the last creature to discover water”. Through systematic documentation, what is happening can be made visible and it may be possible to:

- Find specific understanding through documentation of concrete details
- Consider the local meanings that happenings have for people
- Find comparative understanding of different social settings
- Find comparative understanding beyond the immediate circumstances of the local setting (Ericsson, 1986: 121-122)

Linguistic research in the ethnographic field is often called ethno-linguistics or linguistic anthropology and is often connected with education. Wortham
(2001: 253-255) defines linguistic anthropology of education with reference to six characteristics:

1. It studies language in use, how structural categories are used in communicative practices, and speakers as social actors
2. It tries to understand participants’ own point of view on their activities
3. It tries to address macrosociological questions by doing detailed analyses of language use in particular contexts, thus studies what Gee calls discourses with a little “d”
4. It studies emergent patterns of identity formation that are created in particular contexts, how language use can constitute aspects of culture and identity
5. It systematically analyses patterns of semiotic cues across particular segments of language use
6. It is a subset of educational linguistics

The significance of interpretive approaches in educational research is stressed by Erickson (1986). He argues that it has relevance for education “because of what it has to say about its central substantive concerns: a) the nature of classrooms as socially and culturally organized environments for learning, b) the nature of teaching as one, but only one, aspect of environments for learning, and c) the nature (and content) of the meaning-perspectives of teacher and learner as intrinsic to the educational process” (ibid: 120).

This study was carried out through five field studies carried out during the years 2000 – 2003 with a total of nine months in field. Techniques such as participant observation and interviews were used, to create a picture of both literacy practises and the intake of knowledge in the school and in the community. This means that this is a linguistic study in the ethnographic field with a longitudinal perspective following in the foot-paths of studies by among others Heath (1983), Kulick and Stroud (1993), Street (1993, 1995), Prinsloo and Breier (1996), Barton and Hamilton (1998) and Martin-Jones (2000).

By using Karagwe as the field I take advantage of the fact that I am well acquainted with the area through cooperation with a local non-governmental organisation, an NGO, involved in the development of appropriate technology in women’s groups and primary schools. I also take advantage of the fact that I am acquainted with Tanzania and speak fluent Swahili, which is used as the official language of the country.

2.1 Ethical considerations

In this part ethical considerations relevant for the present study will be discussed in general. In all research, considerations have to be made as to how information is treated, to minimise possible negative effects for those involved. In this research, ethical rules set up by Humanistisk-samhällsvetenskapliga forsknings-
Åsa Wedin

The rules from HSFR may be criticised for ethnocentrism. The question of individual consent is an example where the rules may be difficult to implement in other cultural settings because they are founded on an individualised idea of integrity (Dahl, 1993:13). This becomes evident in a country such as Tanzania, which is quite hierarchically organised. This means, for example, that if explicitly requested if they want to participate or not, most people would not have a real choice. According to local norms a person who is regarded as of minor status, such as a schoolchild or a parent, would be expected to agree to participate if asked by someone of higher status, such as a teacher or a researcher. Hence there would not be a real choice. The proper and expected way for a researcher to introduce a study and to get research permission in Tanzania is a top-down one. The first level is on a national level, the second on a district level and the third level in this case is the school level, from the principal down to the pupils in the last stage. This presents a problem for a researcher who wants to respect the will of the individual and especially children. In this study this was handled in different ways which will be further described under 2.5. This does not mean that no harm was done but that at least as far as possible precautions were taken to consider this question throughout the research process.

Another problem raised by the demand for “informed consent” is that it is founded on the presupposition that the target group have enough pre-knowledge concerning the aim and possible results of the research, which is mostly not the case. However, the social interaction between the researcher and the informants in the field constitutes an ethical control in itself. Without functional interaction and working social contacts, it would not be possible to carry out the study. Thus consent is itself in one way included in the process.

Other ethical problems, mentioned by among others Dahl (1993), are problems of representativity, fair repayment and tolerance of the indecent. The problem of representativity will be discussed under 2.2, Ethnographic methods. The problem with tolerance of the indecent will be discussed under the results from the field. The problem of fair repayment is connected with the difference in

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råde, (HSFR, The research Council for Humanism and Social Science, Sweden), are followed. These rules have four main demands: demands of information, consent, confidentiality and use. In the case of ethnographic research ethical questions are by necessity crucial since people are being used, both as individuals and as groups. Personal relations and interdependent trust between the researcher and the participants are basic components of the research method. In most cases relations of power in the research are unequal, with the researcher in a stronger position and the researched in a weaker position. Put simply the publication of results may constitute an encroachment and a violation of given confidence. This entails that the researcher considers ethical effects of the research carefully. For whom is the research undertaken? Who may benefit and who may lose?

The rules from HSFR may be criticised for ethnocentrism. The question of individual consent is an example where the rules may be difficult to implement in other cultural settings because they are founded on an individualised idea of integrity (Dahl, 1993:13). This becomes evident in a country such as Tanzania, which is quite hierarchically organised. This means, for example, that if explicitly requested if they want to participate or not, most people would not have a real choice. According to local norms a person who is regarded as of minor status, such as a schoolchild or a parent, would be expected to agree to participate if asked by someone of higher status, such as a teacher or a researcher. Hence there would not be a real choice. The proper and expected way for a researcher to introduce a study and to get research permission in Tanzania is a top-down one. The first level is on a national level, the second on a district level and the third level in this case is the school level, from the principal down to the pupils in the last stage. This presents a problem for a researcher who wants to respect the will of the individual and especially children. In this study this was handled in different ways which will be further described under 2.5. This does not mean that no harm was done but that at least as far as possible precautions were taken to consider this question throughout the research process.

Another problem raised by the demand for “informed consent” is that it is founded on the presupposition that the target group have enough pre-knowledge concerning the aim and possible results of the research, which is mostly not the case. However, the social interaction between the researcher and the informants in the field constitutes an ethical control in itself. Without functional interaction and working social contacts, it would not be possible to carry out the study. Thus consent is itself in one way included in the process.

Other ethical problems, mentioned by among others Dahl (1993), are problems of representativity, fair repayment and tolerance of the indecent. The problem of representativity will be discussed under 2.2, Ethnographic methods. The problem with tolerance of the indecent will be discussed under the results from the field. The problem of fair repayment is connected with the difference in

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9 These rules may be found on http://www.vr.se/humsam.
status between the researcher and the target group. As ethnographic researchers tend to take the perspective of the underdog and to ally themselves with groups in minor positions (Dahl, 1993; Narrowe, 1993) the researcher is often in a stronger position than the researched, both economically, politically and socially. This easily creates expectations among the target group (and sometimes also in the researcher) that the research will generate results that may serve as a solution to problems experienced by the participants. This may contrast with the nature of ethnographic research with its base in long-term presence in the field and thoughtful and circumspect reflection. In many cases expectations for practical help in the daily life are also created, such as economic or medical help, perhaps without the researcher being aware of these expectations. The long-time nature of the research, and the fact that the research is usually based on close relations with informants, may also cause disappointment when the inevitable end of the field study arrives. These problems were handled in different ways when they occurred in this study. Schools were for example given seminars where results were discussed with teachers.

For ethical reasons names of informants, primary schools and villages are fictional throughout the text. Only geographical names and names of official persons from district level and above are authentic. In some cases, minor alterations have been made to prevent recognition. On the whole the ambition has been to give a “thick description” (see Geertz, 1973) where relevant for the study but to leave out information that could be used to identify individuals.

It is also important that the researcher considers who is supposed to be the main benefactor of the research. In the end the researcher may find him- or herself in the situation of having loyalties to groups with conflicting interests, such as informants, other habitants in the area, local government, providers of research grants, his or her own academic institution and, not least, the researcher him- or herself. This question has to be considered throughout the research. This was certainly the case in the present study, which is a doctoral study with academic ambitions, funded co-operatively by Swedish International Development Cooperation Department for Research Cooperation, Sida/SAREC, Stockholm University and Högskolan Dalarna. In the interest of the latter is the fact that the study leads to a dissertation, preferably sooner than later. In the interest of Stockholm University is probably mainly academic success. Also SAREC is naturally interested in academic success but probably with a more pragmatic utility goal – better education in developing countries. The participants in the study clearly express what they want – higher economic conditions and possibly also for migration to urban areas or Western countries.

10 The term **informants** may be controversial. Other possibilities are **subjects**, **participants** or **actors**. Although I have chosen to use **informants** this does not in any way mean that they were passive or that I regarded them as **objects**. On the role of informants in this study see for example 2.3.
Then what are my own ambitions? Beyond doubt I strive for academic success but also for “better education” which does not necessarily mean that my view of better education coincides with that of other interested parties. To me good education, or relevant education, means that the majority of pupils in the schools learn what they need to control the development of their own lives and also that pupils from different socioeconomic backgrounds are given fair educational choices. This means, in the case of literacy, that pupils should be able to leave school confident, “with their backs upright”, able to use literacy as a tool for their own and their society’s development. That pupils from different social and economic groups should have equal access to school knowledge is to me a question of democracy.

Another problem that may occur during this research concerns the medium of instruction in schools. Extensive research recommends the use of mother tongue in early schooling. The opinion that children are best taught in a language they understand is well founded (see for example Thomas & Collier, 1997; Cummins, 2000). In Tanzania, however, Swahili is the language of instruction in primary school although it is the mother tongue of only a minority of the pupils, and there is a strong conviction in favour of the use of Swahili among locals on different levels. There is even a tendency among “the better off” to put their children in English medium schools. This issue will be further discussed in chapters 4, 5 and 10.

2.2 Ethnographic methods

The science of ethnography was originally aimed at describing non-European people’s material and spiritual culture, the word itself stemming from the Greek ethnos, meaning people, and graphia, meaning description. In the discovery and exploitation of “the New World”, ethnographers were one of the tools used by the Western powers, whether they liked it or not. After the great discoverers came the missionaries and the anthropologists. During the 1960s ethnography was developed in the direction of analysing social and cultural structures and processes, not only in “exotic” cultures but also in sub-cultures in our midst. Today ethnography is usually used to denominate the research praxis where material for analysis of social and cultural structures and practices are collected and analysed and ethnographic techniques are being used in different fields such as for example feminist science, linguistic studies and educational research.

Ethnographic methods have been developed during extensive research over more than a century and in numerous societies and situations of different types, to help researchers, more often than not from Western societies, understand the plurality of human culture. Clifford Geertz in his article “Thick description” (1973) which has had a great influence on the development of ethnography and anthropology over the recent decades, claimed that cultural analysis is intrinsically incomplete and states that:
Our double task is to uncover the conceptual structures that inform our subjects’ acts, the “said” of social discourse, and to construct a system of analysis in whose terms what is generic to those structures, what belongs to them because they are what they are, will stand out against the other determinants of human behaviour. (Geertz, 1973: 27)

Thus ethnographic methods give us a tool to study literacy in context as the socio-cultural phenomenon it is.

The label participant observation may be used to refer to all the activities which on-site ethnographic researchers do in the field (Wolcott, 1999: 44). Under this heading may be grouped the different techniques such as participant observation, interviews and archival research. In this study mainly the two first types of technique are used. They will be further described under 2.3 and 2.4.

Traditionally ethnographic research did not aim to define problems and find solutions to them. Critical ethnographers however, for example in fields such as feminist science and educational research, seek to understand what is wrong to avoid what they regard as stopping one step short. In this way they strive to use their work to aid emancipatory goals and to make the participants/informants voices heard. Britzman (1991) makes the difference clear between her own view as a critical ethnographer and traditional educational ethnographers:

Unlike traditional educational ethnographers who enter the familiar world of school and linguistically render this familiar experience as strange, my project is to take the familiar story of learning to teach and render it problematic through critique and by asserting multiple voices. (ibid:10)

Cazden (1983) discusses the traditional role for ethnographic research of explaining without giving advice for change. She refers to a (fictional?) sign at the Department of Education in Alaska: “We don’t need any more anthropological explanations of school failure”. She gives two examples of successful cases where ethnographic research has been clearly involved in designing change, the study of Shirley Brice Heath (see under 1.4, for further information) and the Kamehameha Early Education Program in Hawai’i (See 1.5.3). With the focus of the present study on literacy and relevant schooling the question of whether or not the research should give advice for change is relevant. Should the researcher get involved in the field, taking the role of a “participant activist” as Narrowe (1993) argues? To her the role of the researcher is to identify problems and initiate measures. The researcher should give rise to discussions. Narrowe uses metaphors such as the researcher as a catalyst, a source for resources and a team-player. An ethical problem she mentions with this type of research is that the researcher may bring up unsolvable problems and the fact that criticism may hurt some people.

Other problems when this type of study is carried out in post-colonial states, such as the present study, is the risk of falling into the colonial trap, that the researcher unconsciously takes the role of the coloniser, as a representative of
what is perceived as modern while participants stay in the position where their
own views are seen as un-modern and backwards.

With the focus of ethnography as science, attention has been directed towards
different factors affecting the results, such as the researcher’s relation to the
informants during the field work, his or her own ideology and cultural back-
ground overall as well as local and international political circumstances in the
ethnographic activity in question. One factor that has been discussed concerning
the scientific status of ethnography is the question of reliability as the researcher
usually both collects and analyses the data. Other important factors are validity,
generalisability and objectivity.

In research, attention should be directed towards eventual biases and sources
of error such as the nature of the research technique and the influence of the
researcher. Still many ethnographers do not find replicability/reliability an
appropriate measure for evaluating fieldwork. Geertz (1973) states that
anthropological writings are themselves interpretations of second or third order.
In ethnographic research the researcher is inevitably involved in intense and
prolonged sensitive interactions with people, and it is a fact that you can not step
into the same stream twice, things do not happen twice. Furthermore similarity in
response is not the same as accuracy. According to Hitchcock and Hughes
(1995) it is more profitable to critically consider the significance of a range of
personal key variables of both researcher and informants as well as considering
the nature of the technique involved than to ask if the study is replicable. Wolcott
(1999) stresses that there are multiple insider views and that what the
ethnographer strives to do is to present a way of seeing, not the way.

Validity is mainly a question of instrument/technique, data, findings and
explanation. How is what is done motivated in relation to research questions? Is
the picture given in the description based on methods that are valid? Does it
describe what the researcher set out to describe and is the description valide and
authentic? Are explanations given justified from the presented evidence?
Validity may be increased by validity checks. One common way often used in
qualitative research is triangulation where a range of methods are used to expand
the picture and to investigate the question from different perspectives. Another
way used in ethnographic research is respondent validation where field notes or
observations are taken back to the participants to check that one got it right. A
third way is to scrutinise deviant data to shed new light on the question.

Typicality and representativeness, the question of generalisability are also
important. Generalisability is interesting when you use quantitative methods such
as sampling, representativity and significance. In ethnographic research,
however, the results are heavily influenced by the ethnographer’s own interac-
tions with particular individuals or with one closely knit group such as for
example a family. Wolcott shows that the strength with ethnographic research is
not as a source for generalisation but as a source for knowledge about an instance
of something (1999: 174). Also the fact that the “well informed informant” may
not be typical has to be considered. The ethic considerations on the possibility of participants to choose to participate or not affects who are in reality chosen. Individuals who are more communicative, articulate and extrovert are more likely to participate as informants than other people. However, following the micro-perspective of ethnographic research does not constitute a problem when we realise that:

[...] social activities are comments on more than themselves; that where an interspection comes from does not determine where it can be impelled to go. (Geertz, 1973: 23)

The question of objectivity has been the subject for many discussions in science. In what was usually called “the scientific method”, facts were supposed to speak for themselves and the researcher was not supposed to distort the truth. Objectivity was both desirable and a necessary condition for good research. Still the question remains: is objectivity possible or even desirable? The values of the researcher in for example social educational research can enter at any point in the research process - from the choice of subject, through research design and data collection techniques to analysis and conclusion. Many researchers using qualitative methods argue that complete objectivity is unobtainable and that value-free knowledge does not exist. That the researcher has biases is inevitable in all research and may in ethnographic research be seen as “not only (...) something we must live with but (...) something we can not do without” (Wolcott, 1995: 164). Instead of seeing bias and subjectivity as a problem, the necessity of making explicit the purposes and assumptions, starting points, premises and values of the researcher has to be stressed.

Following this, in ethnographic research the researcher may reveal what is hidden and discover what is beyond common sense by using the holistic perspective that ethnography offers. Using abduction for analyses throughout the research allows the researcher to combine theoretic analyses with empirical findings. According to Alvesson and Sköldberg (1994) abduction differs from induction and deduction by “on the one hand daring to take the leap beyond pure distillation of facts, on the other hand base this on (already theory laden) empiri” (ibid: 45, translation by the author). A longitudinal design, as in this study, also makes it possible for the researcher to, throughout the research, step into the field, step back, reflect, adjust focus and methods and return into the field. This means that the researcher reflects on all stages of the research, from planning, through field work and to analysis.

2.3 Participant observation

One of the two major activities that field workers do is participant observation. The notion of participant observation is of a field worker participating in and observing what happens in the field. The phenomenon participated in and observed may be a well defined one like for example “a day in a school
principal’s life”, “an evening at the local bar” and “code-switching in a bilingual classroom” or it might be everyday life in a certain society. The extent of participation may also vary from an active role, such as for example Canagarajah (1993, 2000) in a Sri Lankesan context and Wolcott (1999) among the Kwakiutl in Canada, who were both teaching in the very classes they observed, to a passive role where the field worker sits quietly “like a fly on the wall” (ibid: 50) observing what is happening without getting involved.

It is important to be aware of the influence of the participant observer, and Wolcott cautions the fieldworker about getting too involved. He suggests that the field worker keep a low profile: “becoming only as involved as necessary to obtain whatever information sought” (ibid: 49). Narrowe (1993, 1998), however, who conducted her study in an educational setting, argues for “participant activism”. She sees teachers as “practicians” who want practical advice on ways to make education better.

2.4 Interviewing

The second major activity in ethnographic field work is interviewing. There is no clear-cut border between participant observation and interviews, and interviewing may be seen as an aspect of participant observation. Interviews may vary from structured to unstructured and from formal to informal. In an interview situation many factors have to be taken into account, such as the setting, the roles of the interviewer and the interviewee, other persons present, and use of interpreters. The importance of using native meta-communicative repertoires in the interview setting is stressed by Briggs (1986). It is important for the interviewer to become aware of communicative rules such as who may ask questions, in what situations it is appropriate to ask questions and how the answers should be interpreted. Power relations according to local norms have to be considered particularly carefully.

The most important skill for a good interviewer is, as I see it, the ability to listen. Of course it is important to be skilled in questioning techniques to bring out the information sought for, but I find it more important to have an ability to show real interest in the thoughts of the informants. This is even more important when the interviewer has higher status than the interviewee. To make informants give relevant information you have to make them understand that you are really interested in their thoughts. When interviewing children it is also important to make them think by giving them demanding questions. It is important to make the children reflect (Doverborg & Pramling-Samuelsson, 2000).

2.5 Realisation

In this part the realisation of the methods in the present study will be discussed. Throughout the field studies, a range of methods have been used with participant observation as the base. Observations have been made of different types ranging
from “a fly on the wall” to “participant activism”. Contacts with people on different levels, mainly through “trusted friends”, have resulted in visits to many places with relation to literacy and interviews with people such as teachers, parents, pupils, officials, old persons, educators and local leaders.

There was initially an ethical problem. I found it important to first visit the schools I had chosen and to ask for their consent to participate. This violated local rules and norms that permission was to be given top-down, from ministry level, through district level to the schools. I solved this by initially visiting the schools, where I was already known as a trusted friend through friend school-activities between them and Swedish schools. I described the aims of my research and what I intended to do. I also told them that if they agreed to participate I would then seek the necessary permission in the ordinary way, through the Tanzanian Ministry of Culture and Education and COSTECH (Tanzania Commission for Science and Technology). All five schools that I had chosen agreed to participate and my impression was that they were pleased and flattered to be among the schools chosen. I also initially visited the District Education Office in Karagwe and explained my plans. After I had got the consent of the schools, I sought permission the official, top-down way. I could then come back to the schools with the appropriate documents and begin the research and at the same time avoid violating my own norms that participant teachers in the schools at least should have a theoretical choice to participate or not. Whether this was a real choice or not however remains doubtful.

In Karagwe, when you enter a home or a school you are received as a guest and you are also expected to behave like one. This means that you are welcomed in a polite way, sometimes rather formally, and you are expected to greet the persons you meet in a polite way. For me this meant that I felt the need to learn to at least greet politely in Runyambo before I could understand anything else of the language. As I master Swahili, which is spoken as a second language by most of the inhabitants, people used Swahili when they communicated with me. However, to be able to greet them in Runyambo is an act of respect.

You are also supposed to chew some coffee beans and to drink some tea while sitting in the best chair in the mulyango. In school, when you enter a classroom, pupils rise and greet you and you are expected to say a few words to them. On the whole politeness and proper behaviour is seen as very important in Karagwe. However, after that initial stage, I usually tried to “get off the scene” and to keep in the

11 Runyambo, also Lunyambo, Kinyambo or Chinyambo, is the language spoken as the mother tongue by the majority of the inhabitants in Karagwe. Throughout the study I will use Runyambo nouns in the indefinite form to make them fit into the English text, thus I use Runyambo instead of the definite form Orunyambo.

12 The reception room, traditionally the men’s room, in a Nyambo-home. As Runyambo is not standardised it has in many cases not been possible to find the standard form. The Runyambo words and expressions in this text are given as I have received them. In most cases I have checked the spelling with different informants but as there is variation in their language and as they are not used to using written Runyambo I have had to choose one form in many cases.
background if possible. In the homes one effect of this was that people often switched from Swahili to Runyambo, which I only came to understand after some time. In classrooms teachers did not switch to Runyambo, except for occasionally in pre-school and standard 1.\textsuperscript{13}

Many interviews were tape recorded and transcribed, others were very informal and notes were sometimes only taken down afterwards. Nearly all interviews were conducted in Swahili but in a few cases, with some elderly persons, a relative or a neighbour was used as interlocutor between Runyambo and Swahili. Particular respect was paid to children and old persons, although in different ways. In the case of old persons I focused on respect and deference particularly, according to local norms. Before the interview I tried to make sure that the interpreter had a basic knowledge of interpreting and of what I was looking for. In these cases the setting was the mulyango in the home of the interviewee, who was in some cases more than 100 years old. This meant that the interviewee had a very high status in the family. The interpreter was usually a child or a grandchild and thus an inferior, although often a beloved one. The character of these interviews was that of a parent-child communication with the elder telling stories from his or her life and the (grand-)child asking and listening eagerly. The old person often talked vividly and with feeling but sometimes became too tired to continue and the interview had to be ended. I was present during the interview and tried to follow as much as I could and afterwards the interlocutor explained to me what I had not understood.

During the research, the highest consideration was given to the rights of children, particularly those children that are not perceived as well performing in schools and in homes. As these children are low ranked in many ways and all the time are at risk of being beaten or punished in other ways in school, I made an effort to take every precaution I could. In Karagwe children are not supposed to express their opinions to an adult stranger, in most cases not at all to any adult. In schools they are supposed to do what they are told by teachers without questioning. Pupils are quite frequently punished at school and low performing children are punished most. Thus I determined early on to avoid asking questions that might cause children problems in the school setting. I did not ask pupils in schools about teachers’ performance, their own performance or what problems they experienced at school. I also made sure that it was not clear for anyone else, teacher or pupil, why I choose to talk to certain children. If pupils expressed their opinions or problems to me, I listened but did not ask further questions on sensitive topics.

Although local norms did not allow children to express themselves freely to me as an adult and superior I felt a need to find ways to make them violate these rules without causing them troubles. As an outsider, a Mujungu,\textsuperscript{14} it was possible

\textsuperscript{13} Following Tanzanian standard I use standard for classes in primary school and form for classes in secondary school.

\textsuperscript{14} “A Westerner” in Runyambo, the same as Mzungu in Swahili.
for me to break adult norms and in families I came to know for a long time I could initiate discussions with children that would not have been proper in other places. In these families parents came to understand what I wanted to know and thus did not insist on children keeping out of the way of the guest, as was the normal behaviour. Throughout the study there were also some children that arranged to meet me on their own initiative, without the supervision of their parents or care-takers. I thus came to know some children for a longer time. These children were not studying in “my” schools and thus they could trust that I would not bring what they told me to their teachers. After some time they came to know me well enough to tell me about schooling and education from their perspective. Although these children came from different areas and different schools, their information was very consistent on issues such as teacher-pupil relations and teaching-learning.

On the whole, my experience from interviewing in the setting of this study is that Banyambo are easy to get on speaking terms with. Most people I met were eager to give me the information I asked for and willingly told me about their opinions and experiences. Thus I feel that speaking to adults did not present a problem, although I had to rely on interpreters in a few cases.

Observations in different places, such as in classrooms and other school related areas, churches, offices, markets and so on were sometimes recorded by tape-recorder or video camera and photos have been taken.

Self retrospection has been used in different ways throughout the research. Parents have followed literacy practices in their homes, teachers have retrospected on their work over a day and pupils in standard 6 and 7 have written essays on different topics. Groups of teachers have been recorded during focus group discussions. Furthermore, mothers of small children have been given tape recorders and asked to record their interaction with their children, such as narration and singing.

In an ethnographic study you may never absolutely anticipate what will happen. This naturally affects what is done. As this study had a longitudinal design, some processes have become visible to me that I might not have observed in a shorter study. One example is how the informants took initiatives that changed my plans. They indirectly directed me and my work in ways that were difficult to recognise. Thus they came to influence the study in a way that I had not anticipated. All people I came into contact with at grass roots level and in schools were extremely welcoming and cooperating with them was very easy. Only after the fourth field study did I begin to realise how they in many ways had made me do other things than what I had planned. One initiative that made me spend quite some time on an activity that I had not planned was the exchange of letters that developed between me and some of the informants. People wrote me letters which were delivered to me both during field studies but particularly

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15 Banyambo, singular Munyambo, are the main inhabitants in Karagwe, the people of Karagwe.
in the time in between. This gave me an unexpected experience of one common literacy practise in Karagwe, an experience initiated and carried out mainly by the informants. People also initiated many activities for me, especially visits. One example of many was when I had arranged with a pre-school teacher to observe her class for one day. However, after the first lesson she sent the children out-doors to play and invited me for “a short walk” which turned out to lead us to her parents’ home where we were served food and snacks that had been prepared for hours.

Not always did I manage to humbly adapt to the situation and open-mindedly receive the information about people’s perspectives this could give me. Once this was extra difficult. That was when I had prepared 75 pupils in a class to reflect on literacy practices in their environment. I had given them three days to prepare themselves to write texts on the topic. However, when I collected the written texts, they turned out to be nearly identical, each text telling the needs of the community under the headings: Economy, Education, Water and Health. Their Swahili teacher had quite simply given them other instructions on what to write! I was furious but did my best not to show my anger. It took me quite a long time before I could calm down enough to realise that this could give me lot of information of schooled literacy and teachers’ perspectives on writing and of what type of knowledge that was perceived as proper to give to the Mujungu.

Other situations that were quite embarrassing for me as a shy Swede were when I was made to stand up in churches and to present myself and occasionally also sing a Swedish hymn in front of the congregation and all the occasions when I was demanded to give a speech. I came to realise that although I had made plans for my observations and interviews and people had always kindly agreed to my plans, the plans were quite seldom realised the way I had intended. In schools I had consequently been made to drink more tea, quite often alone in an empty room or with one or two adults, instead of observing children’s activities, and in homes people manipulated to make me spend much time in the mulyango, while I had planned to observe adult-child interaction. Obviously people had made me spend more time on activities that they perceived proper for me as an adult guest and less time with children, which is quite logical as children are supposed to keep out of the way of guests. That people took the chance to present the *mama Mujungu*,16 ‘the Western woman’, for relatives and friends and that they took the opportunity to explain their needs for me is also very understandable. Of course all these initiatives gave me important information on people’s understanding of what was important to teach the Mujungu.

During a longitudinal study of this type the researcher’s own perspectives are likely to change. This was also the case in this study. The study consisted of five field studies of all together nine months in Karagwe. The fact that I spent extended time in the area during these five years influenced my thinking in many

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16 Note that this expression is a code-mix between Swahili and Runyambo, *mama* being woman in Swahili and *Mujungu* being Runyambo for Westerner.
ways. One important thing that changed is my way of looking at literacy and education. During the classroom observations in the first field study I first felt quite disillusioned, to say the least. My perspectives were Western and as I looked for what I perceived as good teaching in Sweden I was quite disappointed at what I saw. I then focussed my next field studies more on literacy and education in families and in the society. It took me much time in the field before I could observe what was actually there in the schools, without my own prejudices on what ought to be there, such as pupil-centredness and communicative methods. It was not until I had understood interactional patterns in homes and in the society that I began to understand the function of different features in school, such as teacher-pupil interaction and language use.

2.6 Method discussion

In ethnographic research, the interaction between researcher and informants and the interaction between their respective interpretations of reality are central for the outcome. The fact that I had contact with a local NGO before the study helped me in many ways, as I was already seen as a respected person and “trusted friend” by many of the informants before the start of the research. Although this NGO was a natural base throughout the research, I was careful not to let this restrict my field.

The uses of one’s own personality as the most important research tool in the research is not unproblematic. Ethnographic research, in the way it was conducted in this study, puts high demands on the researcher. It means being personally involved in people's lives, in their ups and downs. It means becoming intimately involved in life and death, in the happiness and sorrow that encounters the participants. In the field the researcher is on his or her own, faced with decisions that means balancing on the narrow string joining professional research and empathic involvement in people’s lives. This means that there is a need for a lot of common sense to reach what is beyond common sense. To get “trusted friends” you have to be one yourself. Thus personal involvement was a central part of this research and its implications have to be weighted throughout the whole process.

The researcher’s perceptions of Self and the construction of Other have been much discussed in ethnographic works (among others by Kulick, 1992). In the present research the interaction between the subjects and myself may be characterised as a continual negotiation of identity, of respective perception of Self and Other. My own perception of my own Self and of the subjects as Other has been challenged throughout the study. The subjects have continuously presented me with their views of Self, that is as “we”, as Banyambo or Africans, and Other, that is in this case Westerners, Wazungu/Bajungu. They have faced me with their perceptions of me and them that I do not share and that have

17 Bajungu is plural of Mujungu, Westerner, see footnote 7.
challenged my own perceptions. It took me a lot of frustration before I understood that I to them represented the Bajungu, as a collective.

My own picture of the Banyambo, that has developed through the study, is that they see themselves as people who struggle under hardships. They perceive themselves as hardworking, living under harsh conditions, suffering from poverty, hunger, disease and a low level of knowledge. Although they work hard from early morning till night, accepting their lot in life they barely manage to live. They perceive the number of drunkards in their part of the world as high, as well as the level of promiscuity. On the whole they pity themselves and hope for help.

The Westerners, the Bajungu, on the whole represent the opposite, the Other. They are seen as physically weak, unable to cope with hardships such as walking by foot, climbing mountains, working in fields and so on. In the lives of Westerners everything is perceived as being easy and rational. The Bajungu are all devoted Christians (all European names are for example perceived as Christian, thus a child of Christian parents is always given a European name among his or her other names), well educated and perceived as behaving accordingly. In European life there are no drugs, no alcohol or loose sexual relations. The life of Bajungu is easy and they have unending economic recourses.

As I was continually faced with the conflict between on the one side their picture of me as representing the Bajungu and their Self, and on the other my own view of myself and of them, I often tried to challenge and oppose their picture by telling them my view of “European” life, which is rather a picture of Swedish life from a middle-class perspective, where there exist problems such as alcohol, drugs, gang brutality and racism. I tried to explain the hardships “we” face in the northern part of Sweden with winter and high costs and tried to gain some of the respect I felt I lost through their picture of “us” by walking long distances, climbing mountains, working in fields, going by bike and so on, but I can not say that I managed to change their picture a lot, not even of myself as an individual Mujungu. I still had to accept that I would be perceived as representing Bajungu as a whole. One telling example is one of my best friends in Karagwe, Mama Katunzi, with whom I spent a lot of time, working in the fields, cooking, nursing children, visiting friends and relatives and going to church. We shared a lot of thoughts through our endless discussion of important aspects of life such as men, children, work and health. She asked me a lot about my life in Sweden and told me about her life. Still, she was surprised, after we had known each other for more than five years, that I managed to weed so rapidly. Although we had discussed my own cultivations at home she did not connect that with a mastery of weeding.
Chapter Three

The Setting

Karagwe is located in the north-west corner of Tanzania as one of six districts in the region of Kagera, west of Lake Victoria (see map 1). Most people enter Karagwe from the north, coming through Kyaka which is about one hour’s drive from Bukoba and the shores of Lake Victoria, or about three quarters of an hour from Mutukula and the border to Uganda. These are two main routes for people and goods travelling to and from Karagwe, the third one entering Karagwe from Ngara and Biharamulo districts in the south. Coming from Kyaka you have about one more hour’s drive on rough roads climbing the mountains of Karagwe before you get to the administrative centre of Kayanga. As with most towns and villages in Karagwe, Kayanga is situated on one of the mountain ridges, some of which reach about 1300 metres above sea level. People have mainly settled on the hilltops where the soil is fertile and the air is healthy, which is contrary to the conditions in the sometimes swampy valleys where mosquitoes and diseases prevail. However this habit of the Banyambo, the main inhabitants of Karagwe, is also the root of one of their main problems, bad access to water. Although the area usually gets heavy rain twice a year, the water streams down to the valleys. Thus one of the main activities for Banyambo women and children is to climb down the hills to fetch water every morning and afternoon. Today one of the important activities of different institutions and non-governmental organisations in Karagwe is to find ways to keep the water where people live, water-harvesting. Iron-sheets on roofs are bent and gutters, water-jars and -tanks of different types are constructed to keep the water near the homes.

Driving through Kayanga on the dusty main-road you find some small hotels and restaurants, a prison, a bank, a post office and a mosque. Leaving the main road you also find a library, some churches, the District Office buildings, the primary school and the market and still further off you find the homes of the inhabitants, many of them employees in the different offices. Although this is the main administrative town in Karagwe you do not find any house with more than one floor. People live scattered even in town, with small plots where they grow food and keep some cattle.
If you are only driving through Kayanga it will probably take you only a few minutes to pass the town. Then you have about fifteen minutes’ drive to Omurushaka, the business centre of Karagwe. Omurushaka is Runyambo for ‘at the bushes’. Only a few decades ago this place was only a meeting place “at the bushes” on the main road, between the villages of Bugene, Nyakahanga and Kishao. People started to settle there and the number of inhabitants increased rapidly, and is still increasing. Today Omurushaka is a busy town where many people take their interest in making money. On the dusty main road you had better beware because of all the vehicles passing at a high speed, cars, lorries, local buses (so called daladala), bicycles and motorcycles. In the town you find shops of different types and on market days, Wednesdays and Saturdays, the market is crowded. People come in from the neighbourhood and sell different kinds of goods such as vegetables, cattle, second-hand clothes and tobacco. One of the new contributions to the street scene is the number of street children hanging around in the town. For different reasons children, mainly boys, are sent to or run away to town to make money and in 2001 they were said to number more than 300 in Omurushaka. The number fluctuates depending on the amount
A large number of food available in the villages. When there is enough food most children return to their villages and in time of shortage the number of street children in town immediately increases. As the town is an important logistical centre, the nightlife is adapted to that with many bars and organised procuring activities.

Karagwe is vast, about 7,200 square kilometres, and the inhabitants, who number 425,576 according to the 2002 Population and Housing Census, live scattered all over the fertile areas (see map 2). The annual population growth rate is fairly high, 4.2% in 1988 and roughly the same during the period 1988-2002, but this is not only due to the high birth rate but also to immigration from more densely populated parts of the country as well as from Rwanda. Apart from the two main urban places there are a few regional centres, such as Nyaishozi, Nkwenda, Kaisho and Rwambaizi, but most of the inhabitants live in small villages. Also in the villages the Banyambo live in scattered homesteads. The traditional organisation of these homes is that an elderly man lives with his
wife/wives and his sons and their wives around him, each house-hold in its own house and with its own plot. Commonly male descendants of three generations are represented in this “extended family”. Inheritance of land is traditionally patrilinear and when a girl marries she moves to the family of her husband.\textsuperscript{18} The Banyambo are exogamous, which means that married women live outside their own clan while men, children and un-married (also divorced and widowed) women live inside theirs. On their plots people grow mainly the staple food bananas of different types, but also vegetables such as beans, millet, peas, cassava, ground-nuts, tomatoes and maize. Millet is said to be the earliest staple food in the area while plantain was introduced somewhere during the first millennium AD (Carlson, 1989; Mutembei, 2001). Fruit trees of different kinds are becoming increasingly popular while the main cash crop is coffee. Commonly coffee beans are chewed by the Banyambo, and also used as an offering to guests. This was traditionally the right of the Mukama, the king, who had the subjects grow and harvest coffee for him, but with the German colonialists coffee was introduced as a cash crop and the number of plants increased greatly. Today the income from coffee is the main income for most Banyambo peasants although they experienced a severe decrease in the coffee-price around the turn of the millennium.

3.1 Political organisation
Traditionally Buhaya,\textsuperscript{19} which is now the Kagera district and of which the former kingdom of Karagwe is a part, consisted of some 100 clans (Hydén, 1968). The clan system still exists although not all inhabitants respect the taboos and totems. The indigenous Banyambo, a Bantu-speaking people who were agriculturalists, are supposed to have invaded the territory from the south between the fifth and the tenth centuries AD (Katoke, 1973). Some of them moved on north-eastwards while others settled in the area. Descendants of the first party are then supposed to have returned a few centuries later, this time mixed with Bantuised Nilotic peoples whom they had mingled with in the Bunyoro region (now in the north-west of Uganda). The Banyambo are usually included in the Bahaya, the people inhabiting Buhaya, who are included in the Inter-Lacustrine Bantu, as well as the Tutsi and the Hutu of Rwanda and Burundi. Buhaya was traditionally organised according to a caste-system with ruling and non-ruling clans. The ruling Nfura clans were pastoralists while the non-ruling clans, the Bairu.

\textsuperscript{18} Cory and Hartnoll (1945) describe the laws of heritage among the Bahaya in the 1930s thoroughly. These old laws have lost some of their role and today also women may inherit and own land.

\textsuperscript{19} I use the traditional term Buhaya for the area west of Lake Victoria when I discuss the period before independence. The area is today called Kagera district. Buhaya is the land of the Bahaya, singular Muhaya. Although the inhabitants share a common history, ancestry and language, Buhaya was never a political entity before the arrival of the Westerners but consisted of 5-8 smaller kingdoms, among them Karagwe. It should be noted that the concepts of “tribe” and “clan” are Western and not emic in the African context.
agriculturalists. Through history the ruling class in Karagwe mainly came from the Bachwezi, Bahima and the Bahinda dynasties. The Mukama held absolute power and during the main part of the 16th, 17th and the 18th centuries, the Mukama of Karagwe was the strongest among the Buhaya-kings. In Buhaya, the king had the right to give land to his subordinates through the *nyarubanja*-system.\(^{20}\) This land tenure-system was, according to Hydén (1968), never practised in Karagwe for varied reasons.\(^{21}\) In Karagwe the ruling Hima got their tribute through the king, hence they did not mix with the rest of the population (the Bairu) but lived in secluded communities. Thus the Hima in Karagwe were endogamous, contrary to the other clans. The Mukama also inherited land in the case where a man left no male heir when he died. This included the inheritance of wives and children.

One important factor for the absolute power of Mukama was the divine powers he was accredited. Thus the arrival of missionaries and colonisers soon undermined the power of the Bakama (plural of Mukama). With new religious influences and new ways for advancement for people, the power of the Bakama, who were often very despotic,\(^{22}\) declined. The introduction of coffee-plants of the Arabica type as a cash crop among the peasants further undermined the king’s power.\(^{23}\) Peasants who had earlier been relying on the Mukama for their well-being now got new ways to control their lives. After independence the kings in Tanzania lost their political power.

Today the households are organised progressively from small to large administrative units. The lowest level is the *kaya*, the homestead, which usually has a male as head. These homes are organised in *nyumba-kumi*, ‘ten-cells’, groups of ten houses, an organisation introduced by the Nyerere-government after independence. Each group elects its *balodzi*, representative for the *kitongoji* which belongs to a *kijiji*, ‘village’. In each *kijiji*, a chair person and a board is elected and a *katibu*, a secretary, is appointed from the District office. A group of villages then form a *kata*, ‘ward’, also with its chair person and a board. These *kata* then group into *tarafa*, ‘divisions’ which in their turn form the *wilaya*, ‘districts’, of which Karagwe is one. As a district Karagwe, together with Muleba, Biharamulo, Ngara, Bukoba urban and Bukoba rural form the region, *Mkoa wa Kagera*, with Bukoba as the administrative centre. Each region elects its own *Mbunge*, the representative of the region in the Parliament.

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20 A type of land tenure system practised in the area.
21 Hydén gives the following reason: Karagwe had a sparse population and plenty of pasture, hence cattle was the only valuable asset for the ruling class, the Hima, there.
22 As one example of this may be mentioned Ndagara, who is said to have been buried with fifty cows and five living maids (Ford & Hall, 1947, and oral sources) and Kalemera who is said to have had many of his subjects killed only because he wanted to see a whole mountainside flowing with blood. (According to John Bosco at the University of Dar-es-Salaam (oral communication) the blood was made to construct a river.)
23 Traditionally coffee of the Robusta-type had been planted.
The political leaders on a local level are usually important persons with great influence on life in the villages. When problems arise, for example in the family or between school and parents, the first persons to be contacted are usually the chairpersons of the kitongoji and the village.

3.2 History – The great past of the Karagwe kingdom

Buhaya had a centralised government as early as in the 15th century (Atieno Odhiambo, Ouso & Williams, 1977; Katoke, 1973; Ishumi, 1980) and as in the neighbouring areas Buganda and Rwanda, strong royal traditions with divine royalties had developed in Buhaya. Black-smithering and the production of iron-tools have been important in the area for more than 1000 years.\(^{24}\) The Mukama, the king of Karagwe, held a strong position both inside Karagwe and in the whole region. He was said to hold divine powers and the stories about the magic wonders performed by different Bakama are still in a vivid memory among the inhabitants. Karagwe was the dominant kingdom in Buhaya and also had great influence on the surrounding areas in Buganda and Rwanda during the 16\(^{th}\), 17\(^{th}\) and the 18\(^{th}\) century (Taylor, 1962; Katoke, 1973). There was a decline in the kingdom’s power during the 19\(^{th}\) century, according to Katoke, due, among other things, to internal rivalry between the heirs of the power, the sons of the Bakama. Other reasons for the decline of Karagwe and the Banyambo during the 19\(^{th}\) century were probably that the rinderpest, that was rife among the cattle, caused the open pasture land to turn into bush land which lead to an increased number of tse-tse flies. In the same time people were affected by sandflies and smallpox (Carlsson, 1989). According to Ford and Hall (1947) the sandflies had arrived with the trade caravans from the West (arranged by the European colonisers) and the rinderpest probably from Italy through Somalia.

During the 19\(^{th}\) century Karagwe was an important staging point in the trade from the coastal region into Buganda and the hinterland. This trade was traditionally in the hands of the Wanyamwezi and the Wasumbwa but was later overtaken by the Arabs\(^{25}\) (Atieno Odhiambo et al., 1977; Katoke, 1973). According to Katoke, the Wanyamwezi and the Wasumbwa reached Karagwe towards the end of the 18\(^{th}\) century and the Arabs in the end of the 1830s or the early 1840s. Still in the 1890s there were Wanyamwezi\(^{26}\) and Wasumbwa traders acting as agents for the Arabs (Katoke, 1973). The Arab trade had a determining influence on the whole of East Africa. The Arabs built their strong-hold in Kafuro, near Bweranyange, the king’s court (Carlson, 1989). The traders brought with them not only goods but also a new way of thinking - Islam. Although Islam

\(^{24}\) According to Schmidt (1997) there was an early iron-age in Buhaya round 600 BC and a later iron-age from 1500 AD. Whether this first iron-age also existed in Karagwe is not known.

\(^{25}\) Arabs here refers to Swahili-speaking people from the coast.

\(^{26}\) Swahili-prefixes will be used in the text except for people and languages in the region of Kagera and the bordering areas in Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi for which local names will be used.
was never missionised, many East-Africans, mainly young people, saw it as a way to prosperity. Hydén also credits the spread of Islam in Buhaya to the fact that the Arabs lived among the locals and chose wives from among them and also to the fact that they did not practise any discrimination on grounds of race, colour, class or birth (as compared with the Bakama). The contact between traders from the coast and people speaking different languages lead to the spread of Swahili inland. With the coming of Islam, Muslim education in the form of Madrasa, Qur’an schools, was introduced. This started as early as in the ninth century at the coast where Islam came to be very dominant in many places in East Africa. However Islam never became dominant in Karagwe. Hydén estimated that in 1957, 12.8 % of the Bahaya were Muslims, 46.7 % were Catholics, 11.2 % Protestants and 28.1 Pagan\(^27\) (Hydén, 1968: 71). Katoke gives the following reasons why only a minority of the people in Karagwe converted to Islam:

- The Arabs remained in secluded communities in the trade centres.
- None of the Bakama converted to Islam.
- The Arabs were traders and not missionaries.
- Because of the slave trade the Banyambo did not see any advantage in converting.
- The tradition of circumcision among the Muslims did not attract the Banyambo.\(^{28}\)

(Katoke, 1973: 26)

Today the Muslims in Karagwe live mainly in the centers of Kayanga, Omurushaka, Nkwenda and Nyaishozi.

Wars between rivaling Bakama and the Arab trade are the main reasons why the Banyambo are actually quite a mix of people. Today Banyambo also include descendants from people involved in the trade, apart from the Arabs also members from tribes such as Wanyamwezi, Wasumbwa, Bazinza, Barundi, Banyarwanda,\(^{29}\) Banyankole, Baganda and Banyoro (Katoke, 1973). Hence in fact the seemingly homogenous group of Banyambo is actually a conglomerate created by its place in the history of rivaling kings and trade.

In the middle of the 19th century\(^{30}\) explorers from Europe such as Livingstone, Burton, Speke and Stanley passed through East Africa. Around the turn of the

\(^{27}\) Hydén uses “Pagan” for the believers of traditional religions.

\(^{28}\) Note that Muslim circumcision is only applied to men. Female circumcision is not a Muslim tradition but a tradition practiced in some parts of Africa, though not in Karagwe. According to Katoke, the very act of cutting and separating any part of the human body is connected with witch-craft among the Banyambo. Compare however the invention of extracting “nylon-teeth” from babies, which according to Weiss (1996) was introduced as late as in the 1990s in Buhaya but which I myself found was practised already in 1989 when I visited Ndolage in Ihangiro, south from Bukoba town.

\(^{29}\) The late Katoke, who was himself a Munyambo, uses the names Barundi and Banyarwanda for the people from what is now Burundi and Rwanda respectively, instead of the more common tribal names Tutsi and Hutu although these latter are used in Karagwe today. We should remember here that many tribal names were given by the invaders from West.

\(^{30}\) 1861 according to Seitel (1972).
century the first Christian missionaries arrived, and following that the power of the Bakama declined even more. In 1915 the Germans killed Ntare VII, the heir of the throne in Karagwe, who was hanged in front of the post office in Bukoba (Ford & Hall, 1947; Hydén, 1968). In 1916 the British government raided the area and took charge over Buhaya, three years before the whole Tanganyika was declared a British mandated territory and a trusteeship country. One of the first things the British did was to abandon the traditional Muteko-schools, where the Mukama had trained and recruited soldiers and servants (Cory & Hartnoll, 1945; Hydén, 1968; Katoke, 1973; Larsson, 1991). They also abandoned the tradition of the Bazaana, the wives of the Mukama who were thought of as “knowers”, i.e. having deep knowledge in Haya culture and language. The Bazaana had knowledge of proverbs and figurative language and they traditionally endured low status and low social esteem (Dauer, 1984).

After the killing of Ntare and the abolition of the Muteko-schools, the power of the Bakama never returned to its former height. Griffith recognises the importance of the disappearance of the Muteko: “Tribal authority, courtesy and manliness have suffered owing to their disappearance” (Griffith, 1936: 80). The new rulers appointed the heir that best suited their wishes and after the last Mukama, Ruhinda II, no new king has been appointed. The place where the Bakama held their court and where the hereditary relics were kept, Bweranyange, is today only a slope covered with grass and bushes. The small museum that was established on the place has been destroyed by a fire and no one has been able to raise enough funds to rebuild it.

It is obvious that colonialism had a profound influence on development in Karagwe, as in other places, and that the European impact on Africa as a whole has been enormous even after independence. Usually when discussing the effects of colonialism in Buhaya, the focus is on political and economic effects (Katoke, 1973; Hydén, 1968) and of course the injustice of colonial powers governing foreign countries and gaining in raw material production in colonialised areas is unquestionable. However Western colonial impact on cultural life, and the people’s ethos, thinking and religion is not focussed on as often. Every foreign influence affects culture but education and language influence acculturation perhaps more indirectly but nonetheless not less effectively. Tibazarwa stresses the European impact on African ethos and life:

> Through the colonial regime, the cultural base of the African was subjected to an unprecedented influence by imposing on it totally alien political systems as well as foreign educational methods, religious forms and an even extraneous self-image. Inculcating the new way of life into the natives was the primary task of the colonial administration, which tried hard to transform (civilize) the natives by eradicating their traditional culture. (Tibazarwa, 1994: 103)

Carlson (1989) states for Buhaya that there was a profound transformation in ethos from valuing the traditional order to valuing Western commodities, styles of living and cosmologies in Buhaya during the colonial period. Literacy and
Christianity were imposed on people, fused together with a Western type of schooled education. Traditional religion in Buhaya can be described as animist in essence with Wamara as the greatest spirit. The greatest spirit in Karagwe was Kutonda.\(^{31}\) The Banyambo lived, as in most societies in pre-colonial Africa, in the social milieu and the economic system of the clan and the tribe. Identity was linked with loyalty and affiliation with the clan/tribe. We shall see later that the colonial system affected not only how literacy came to be used but also methods used in education and language attitudes as a whole.

In 1961 Tanganyika became independent under the leadership of TANU, Tanganyika African National Union, and Julius Kambarage Nyerere who became the new nation’s first prime minister and subsequently president. Through a union between Tanganyika and Zanzibar the Republic of Tanzania was created in 1964. As a result of social progress, education and political commitment, Bahaya came to be fairly well represented in the political and civil leadership of the new state, together with the Chagga from the slopes of Kilimanjaro.

In 1978 Idi Amin in Uganda aggressively seized a part of Kagera, which was then called West Lake Region. Tanzanian forces managed to force the Ugandan troops to leave the area and to re-establish the border between Uganda and Tanzania.

During the second half of the 20\(^{th}\) century, wars in Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi made Karagwe the refuge for numbers of refugees. Particularly during the 1980s and the 1990s many refugees arrived from the ruthless civil wars in Rwanda and Burundi. Big refugee camps were opened in Omukaliro, Kyabelisa, Kagenyi and Rwabwere. Most of the Rwandan refugees were returned in the end of the 1990s but many escaped re-patriation and people are still crossing the borders in both directions. This flood of refugees affected Karagwe in many ways. The increase in inhabitants, about 400,000 refugees are estimated to have invaded Karagwe during the 1980s and 1990s,\(^{32}\) was an extra strain on the water and wood resources. New opportunities for wage earning for educated people in the aid-sector drained some sectors of qualified people, such as the health sector, and new markets for building materials appeared. New land was cultivated and among the refugees were many skilled building workers who could be hired for low wages. After the refugees’ return young families are settling on the newly cultivated land, both Banyambo and immigrants from other areas of Tanzania. A problem is that bandits and robbers, what the Banyambo assume are former Rwandan soldiers or refugees, keep raiding the area. Today this is another reason why people prefer to live on the hills where the possibilities for robbers to hide are limited.

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\(^{31}\) According to John Bosco there were other spirits as well, such as spirits of the clans, Kazoba, the spirit of the sun, moon and stars, and Nyakalemba, the female spirit of agriculture.

\(^{32}\) According to the District Planning Officer, 2003 (oral communication). Compare the number with the settled population according to the 2002 census, 425,576 persons.
3.3 The history of education in Karagwe

3.3.1 Before colonisation

In East Africa education was traditionally mainly a matter for the family and the community. Children were taught most of what they needed to know in the extended family. The important content of this education was to respect the elders, to behave according to the social rules, do important work in the home such as to cook, collect water and firewood, take care of cattle and to look after smaller children. Small children were mainly taught by elder siblings and grandparents, who even today are the main care-takers of small children. This was also traditionally the case in Karagwe, where the inhabitants were mainly pastoralists and agriculturalists with black-smithering as an important industry in the area, and today the situation is very much the same. However parallel to the informal education there existed in Buhaya an organisation for formal education of young boys, the earlier mentioned Muteko-schools. The educationalist Abel G Ishumi, in his book on the history of Kiziba (1980), which was a kingdom to the east of Karagwe and is now included in the Kagera district (see map 1), divides traditional education in Kiziba in the following way:

(a) the more general, inclusive and non-formal process of domestic-cum-tribal education, and
(b) the more specific, specialised and more selective process of formal education outside the home, in a “school” environment (Ishumi, 1980: 59)

What Ishumi says about education in Kiziba seems to hold true also for Karagwe. In the Muteko-schools, boys of 10-12 years of age spent some months every year learning things such as warfare skills, obedience, good manners, rites and tradition together with how to treat the Mukama. Thus the Muteko-schools were important for creating and keeping values of community among the people. Apart from practical and social knowledge such as military training, knowledge of traditional rites, proper behaviour and sports, the boys also learned artistic hut-building (Ford & Hall, 1947). According to Hydén (1968) approximately 50% of the boys where said to have “passed” the training. This training was also important for recruiting servants for the kings’ court.

The non-formal education was largely in the hands of parents, even though it was also common that children lived for an extended period in the house of their grand parents or other relatives. In this education children were trained in specific skills and proper social habits. Children were given simple and systematic instruction on basic skills such as how to fetch water and fire-wood, how to spread reed-mats for drying coffee-beans in the sun-shine and how to peel bananas for cooking, an important skill for a female Munyambo. They were also trained in domestic etiquette such as toilet habits, proper language and behaviour
towards elders. Teaching methods mentioned by Ishumi were simple oughts and ought-nots, technical instruction and a graded system of sanction (Ishumi, 1980).

As the child grew older the tasks they learnt took a more sexual bias. Thus girls were taught the skills necessary for a house-wife, by their mothers and other female relatives. One important skill for women in Karagwe was *okushemeza*,³³ ‘to make something pleasing/beautiful’. This could traditionally be in the form of sewing, weaving, making bead-work or pottery or using different types of cosmetics. In the training of an adolescent girl is also included the period she is “kept inside”³⁴ before and after the wedding, a tradition still practised in most families. During a period before the wedding the girl traditionally stays at home and is taught knowledge necessary for a wife, such as how to please her husband and how to behave when she moves in with his extended family, which is not of the same clan as herself. During the first period of married life the *mugole*, ‘the newly wedded bride’, is traditionally “kept inside” for a period which may last up to one or two years. During this period she is not supposed to be seen by anyone but the females attending her, usually her mother- and sisters-in-law. She is expected not to engage in work in the house-hold but to stay in her room. This way she is introduced to life in her new family.

Young boys learned to take the goats to pasture. This they traditionally did in groups and while looking after the animals they could exercise the use of artistic and ambiguous speech. Adolescent boys were taught the wisdom of courtship and married life, necessary for life as a husband, by their fathers and other male relatives. Ishumi (1980) stresses the importance for a man to learn to respect relatives and neighbours for example by returning debts, not committing adultery to married women, making home visits to relatives and neighbours, using proper language and attending and fulfilling services at funerals. The boys also learned basic economic skills, which are important for Bahaya men. Shortly after marriage it was common for the newly wedded husband to leave his wife “inside” and go to find wealth, for example by trading or wage-earning. Ishumi stresses that the non-formal education at all levels was a dynamic whole in which “moral and character training, practical activity and training in oral-philosophical reasoning were inseparably intertwined” and that all members of the village, especially the elders, where involved in the education of the children (Ishumi, 1980: 62).

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³³ *Okushemeza* is the definite form of *kushemeza*. As English does not have definite forms of verbal nouns I have kept the definite affix, *o-* to keep the noun in the unmarked definite form.

³⁴ For the Bahaya, Seitel (1972) claims that the difference between “inside” and “outside” areas are important. This is similar to the Banyambo. The house and the area around it is divided into one private, “inside” area where women spend most of their time and one “outside” area where guests are received. The outside consists of the *mulyango*, the “sitting-room” and the area in front of the house while the inside is the women’s room, *isenje/ebiso/endugu*, the bedrooms, the kitchen house and the back yard between the house and the kitchen. The house typically has two entrance doors, the front door for guests and men and the back door for women, children and close friends.
Initiation rites, such as are common in many areas in Africa, do not seem to have been used in Karagwe. The Mutoko-schools may have fulfilled this task for the boys and the keeping inside of the bride for the girls. They may also have been practiced before the arriving of missionaries but were abandoned early. My informants have been very inconsistent on the question of the existence of initiation rites before colonisation.

That this was not a literal culture does not mean that there was no language training. Elaborate language was developed in children and adolescents in different ways. Tales were told by elders, commonly in the kitchen while food was cooking after sunset. Riddles were exchanged, mainly among children and adolescents. The popular ng’oma, where people squatted in a circle, clapping their hands and dancing to the drums, included both traditional and newly composed songs. Banyambo, as well as most Tanzanians, are skilled speakers and often take the chance to give speeches, both planned and spontaneous speeches. Speech was, and is still, flavoured with proverbs. On the whole artistic, sophisticated speech is held in high regard and ambiguous talk was used in different settings. Traditionally a group of men, gathered in the mulyango, would often use ambiguous speech to hide the meaning for male adolescents who were present. One of my elder informants remembers how his father would sometimes explain the hidden meanings for him afterwords. The Abazaana, the wives of the king, were said to be skilled poets and users of advanced language.

One special male speech act deserves more attention, echivugo, the self-praising. Every young man was expected to compose his own self-praising poem. This he would perform vividly, with a spear or bow in hand, acting forceful. His echivugo he would for example perform when posing in front of his parents-in-law. They could then send him away, arguing that it was not good enough. Then he would return and prepare himself more and return until his echivugo had been accepted. The following is an example of a self-praising, composed somewhere in the 1920s:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kamama nasura ubulwani</th>
<th>Kamama predicts fighting$^{35}$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Engoma ekaruga ahachoma</td>
<td>The root of the drum is iron</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rugangurana atura narwana</td>
<td>Rugangurana use to fight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nkeimuka nabeiru balwina buzale</td>
<td>I was raised in a civilised family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chibale bamutume Buganda</td>
<td>Let them send Chibale to Uganda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malele ngenda ngempungu</td>
<td>I, the eagle, I fly as the hawk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Akeiru keija umwihanawe</td>
<td>The poor man has come under the hot sun, saying:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$^{35}$ In the poem he praises himself as a civilised man, who does not like fighting, that is they should not be afraid of giving their daughter to him, who is fast like the hawk. He describes the hard work to find the bride and the bananas from the new plant and the milk are symbols for the bride and the thunder for the family. The drum and iron are strong ancient symbols for the king. A sisimisi is a very tiny ant. This echivugo was given by Muzee Joshua, and translated to me to Swahili by him and Mwalimu Martiale Kaburetane Mbehoma.
3.3.2 During foreign rule

Berlin of 1884 was effected through the sword and the bullet. But the night of the sword and the bullet was followed by the morning of the chalk and the blackboard. The psychological violence of the battlefield was followed by the psychological violence of the classroom. (Ngugi wa Thiong’o, 1986: 9)

Learning, for a colonial child, became a cerebral activity and not an emotionally felt experience. (ibid: 17)

In the middle of the 19th century explorers from Europe such as Livingstone, Burton, Speke and Stanley passed through East Africa and around the turn of the century the first Christian missionaries arrived, determined to “civilise and christianise the savages”. The main tool for the missionaries in their civilising task was to introduce literacy. They built schools where they started to teach children to read the religious texts.

In order for the Protestant church to function, it needs a native clergy that is held in respect by the population as well as lay persons capable of administrating the church. It is impossible to achieve either of these until the entire population have reached a certain minimum educational level. It is impossible to reach this level without elementary schools. Therefore, it is impossible to Christianize a people today without schools. (Gustav Warneck in Scanlon, 1964: 30)

One important task for the early missionaries was to write local languages down. Swahili, the lingua franca of East Africa, had already been written for centuries in Arabic script but missionaries such as Steere and Madan used the Roman script to write its grammar and compile dictionaries. In Buhaya the New Testament was translated into Ruhaya36 and this translation is still used in many homes parallel with the Swahili version.

There were certain similarities between colonial education and mission. Although the missionaries strove to win African souls for Christ through purely religious education, while the colonialist37 education was “a diluted semi-secular

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36 Runyambo is close enough to Ruhaya to make the Banyambo able to read Ruhaya without difficulty.
37 Here I use “colonialist” for both the Germans and the British although Tanzania was not formally a British colony.
education which emphasised the role of the school in the continued furtherance of colonial interests in Africa” (Fafunwa, 1982: 21) they all aimed at “civilising” the inhabitants away from African culture and world-view. The colonialists also aimed at colonial interests such as access to natural resources and a cheap and obedient working-force. Although these were not the explicit tasks of the missionaries, it was still not at all in conflict with their mission. An example of how the German colonialists could express their task, as they saw it, in the beginning of the 20th century, we find in Martin Schlunk:

It is unavoidable that in our African colonies, where the new and the old meet, the natives grasp eagerly for our techniques. In short, they are becoming civilized. It is indeed fortunate that they do not turn out to be caricatures of civilization, as is so often the case in British colonies. But this outward process of civilization, which manifests in the speaking of German, the wearing of European clothes, and similar things, is not enough. The true process of civilization has to be internalized if it is to be true. Rather it must be to bring up a new generation that will have accepted the new civilization internally as well as externally. (Martin Schlunk, 1914, in Scanlon, 1964: 32)

It is not quite clear what the response was from the Banyambo to colonial and missionary education. Today schooled education is given high value among the Banyambo in general. Schooling and development are usually perceived as positively intertwined. However one may assume that initially there was great resistance from the locals. Many elderly persons depict vividly how their parents prevented them from going to school or joining religious meetings. 38 This restraining could be quite forceful, with children running off from jobs they were assigned to do, other children being locked in or being punished after having managed to escape to school. If one considers the patriarchal organisation of the Banyambo this seems very plausible. For Banyambo men, wives and children were traditionally seen mainly as a working force (and are still so in some families). A man married women to have them working in his shamba,39 bringing food to the house and giving him children. He wanted to have children to extend his life power and to have more hands working for him. It is still the responsibility of wives and children to fetch water and fire-wood and to do the farming to feed the family. The more wives and children, the greater his prosperity. Boys are needed to look after the cattle. Thus it seems plausible that many fathers, and mothers, did not like sending their children to school “wasting time instead of doing domestic work”. This is confirmed by many elderly people.

With the Berlin conference and the Scramble for Africa, borders and new nations were constructed. Karagwe came to be on the Tanganyika side of the border while the kingdoms to the north came to be in Uganda and the kingdoms to the west in Rwanda and Burundi. From 1884 to 1919 the Germans ruled in

38 This is verified by Larsson (1991).
39 Shamba, plural mashamba, is Swahili for garden, field or plantation.
what was then German East Africa and in their schools they aimed to train local administrators and health servants.

The state is interested in establishing its power over young colonies. It wants to make them economically useful for the Fatherland and to tie them as much as possible to it. In order to accomplish this, a knowledge of the native languages is necessary. Also, a number of native civil servants are needed, with whom it is possible to communicate. The state also wants the great masses of the natives to reach a higher standard of living as well as to get some feeling of loyalty toward the mother country. (Martin Schlunk, 1914, in Scanlon, 1964: 34)

The German colonisers also organised some occupational training to get workmen to help them build railways. Obviously the missionary schools constituted a threat to the Muteko-schools and the Bakama, as the Muteko-schools not only trained the soldiers needed by the Mukama, but also constituted a cement in the kingdom by educating boys in traditional rites and etiquette. With the construction of missionary schools, the influence of the Muteko-schools in Buhaya had been weakened. According to Griffith (1936) many children preferred the missionary schools as the discipline there was not quite as severe and the Muteko-schools were abandoned in 1916 by the Brittish. He claims that the Muteko-schools existed until 1926 although their power had diminished (Cory & Hartnoll (1945) and some of my informants give the beginning of the 1930s).

In 1916 Britain took over the ruler-ship of Tanganyika as a result of the First World War (Carlsson, 1989). One of the first African movements in East Africa was Bantu Babendela (People of the Flag) which according to Dauer (1984) was constructed after the abolishment of Muteko. Bantu Babendela mainly attracted young men and was involved in riots opposing the colonial power. When Bantu Babendela was abandoned, Bukoba Buhaya Union was created in 1924. This other organisation worked to encourage literacy education and coffee growing (Atieno-Odhiambo et al., 1977) and argued for the question of female inheritance rights and schooling for girls (Dauer, 1984).

Widespread development of a Western type of education and schooling came to be essential in British Government colonies which lead to the organisation of mass education in its colonies. Lene Buchert, in her study of the history of education in Tanzania, shows how educational policies have been formulated in Tanzania (Buchert, 1994). She states that the underlying assumption for the formulation of goals for this mass education during foreign rule was the assumption that it was natural that the Africans should strive for the British type of democracy. During the 1950s there was an emphasis on child literacy while the emphasis on higher education for Africans and adult education was limited. She identifies two main directions for education policy during foreign rule in Tanzania: Education for Adaptation and Education for Modernisation (Buchert, 1994). During British colonial rule the second policy was applied in education for Europeans, Indians and a few, selected Africans such as the sons of the
traditional kings, who needed education for the implementation of the policy of indirect rule, while the first type was for the majority, that is the rest of the Africans. After the Second World War mass education, where modern ideas were mixed with traditional ways of living, was given an impetus. Bukoba, the largest town in Buhaya, was among the first places in Tanzania where mass education was organised. The educational plans were “generally more an interpretation of local needs by the British authority than formulated needs of the local people” (Buchert, 1994: 72). According to Brock-Utne “education was used as an ideological tool to create feelings of inferiority in Africans, to create dependence on white people, and to spread the thinking, ideas, and concepts of the ’master’ race” (Brock-Utne, 2000: 19).

After independence the critique against the education system created by the colonialists was expressed among others by Julius Nyerere, the first president of Tanzania:

"The educational system introduced into Tanzania by the colonialists was modelled on the British system, but with even heavier emphasis on subservient attitudes and on white-collar skills. Inevitably, too, it was based on assumptions of colonialist and capitalist society. It emphasized and encouraged the individualist instincts of mankind, instead of his co-operative instincts. It led to the possession of individual material wealth being a major criterion of social merit and worth [...] Colonial education in this country was therefore not transmitting the values and knowledge of Tanzanian society from one generation to the next; it was a deliberate attempt to change those values and to replace traditional knowledge from a different society [...] The independent state of Tanzania in fact inherited a system of education which was in many respects both inadequate and inappropriate for the new state. (Nyerere, 1968: 269)

Zakayo J Mpogolo, one of the organisers of adult literacy campaigns in Tanzania after independence, concludes that:

the type of education offered during the colonial era was paternalistic and [...] it was European oriented, elitist in nature and exploitative in result. It was a kind of education which tended to create social stratification. It was neither intended for human development nor the total liberation of man. The other Cumulative (Sic!) effects of the educational experience were the undermining of African culture and the adoption of values of an alien culture. The people lost their confidence because subservient attitudes were inculcated in them. (Mpogolo, 1980: 9)

3.3.3 1961–1980

When the white man came to Africa he had the Bible and we had the land. And now? We have the Bible and he has the land. (Jomo Kenyatta, the first president of Kenya, cited in Mazrui, 1996: 5)

In all, in hardly one generation after independence, the African fabric had changed almost as it did during the whole 100 year period following the Berlin Conference. (Tibazarwa, 1994: 102)
Following the independence in 1961-1964 there was a great overturn in school politics in Tanzania. During a conference arranged in Addis Ababa in 1961 by UNESCO and UNECA, Tanganyika and Zanzibar together with thirty-five other African states and four European met to discuss education in Africa. The conference only discussed formal schooling of the type introduced by the colonial powers and the report from that conference has had a great influence on the development of education in Africa. Even though the relevance of schooling in Africa seems to have been important during the conference it is clear that increasing quantity in education came to achieve priority over quality and relevance in the newly independent states (Brock-Utne, 2000: 115). Initially the importance of academic skills in schools was stressed in Tanzania, what Buchert calls *Education for Manpower Development* (Buchert, 1994: 93). Now was the chance for the children of Tanzania to get access to the type of schooling which they had been denied! However, after the Arusha Declaration of 1967, where the outlines for an egalitarian system were laid down, there was a shift in policy. Vocational skills were reintroduced and the focus in schooling came to be more on agriculture and villages as this was an important base for the new state’s economy. Three important steps were to abandon racial segregation in education, to increase the number of enrolled pupils and to “Tanzanianise” the education. One of the prominent persons in this process was of course the former freedom fighter and the first president of the Tanzanian Republic, the late Julius Kambarage Nyerere. He was, and still is, in Tanzania often referred to as “Mwalimu”, the teacher. Being a teacher by profession he saw to it that the policy was focused on education. In an important and often cited speech, Nyerere argued that:

> [...] people can not be developed; they can only develop themselves. Man develops himself by what he does, by making his own decisions, by increasing his own knowledge and ability, and by his full participation as an equal in the life of the community he lives in [...] a man is developing himself when he improves his education on whatever he learns about which can (Sic!) help understand the environment we live in, and the manner in which we can change and use his environment in order to improve ourselves. (Nyerere in Mpogolo, 1980: 27)

Education in the independent Tanzania was to be geared towards building the new nation on *Kujitegemea na Ujamaa*, that is Self-Reliance and the type of African Socialism, *Ujamaa*, advocated by Nyerere. Education for Self-reliance meant that schools were to rely more on themselves economically. The whole country was mobilised to eradicate illiteracy, to provide universal primary education and to change the content of the inherited educational system (Nyerere, 1968). The government was determined to free itself from the yoke of colonialism. Mass education was seen as a channel to national cohesion by creating mass support for the national politico-economic goals and the common socio-cultural outlook. Education for Self-Reliance was implemented uniformly
across the country and there seems to have been little local influence on content and methods used in the schools even though, according to Mpogolo, attempts were made to diversify the curriculum according to regional and local needs (Mpogolo, 1985). One may however doubt whether this diversification was ever realised. Many sources, including my own observations, gives the impression of great uniformity in the implementation of the curriculum in different areas.

The determination and the effort put into education in the new state of Tanzania was impressive. The young state had high goals for the future and 1970 was declared the Nation’s Adult Education Year with a massive effort on Literacy campaigns for adult illiterates and the aim to eradicate illiteracy in the country to the end of 1975. Mpogolo (1985), who was one of the men in the forefront of these campaigns, states that they were a success. In 1962, 90 % of the Tanzanians over 10 years of age had been estimated to be illiterate and by the end of 1977 the illiteracy rate had decreased to 27 % (Mpogolo, 1985). In the adult education programme there was an early plan towards functional literacy as opposed to the traditional methods which had been used in Tanzanian schools up to then. Primers used dealt with topics relevant for the learners such as farming, house-keeping, health care and nutrition. The literacy campaigns, which mainly consisted of adult literacy classes with trained teachers, were accompanied by other campaigns in order to create a literacy environment. These activities were, among others, education on radio, literacy campaigns in the newspapers, songs and poems about literacy, the publishing of rural newspapers, the establishing of rural libraries, folk development colleges together with competitions between writers, jazz-bands, regions and literacy classes.

A strong interest in private education had developed among the relative well-to-do Bahaya and Chagga. This came to represent a force against Education for Self-Reliance with its orientation towards relevant education for the rural sector (Buchert, 1994). The élite among the Bahaya, as well as among the Chagga, wanted access to the well-paid jobs. Many children of the better-off in Buhaya were sent to relatives or boarding schools in Uganda to attend private education both at primary and secondary level. It should be remembered that the borders between Karagwe and Uganda were not more than a century old and were drawn for reasons other than ethnicity and culture. For many of the Bahaya, Uganda and Rwanda are much closer than for example the Tanzanian coast, not only geographically but also linguistically and ethnically. In some aspects Kampala is

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40 According to Carr-Hill et al. (1991) adult literacy increased from 17% in 1960 to 79 % in 1980 in Tanzania.

41 This seem traditionally to have been the rule for the heir of the Mukama. According to local sources he was sent to Uganda at an early age to be brought up by relatives. “Can a woman have two husbands? No, and so the king could also not have a rival so close. That is why his heir had to move to Uganda and not to return before the death of his father?”, as one of my informants argued.
more of a capital for them than Dar-es-Salaam. On the other hand there are nowadays also strong links to Dar-es-Salaam for the Bahaya, as they, together with the Chagga and the Zanzibari, are well-represented in both the government and central administration.

Following this massive effort on adult education there was a strong concentration on education for children through primary schools. With small resources and without enough funds the plan for enrolment was even surpassed. Primary school education was made universal in November 1977 and both enrolment and attendance was made compulsory. However, due to small resources the quality of primary education was low. There was a general lack of basic resources such as permanent school-buildings, school desks, teaching aids and teacher training. Standard seven or eight leavers could attain a course of a few years and become employed as teachers (so called “Grade C teachers”). Omari et al. (1983) refer to statistics for enrolment showing that in the West Lake region (Buhaya) the number of pupils enrolled in standard one in 1969 was 10,810. In 1974 the target was to reach an enrolment of 12,909 pupils, while the actual number of pupils enrolled was 15,706 which is remarkable when available resources are taken into account. In the region 27,875 pupils were enrolled in standard one in 1976, which is nearly the double compared to two years earlier and an increase of nearly 170% compared to 1969. However, we might get a hint of the quality of the education if we look at the number of pupils enrolled in standard four in 1979, when those who began in standard one in 1976 should have reached that level, and we find that the number of pupils enrolled had diminished. Now there remained only 23,938, which is a decrease of about 17% (4837 pupils).

3.3.4 1980–2000

What has happened in the 1980s and the 1990s in the educational sector in Africa is described by Brock-Utne as re-colonisation by the West and a serious threat to the intellectual gains of Africa (Brock-Utne, 2000). She puts the blame for this mainly on two things that took place on the international arena; the Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) which were forced on loan-dependent countries such as Tanzania by the World Bank and IMF in the mid 1980s, and the Conference on Education for All in Jomtien in Thailand in 1990 (EFA). She argues that the policies taken by the World Bank following SAP concerning education in the South have forced the governments in the loan-taking countries

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42 The capital of Tanzania is formally Dodoma but in reality Dar-es-Salaam is the city where most of the central bureaucracy and the trade centre of Tanzania is located.

43 There is a habit among those Bahaya who have moved to towns such as Dar-es-Salaam and become employed in the higher sector, that they often build a house on the home-shamba to which they return when they retire. This helps to build strong ties between the Bahaya and for example Dar-es-Salaam. This habit holds true also for the Banyambo.

44 International Monetary Fund
in a very undemocratic manner to act as dictators over their own people and that this has seriously affected the social sector as a whole and the educational sector in particular in these countries (Brock-Utne, 2000: 109, see also Buchert, 1994). Brock-Utne cites the World Bank:

The safest investment in educational quality in most countries is to make sure that there are adequate books and supplies. These are effective in raising test scores, and almost, invariably, have been under-invested in relative to teachers. [...] The following kinds of investment are unlikely to have any noticeable effect on primary school quality despite their potentially high cost: reducing class size, providing primary teachers (Sic!) with more than a general secondary education, providing teachers with more than minimal exposure to pedagogical theory. (Educational Policies for Sub-Saharan Africa, World Bank, 1988: 57, in Brock-Utne, 2000: 48-49)

Beyond doubt, a concentration on basic resources will have positive effects in Tanzanian schools in the short term, as the lack of material is indisputable. However, arguments that reducing class size and teacher training is not effective for countries such as Tanzania are remarkable when actual class size and the actual situation for teacher training in Tanzania is taken into account. This will be discussed further in chapter 4.

Brock-Utne also scrutinises the document from Jomtien “Education For All” (EFA) and argues that EFA is usually understood by the West as Primary Education and Universal Education but that in the West there is often an assumption of equality between Universal Education and Western education built on Western values and a Western world-view (Brock-Utne, 2000: 11). She refers to Odora-Hoppers who argues that the phenomenon of universal access to education is taken as a “neutral, ethically disinterested concern without any question being asked about universal access into what type of education” (Odora-Hoppers, 1998: 2). Decrease in the resources for education on primary, secondary and tertiary level and the introduction of school-fees on all school levels, with a following decrease in number of students enrolled, is a concrete result together with stronger dependence on Western types of education (see also Buchert, 1994: 169). Buchert also argues that the result of the SAPs and EFA is a shift from a policy of equality in Education for Self-Reliance to a policy of quality. The former policy, which stressed attitude formation, stimulation of socio-cultural goals of co-operation and social commitment, social equality and adult literacy, is played down. Buchert also states that EFA has been implemented irrespective of local differences in different countries (1994). The Tanzanian policy for education of the 1960s and the 1970s have been forced to give way to the adaptation of Western ideas of Education. Thus, Brock-Utne argues, “Education For All becomes Schooling for Some – schooling in Western knowledge” (2000: 285).
3.4 Schooled education in Karagwe today

The type of local and traditional education mentioned in 3.3.1 can also be observed in homes today. Small children are for example taught to fetch water by carrying it on their heads from early years. They climb the hills together with their mothers and elder siblings carrying small bottles or cups on their heads. Thus they learn to fetch water and carry it on their heads by actually doing it in its context. Many of my informants explained to me how they had been taught and trained in different duties in the home this way. A parent, relative or elder sibling had showed them how to do and the task had usually been simplified. An example of how a child can learn by watching, listening and imitating is given us by one of my informants:

**Petronia:** About my learning I kept close to my mother because I did not like to play around so much, so I went to my mother in the kitchen. Thus she taught me this way slowly, first of all, before I knew how to cook, I was taught to peel bananas first, thus I was taught completely. Mother went and bought a knife and she said: This is your knife. So whenever I am going to start to peel we will be together and you take a banana and you start to peel. And whenever you start to learn to peel you find it difficult, it is difficult. Because you only take the knife like this and you find you have already made a mistake. [...]  
**Interviewer:** When you made a mistake ... what did she do?  
**Petronia:** Mother, when I made a mistake she did neither insult nor tease me, instead she showed: You have made a mistake, do like this. Slowly but she did not hit me, nor did she insult me, no she showed me step by step, after some time I learned.45

This education is contextual and the methods can be summarised as learning through experience. Children look, listen and imitate to learn. The action is then repeated. The learning is holistic and contextual. Children practice the action in a holistic way, simplified and in its context. Children acquire skills in “a dynamic whole” (Ishumi, 1980) while being socialised into Nyambo-life.

Today, as in the ancient past, there are two types of education in Karagwe; formal and informal. The society has changed from being a society relying on oral communication for all communication to a society where both literacy and orality exist side by side in many different ways. Where previously only boys were sent to school, and only for a few months, today all children are supposed to spend at least eight years in school, seven years in the compulsory primary school and one year in pre-school. Even if the enrolment rates have been decreasing during the 1990s, the total time spent in school by children has increased enormously. Schooling of the Western type, based on Western ontology and epistemology, has replaced the traditional type of schooling based on local perceptions. Western perceptions of formal education, based on “the three Rs” (Reading, Writing and Arithmetic), has replaced military training and

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45 All quotations from local informants are from interviews or conversations conducted in Swahili when nothing else is mentioned. The translations are made by the author. Names of informants are fictitious, as are names of schools and villages.
education in traditional world views. In a simplified way you can say that literacy has come to be the hub around which the “new, modern and Western” is circulating.

3.4.1 The school system

The school system in Tanzania today is organised according to a model that resembles the British system. After one preparatory year in chekechea (preschool), also called awali (the beginning), children join the primary school, which is compulsory and covers standard one to seven. In standard 7 children write their final exams and following the results some of the children are selected for secondary school, which consists of form 1 to 4 (the English O-level) and form 5 to 6 (A-level). After form 6 there are two possibilities for higher studies, university or diploma studies. Form 4 leavers can choose between different colleges, such as teacher training college or nursing training college, and form 3 leavers can continue at different vocational training centres. On secondary level and for vocational training, many private schools have been established. They are usually run by different non-governmental organisations, NGOs, religious associations or parent associations. These schools are not usually profitable but are instead a result of the interest among people to educate themselves and their children.

On primary school level most of the schools are governmental. In Karagwe there are 178 governmental primary schools and seven private (2003, oral communication with the District Education Officer). The private schools are English medium schools and were opened during the 1990s. In this study only the governmental schools are treated. The organisation of the primary schools is very stereotypical. Each school, nearly without exception, has one class in each standard, one to seven. One class is supposed to consist of maximally 50 pupils.

The organisation of each primary school follows a similar pattern. Every class has a classroom and a class-teacher. Standards 1 and 2 are taught by their class teachers, one teacher in each class. This teacher sometimes follows the class

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46 In 1999, 5,803 pupils from standard seven sat the exams, according to the statistics at the District Education Office in Karagwe. 313 of these were selected for governmental secondary schools, that is 0.5%. There is also a number of private secondary schools.
47 The tradition among rich Banyambo, to send their children for schooling to Uganda, is still practised. Children are sent either to stay with relatives in Uganda or to boarding schools. These schools are English medium schools and are considered of higher quality. One of the newly opened private English medium primary schools in Karagwe has mainly employed teachers from Uganda.
48 The classes are often formally divided into parallel streams, for example class 5a and 5b, but in reality they are usually taught in one group as one class with one teacher. Because of the high increase in numbers of pupils from 2001 the lower classes may have up to six parallel streams.
49 The problem with education for children of nomads will not be discussed. Parts of the Himas and Hinda-clans and many of the Rwandan refugees who have stayed in Tanzania are still nomads.
during these two years and usually teaches all their subjects. From standard 3 to 7 the class is taught by subject teachers. However, in all visited schools, this did not mean that teachers specialised in certain subjects. Instead each teacher taught most subjects but in different classes. This meant that the class could meet up to eight teachers in a day and that one teacher could teach up to six subjects and between 300 and 500 pupils a day. When I asked teachers and headmasters about the reason for this organisation, they did not seem to have been aware of any alternative. They told me that this was how they had been told to organise work at their school.

During the research period a new curriculum for primary school was introduced in Tanzania. However the implementation was slow and two years after its introduction no one at the visited schools had seen the curriculum. Neither was it accessible at the District Education Office nor at the Department for Education at the University of Dar-es-Salaam. The subjects taught in primary school following this new curriculum were: Swahili, Mathematics, English, Maarifa ya Jamii, (‘Social science’, which includes History and Geography, Science (Physics, Chemistry, and Biology) and Stadi za kazi (‘working skills’, consisting of: cultivation, Sayansi Kimu, ‘home science’, handicraft, drawing, music and sports). In some of the schools the local church also arranged non-compulsory religious education in the schools.

Generally the standards of the primary schools in Karagwe are slightly above the medium levels in Tanzania, due to the general economic standards of Karagwe. This counts also for the effort put into education and schooling.

3.4.2 The schools in the study

During the period of this study, 1999-2003, all schools in Karagwe were exposed to some changes. In 2001 directives demanded that all pupils of school-age be enrolled. In most schools this meant that the number of pupils in standard one increased dramatically, in some cases from 50 to over 200 pupils. At the same time demands on teachers were increased. Pupils in some classes, in most schools standards four and seven, were to be taught in two turns, half of the class in the morning and half in the afternoon, to make teaching more effective. In some schools these two classes were to be taught also on Saturdays. During this period great efforts were also put into building classrooms and establishing new schools. This also affected many teachers in different ways. Many new teachers were appointed during 2002 and many teachers were moved to new places and headmasters were exchanged. In some cases these changes were implemented from one day to another. Another factor that influenced primary schools during this period was that teachers with Grades B and C were demanded to upgrade their education to Grade A.

In this study, five of the primary schools in Karagwe have been followed more closely. Three of these schools are situated within ten kilometres from the business centre in Karagwe, one in a smaller centre and one is situated in a
settler-area. During the research two new schools were established in the area of these five schools.

The first school, Nyakalalo, is the school that is closest to the town, only four kilometres outside. This school is rural, as are all of the informant schools in this study, as it is situated in a typical rural village with scattered home-steads and shambas. But even if the majority of the parents are cultivators, relying on hoeing, there are also quite many parents working in one of the two towns. Compared to the other schools there are more well-educated parents and accordingly more parents with a relatively high standard of living, compared to the other schools. The school has about 400 pupils and 10 teachers, including the headmaster and his deputy. The pre-school has a trained teacher and there are two other pre-schools in the area, one run by a church and one private. The results in this school are slightly above the results in the other four schools. In 2001 a new school was opened in the area of Nyakalalo.

The second school, Rujoka primary school, is situated on a hill about eight kilometres from the town. Even here there are some well-educated parents and some parents working in town, but on the whole there are more families with low standards of living in this area. This school has seen a great variation in numbers of students. During the war in Rwanda many people found their refuge among relatives in this area. When they returned to Rwanda at the end of the 1990s, the higher classes were nearly emptied of pupils; in some years standards 6 and 7 had less than 10 pupils each. The school still has less than 300 pupils in seven classes who are taught by seven teachers. The pre-school has a trained teacher. The staff gives a solid impression. Many teachers have worked for more than ten years in the same school and some of them are very devoted to their work. The head-master was exchanged once during the study.

The third school, Bwikizo primary school, is also situated on a hilltop, about ten kilometres from the town. Even in this village there are parents working in town, even if they are fewer as the distance is longer. This school has been unchanged for a long time with many teachers who have been working here for many years who live in the area. The school has about 400 pupils and nine teachers including the headmaster. During the course of the study the headmaster was exchanged four times.

The fourth school, Mabare primary school, is one of two primary schools in a smaller town, about 30 kilometres away from the business centre. This school is apparently poorer than the three previous schools. The number of pupils is nearly 600 in seven classes and there are about ten teachers. The number of pupils is rapidly increasing and the teachers often express the need for more teachers being employed. During the study the headmaster was exchanged twice.

This town is quite close to the Rwandan boarder and thus the area was much affected by the refugees. When the refugees left, settlers moved in to the fields of the former refugees. Thus there are many poor parents and the number of

50 For ethic reasons the names of the schools are fictitious.
children is increasing. The school buildings are permanent but of poor standard, without concrete floors and plastering. The staff is quite stable and all teachers live in the area. The older teachers, the majority, only have Grade C or B certificates while the young teachers have Grade A.

The history of the last school, Kihumulo primary school, differs from the other four. This is by far the poorest of the schools, situated about 45 kilometres from the administrative centre and about fifteen kilometres from a small centre with shops and a dispensary. The school was established in the beginning of the 1990s, after the new settlements had made the distance to the previous primary school too far for many children. The headmaster of the old school was appointed new headmaster at Kihumulo and a new one was appointed at the original school. At the same time Kihumulo was established as a new village. The headmaster settled in the new village but many of the teachers had their homes in the previous village so they had to walk the ten kilometres every day to reach the school as there are no teacher houses at the school. The ratio of teachers to pupils is comparatively good, about 350 pupils and ten teachers. However the low numbers of pupils is due to the fact that the school used to admit only 55 children to standard one each year. Thus there are many children in the area who do not go to school. Orders from the district office to admit all children of school age resulted in the registration of 340 pupils in standard 1! That forced the parents and the headmaster to start to establish another school, eleven kilometres further away. The parents chose a suitable location and started to build the school. A non-permanent building being used as a church was borrowed as a classroom the first year.

The headmaster of Kihumulo is extremely enthusiastic and when the new school was established he was appointed headmaster there. The economic standard in the area is very low, compared to the other areas, and consequently so is the economic standard of the school. However the enthusiasm among the staff and parents is comparably high and this has enabled the school to be one of the most well-run of the schools I have visited in Karagwe.

3.4.3 The school premises

The primary schools in Karagwe are easily recognised. The school is usually situated centrally, near the main-road to make access easy. Each school has its own sign-post on the main road, with the name of the school properly painted. The main building is a long, low building and in front of it is a school yard with paths and lawns. The school yard is usually kept properly, the grass regularly cut and there are flower-borders and trees planted to give shadow. Each school also has its shamba where they grow trees, bananas, fruit and vegetables to strengthen the economy of the school and to teach modern methods of agriculture.

The school buildings are of two types, permanent and non-permanent. The permanent buildings are made of burnt bricks with tin roofs. Non-permanent buildings are usually made from a mixture of mud and chopped straw on a
wooden frame with a straw roof. There are also “buildings” consisting of a straw roof on poles but without protecting walls, so called *vibanda*. In non-permanent buildings I also include the cases where no building at all is used, for example when the shadow under a tree is used as a classroom. In the visited schools only permanent buildings were used as classrooms and toilets. Non-permanent buildings were only used for teacher houses, toilets and for classrooms for the pre-school in some cases.\(^{51}\)

The main building is a one-floor building, consisting of one classroom for each class, in all seven or eight, depending on whether there is a room for the pre-school. All visited schools had one office for the teachers and one for the headmaster. Most schools also had a small room functioning as library\(^{52}\) and a store room. In all schools but one the walls were plastered, the floor was made of concrete and there were doors to most of the rooms and shutters for most of the windows. All the schools had water jars or water tanks, which were filled by rainwater through gutters from the roofs. These jars and tanks had either been given to the school through a local NGO in which the schools were members or had been built by the parents. Usually children had access to the water but usually it was also used by teachers living in the teachers’ houses. In no school did the collected water cover its needs.

The schools are supposed to place houses at the disposal of the teachers. In the countryside this is very important as many teachers are not from the village. Four of these schools had houses of varied standards for some of the teachers. This was in one case non-permanent houses, in one case a small house divided in two made of bricks and with earth floor and in the two other cases permanent brick-houses. All teacher houses had tin-roofs. The fifth school was building a simple, non-permanent house for the teachers. This was the school in the poorest area where many of the teachers had more than ten kilometres to walk to school from their respective homes. The construction of a new school, eleven kilometres away, further stressed the problem. As all school buildings are the parents’ responsibility the outlook for teacher houses is not good.

### 3.4.4 The classroom

You enter the classroom at the front, the part where the blackboard is. This is also the part of the classroom where the teacher usually stands. The blackboard is very important, as there is a general lack of schoolbooks. In these schools there is

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\(^{51}\) Some of these schools used non-permanent buildings only a few years ago. One of them, the one in the poorest area, lacked a classroom for one of the classes for a period during the research. In this case the shadow under some trees functioned as a classroom. One of the criteria for choosing a school was that it was well conducted with eager teachers putting effort to work. Thus the standard of these school is slightly above the medium standard in Karagwe. From 2001 some schools had to use non-permanent classrooms again as the number of pupils increased.

\(^{52}\) During the research period some of the schools were involved in a book-reading project, *Tusome vitabu* (Let’s read books) financed by foreign donors.
one blackboard which is in fairly good condition in each classroom, except for classrooms in non-permanent buildings. In the poorest schools some classrooms lacked a blackboard only a few years ago. In front of the teacher are the pupils, sitting in rows. All classrooms in these five schools had desks for all pupils until the increase of number of pupils in 2001 and 2002, except for the children in pre-school. The wooden desks are benches and tables in one. One desk is designed for two children but usually used by three or four. The desks are of various heights but usually the size of the children do not fit the size of the desk. Usually the lower desks are in front and are used by successful pupils, while the less successful ones hide themselves in the back of the classroom. It is often impossible to read what is written on the black board from this position, and, naturally, it is difficult to follow the lesson. There are no backs on the benches but as they are put close to each other, children are able to lean against the desk behind. The pupils sit very close to each other, but this crowding is not only negative for the pupils. It also enables them to support each other in different ways without the teacher noticing it, for example when writing answers to questions or when someone lacks a pen or a note-book. In standard 1 and two pupils use pencils, while in the higher classes pupils use pens. Thus, in lower classes there is an additional reason for co-operation between the pupils, lending each other razor-blades to sharpen the pencils.

The pupils are supposed to bring one note-book each for each subject and a pen or a pencil. These they carry with them to school in the mornings, usually in plastic bags, and take home in the afternoon. As this is only one of the parents’ costs for keeping their children in school, others being school fees, school uniforms and various fund-raisings, there is generally a problem for the pupils that they lack pens and note-books and are often punished by the teachers for this. Thus it is in their interest not to show that they lack anything.

To the left and the right of the pupils there are windows, about eight to ten per classroom. These windows have frames and iron bars and in most of the schools also shutters. They give the pupils light, but not always enough. They also let the wind through which is comforting in the case it is hot but as the climate is sometimes quite chilly it also lets the cold in. For those children not having a sweater and shoes and socks this sometimes makes the temperature too low in the classroom. The comfort of sitting close together helps somewhat but this also helps to spread the flue which sometimes prevails. One problem with the shutters is that they often swing to and fro in the wind, making creaking noises, often accompanied by the squeaking of the numerous bats living under the tin roofs and the crows and jacks jumping on them. These noises are not too disturbing but when there is heavy rain, the rattle on the roof generally makes

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53 Infections of different types frequently spread among the pupils. In one of the poorest of the schools there also prevailed boils among the pupils. According to a doctor they spread among the pupils when they walked in the dewy long grass to school in the mornings. Some pupils were seriously affected.
what the teacher say absolutely inaudible. This does usually not stop the teachers from lecturing.

If the pupils are not interested in what the teacher is talking about, or if there is no teacher around, they can peep out of the window, help each other secretly, listen to different noises, or occupy themselves with the desks. On the wooden desks are written and carved miscellaneous things, as there are probably in most classrooms all over the world. The most common writings are names of pupils, English words and calculations.

3.4.5 What children do in school

Most children have work to do at home before they go to school. Apart from washing themselves and dressing, girls usually carry out domestic work. As dinner is eaten after dark the dishes have to be done in the morning and water has to be fetched. The boys usually take the animals to water and pasture before school. In some homes morning tea is served, perhaps with some maize from the day before, but the majority of the children leave without having anything, perhaps not even water to drink. On their way to school, the children join each other on the road and walk to school in groups in their white shirts, and blue skirts or beige shorts. Only a few of the children wear shoes, markedly fewer in the poorer areas. Some children walk up to eight kilometres to get to the school. Children living further away usually do not go to school at all. Even eight kilometres is far, considered that the “road” is usually a stony path and that the walk includes climbing up and down the hills.54

Pupils and teachers are supposed to arrive in school before 7.30. The discipline differs between the respective schools, but usually only one teacher, the teacher in charge, and approximately two thirds of the children have arrived at this time. The children are usually put to work, cleaning the school. The rooms and the paths are swept and the grass is cut. Each school has its own organisation for this work with de-centralised responsibility. Other morning-activities may be jogging exercises or collecting pupils’ michango (contributions), such as firewood for the teachers or sticks for a building. The morning parade is held about a quarter of an hour before the start of the first lesson, with each class in a row in front of the teacher in charge. School uniforms are inspected, information given and songs sung conducted by the school choir. This scene is very impressive with all the children in line in their white, beige and blue uniforms, singing under the lead of the big school drums and then marching off to their classrooms.

Arriving at their classrooms the children usually have a few minutes’ rest, as the teacher often does not arrive on time. It happens that you do not find more than one or two teachers at school if you arrive at 8 o’clock, when the first lesson is supposed to start. Also a few pupils usually sneak in during the first lesson.

54 There are also wild animals that may be dangerous. At one of the schools one of the teachers refused to stay in the teachers’ house during the nights after he had seen a lion one night on his way to the toilet.
The rest of the day the children spend either in their desks or in the school yard. Each lesson is planned for 45 minutes and according to the schedule there are eight lessons per day from standards 3 to 7. There are usually two shorter breaks and one longer. Most lessons are single lessons, that is one teacher comes to the classroom, teaches his or her subject and leaves. This is usually done without a break in between which many times results in the pupils having to start a new lesson without having finished the work of the previous one. In the cases where the teacher has to leave one classroom, and return to the staff-room to fetch the books for the next lesson, pupils get an unintended break of up to a quarter of an hour. The day for the pupils runs quite haphazardly, from their perspective. It is for example very common that one or more teachers during the day do not show up at all in class. This can be due to many reasons. The pupils are normally not informed in these cases and they are supposed to stay at their desks, waiting. This means that pupils spend quite great part of the time in school waiting at their desks.

During lunch break children are allowed to eat if they have brought anything from home, which very few children have. The usual snack they bring is some maize or a piece of cassava. The majority of children do not bring anything. This means that those children who do not get anything to eat or drink before school, which are probably the majority, and who do not bring anything to eat, can only hope to get some of the water in the jars, if there is any. If there is no water they will not get anything until they return from school at about three or four o’clock. In the hot seasons this affects the lessons after noon above all. However, generally the lessons after lunch have a certain tendency to “disappear” in one way or another. Often pupils are planned for work of any kind in the school or in the school shamba, or even in teachers’ homes or private shambas. Occasionally, one of the schools had arranged for a light “meal” for the pupils, such as a peace of cassava or maize from the school shamba, to influence the parents to give their children a snack when they go to school. Pupils are regularly sent to do errands both during lessons and breaks.

The school is not always a safe place for children. Punishment of many types is used and the reasons for punishment are many, being late, talking in class, making mistakes, not understanding, not having done home-work and so on. Corporal punishment is often used, being beaten by the cane on the buttocks or hands most commonly, but kneeling on the school-ground is also often used as punishment. Another common punishment is to be given work in the school-yard or in the shambas during lecture time. In severe cases of absence parents may be called for. News of sexual harassment of female pupils and of teachers making girls pregnant prevail in reports from the Tanzanian school system but is nothing I came across. The different kinds of problems adults in school may cause pupils make the children stick close together. A pupil experiencing a problem is not likely to seek help from a teacher. Rather he or she would turn to elder siblings or class-mates. On the whole children stick together and help each other.
Children may also try to escape to avoid punishment by using different avoidance strategies, which I will discuss more in chapter 9. One such strategy is to “hide in the bushes”. This means that the child leaves home in the morning but instead of going to school “hides in the bushes”. When the school day ends and the other school children return this child/these children join them and return home. Thus the child avoids going to school and at the same time tries to hide the escape for his or her parents or caregivers.\(^{55}\)

The school day ends as it started, with a parade. After the parade the children return in groups, except for standards 6 and 7, which sometimes are given extra lessons as preparation for the exams. Pupils are not usually given special homework as the teachers know that most pupils are not given time to do it at home. When the children return home there is usually plenty of work for them to do. As dark falls at about seven o’clock and most homes only have a cooking-fire or sometimes one kerosene-lamp as light after dark, the few hours of light remaining when the children return has to be spent on domestic work.

Parents who can afford it may pay for “tuition” after ordinary lessons, usually in English and Mathematics. This was only the case occasionally in some of the schools. In Mabare some of the Muslim children join the “Madrasa” after school. There they are not only taught to read and write Arabic but also basic school education such as the three Rs.

### 3.4.6 What teachers do in school

Most of the teachers in these five schools live near the school, usually in teachers’ houses or in their own houses, although in Kihumulo housing is a great problem for teachers who have to spend many hours each day walking to and from school. The unmarried teachers live either with their parents or in a rented room. Only a few teachers walk a long distance to reach their job. Before they go to school there is domestic work to be done. The male teachers, most of them are married, are usually served morning tea by their wives before they take off to school. Female teachers, among whom some are married, others are divorced and a few not yet married, have domestic work to do, depending on their family situation. The ones who have infants usually have someone to care for them, a younger female relative or a neighbour. Some of the female teachers, who lived in teachers’ houses on the school grounds, did not have anyone to look after the children. They then had to look after them at the same time as they themselves were teaching (maternity leave in Tanzania is three months), either leaving them alone or bringing them to school. Sometimes one of the pupils was sent to look after them.

Teachers usually arrive at school between 7.30 and 8.15. The teacher on duty usually arrives before the others to take care of the morning activities and the

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\(^{55}\) Similar stories were told to me by different children. A similar phenomenon has also been explained by Stambach (2000) who carried out her research among secondary school pupils on the slopes of Kilimanjaro.
parade. Much time is spent on greeting colleagues and being social. The workday consists mainly of teaching, each teacher was appointed between 24 and 35\textsuperscript{56} lessons a week, depending on the number of teachers at the school, preparing lessons and marking note-books. As most lessons are supposed to result in a load of note-books to mark, a day with seven lessons to teach, in seven subjects and classes, might result in 420 note-books to mark if there is an average of 60 pupils per class. This was often stressed to me by the teachers, especially in the school with the highest teaching load, Mabare, but in reality I never saw it happen. But even the marking of 200 note-books is quite a heavy load.

During the day there are usually two shorter breaks and a lunch-break. During lunch teachers usually organise some tea or a simple meal such as porridge or rice for themselves. Some teachers work a lot and can be seen marking note-books from early morning, even before seven o’clock in the morning in some cases, or taking loads of note-books home. Other teachers are generally late, often miss lessons, leave early and always without a note-book.

Some of the teachers show much care for their pupils. There were examples of teachers giving extra lessons free for those who understood poorly, using Runyambo to explain to pupils they knew had not mastered Swahili, paying school fees for orphans and finding pencils or pens for those who did not have any. They also treated the children with kindness and consideration, encouraging rather than punishing. Other teachers were quick to use the stick or punish in other ways, often taking it out on the pupils. Even when I was present there were many incidents when a teacher punished a child severely.

A problem experienced by many teachers is that they may be transferred to new schools, often at short notice. Teachers who have settled in the area of one school, who have bought a shamba and built a house can be transferred 40 kilometres from one day to another. In 2002 many teachers and headmasters were transferred which disturbed the sometimes very stable situation in the schools.\textsuperscript{57}

3.4.7 Parents’ relations to the school

Officially the parents have much power in Tanzanian schools. They build all buildings and make the furniture and are also the legal owners of them. This means that the teachers have to have the parents’ permission to make any alterations and rely totally on the will of the parents to build and maintain the buildings, including teachers’ houses. All contributions, except for the school fees, such as money, fire-wood and so on, has to be approved by the parents.

\textsuperscript{56} After the reorganisation of teaching in 2002, in some schools teachers were demanded to teach more than 50 lessons a week.

\textsuperscript{57} One may assume that this affected the teachers’ and headmasters’ willingness to plan their job well in advance. In the case of for example elections or census teachers will be the main work-force and thus schools are closed.
through the school-board. The parents are represented on the school-board which also may express its discontent with a teacher.

However, in reality, this depends on the strength and commitment of the board and of the school staff. Usually the parents represented in the school board are not the poorest and the ones that are less educated, thus many parents express discontent with both their burden and the fact that children are put to do other work in school, such as helping teachers. Most parents have to sacrifice a lot to educate their children. School fees, uniforms and contributions of different kinds are only one part of the load. Children in Karagwe are generally perceived as an asset to their families and their work is needed at home. We saw earlier that traditionally children started to work early and that their work is an important part of the economy of the family. A family with many children was traditionally considered a rich family. With many hands much land can be cultivated, many cattle pastured and so on. We also have to remember that children in many homes are the main care-takers of infants and toddlers. Today, when children spend a good part of their lives between seven and thirteen years of age\textsuperscript{58} in school, the homes suffer without their work. As we have seen earlier children are an important work-force in homes.

The headmaster sometimes calls the parents to a meeting, usually to give them information about the school and to tell them their duties. Individual parents may be called to school for example in the case of absence of a child or when the school fees have not been paid. A parent who does not fulfil his or her duties\textsuperscript{59} will be contacted by the chairman of the village in a first instance. If he or she still fails, the case may be brought to the police.

\textsuperscript{58} In reality many of the pupils are between 9 and 18 years of age in primary school, due to a delayed start, having to return a year or spending a year in between helping at home.

\textsuperscript{59} Usually the father is seen as responsible for the education of the child. Only if he is not around the mother or another relative is called.
Chapter Four

Language Ideologies in Karagwe

On the one hand is imperialism in its colonial and neo-colonial phases, [...] continuing to control the economy, politics and culture of Africa. [...] On the other hand, and pitted against it, are the ceaseless struggles of African peoples to liberate their economy, politics and culture from that Euro-American based stranglehold to usher a new era of true communal self-regulation and self-determination. [...] The choice of language and the use to which language is put is central to a people’s definition of themselves in their relation to their natural and social environment, indeed in relation to the entire universe. Hence language has always been at the heart of the two contending social forces in Africa of the twentieth century.

(Ngugi wa Thiong’o, 1986: 4)

4.1 Introduction

Literacy is an aspect of language and when you study literacy practices it is also essential to consider people’s attitudes to language and the uses they make of language, their language ideologies. To understand present language policies and practices in Karagwe, we need to understand the relationship between language and power. That language is connected with power is obvious when we observe language hierarchies created through history. This is particularly obvious in the case of Africa. In the processes of colonisation, liberation and de-colonisation, language was an important factor. Throughout these processes languages were ranked and placed in hierarchies. To understand how languages are used and people’s attitudes to languages we have to analyse language in its social context, what have been called language ideologies (by among others Gee, 1996; Blommaert, 1999a; Wortham, 2001). Language ideologies are ‘theories’ underlying the use of language. These ‘theories’ are usually tacit and taken for granted ideas of what counts as a ‘normal’ person and the ‘right’ ways to think, feel and behave. Language ideologies are crucial when assessing the relationship between language and power and when assessing the motives and causes for certain types of language change (Blommaert, 1999a; Wortham, 2001). In analysing how language ideologies of contemporary Karagwe have been
developed we have to analyse how these are connected to broader political and ideological developments in order to write the historiography of language ideologies in Karagwe.

The history of languages is closely related to the history of people who develop them, use them, name them and reconstruct them. The construction of a nation-state, such as in the case of Tanzania, is far from strictly a politico-economic process, it is also a cultural and a discursive project in which language plays an important role.

4.2 The changing policy context through 500 years – A macro-perspective

I will start the analysis of language ideologies in Karagwe by reviewing and analysing how language policies have changed over the last 500 years in the area. Thus I will analyse how the policy context has been mediated through the images of languages. This analysis will be divided into four periods, the pre-colonial period, the colonial period, 1961-1980 and 1980–2000. Then I will analyse language ideologies in contemporary Karagwe on a macro level before I analyse interactional patterns in different discourses in contemporary Karagwe.

4.2.1 Before colonisation

Karagwe has been a multicultural and multilingual area for at least one millennium, where Bantu-speaking agriculturalists from central Africa have mixed with pastoralists who were also Bantu-speakers. The Banyambo developed a strong unity politically, culturally and linguistically, with Runyambo60 as the local language, while there was at the same time a lot of interaction with people mainly from areas speaking related languages, such as Ruhaya,61 Runyankole and Kinyarwanda, but also with traders speaking other Bantu-languages such as Kinyamwezi, Kisumbwa and Swahili. During the 19th century Swahili expanded inland from the coast due to the activities of the trading caravans. Thus one may assume that those among the Banyambo who were involved in trade, mainly men from ruling clans, were also the ones exposed to and subsequently interacting in different languages while agriculturalists and women where probably mainly using only one language. Presumably language mediators and language breakers were involved in the interaction between speakers of different languages. Hence, this was a homogenous kingdom with a foundation of one people speaking one language at

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60 Runyambo, also called Runyambo, Kinyambo or Chinyambo, is the language spoken among the Banyambo, the inhabitants of Karagwe. As I use the indefinite forms of Runyambo-nouns, I do not use the definite forms of the languages (Orunyambo, Ikinyarwanda and so on, although in Runyambo they are the unmarked form.

61 I use the affixes for the languages as they are used in Karagwe, which is a mix of Runyambo and Swahili-affixes. I do not use an prefix for Swahili as the prefix Ki- is not an English one and as Swahili in an English context is not commonly used to denote an area or a people, only the language and culture.
the same time as interaction with people from outside was frequent as was knowledge in other languages, especially among men of the royal clans. We may say that languages had an inside/outside dimension with Runyambo being the language of inside the location and the other languages representing the outside.62

As we saw in 3.3.2, although this was not a literate society, there existed language education. The formal education at the king’s Muteko-school and the non-formal education in the home included various forms of explicit education in using elaborate language. These two types of education were carried out in the local language, Runyambo. The interaction with traders and speakers of other languages did not affect language use in the traditional education. What came to change this dramatically was the coming of Westerners, such as missionaries and colonisers.

4.2.2 During foreign rule

When the Germans started to colonise Tanzania (and Rwanda and Burundi), Swahili was already fairly widespread along the trading routes (Whiteley, 1969). The Germans promoted Swahili as it was useful for their aims. As they relied on local Swahili-speaking persons for the administration of the colony, they promoted the spread of Swahili on a large scale. During German rule (1884 – 1916 in Buhaya) schooling of the Western type was introduced in Karagwe. These schools used Swahili or Ruhaya/Runyambo 63 as a medium for lower standards, and German was taught as a subject. The fact that the Germans introduced Swahili at different levels of the society and also wrote Swahili grammars, compiled dictionaries and transcribed Swahili into Roman script (from Arabic script) and forced people to use it was to have great influence on language use and politics later on in the area. With the introduction of the Western type of schooling, which was infused with Christianity and literacy, there was a profound transformation in ethos in Karagwe, from valuing the traditional order to valuing Western commodities, styles of living and ontologies during the colonial period. There was also a change in language attitudes from valuing and developing the local language to valuing Western languages and Swahili. Arabic was never to have great influence outside the Muslim groups. As we saw under 3.3.2, three years before the whole Tanganyika was declared a British mandated territory, the Germans had hanged the Mukama of Karagwe, Ntare VII, and the British government had raided the area and taken over rule over Buhaya, of which Karagwe was a part.

With British rule the language policy and language medium in school was changed. English was introduced as the medium throughout schooling, except for

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62 Compare the inside/outside perspective in Nyambo and Haya societies, discussed in chapter 3 and by Carlsson (1989).

63 As mentioned earlier Ruhaya and Runyambo are close to each other and printed text in Ruhaya is comprehensible to the Banyambo.
in so called ‘native schools’, what Buchert calls “Education for Adaptation” (Buchert, 1994), where local languages or Swahili were used during the first years of schooling. Higher education, “Education for Modernisation” (Ibid), was reserved for Europeans, Indians and a selected few of the Africans such as the sons of the kings. The Muteko-schools were abandoned in 1916 by the British government in Bukoba, although they seem to have existed up to the 1930s (compare 3.3.2). Although early missionaries in Karagwe used Ruhaya/Runyambo and rapidly trained local teachers, the formal educational system in itself was totally alien and was not adapted to local educational traditions. On the whole this favoured the colonialists who thus could rule more efficiently.

Although there was some hostility towards Swahili among Christian missionaries (Rubagumya, 1990) many steps were taken during the British period aimed at promoting the standardisation and development of Swahili, such as standardising the orthography and lexicography through control of the publication of dictionaries and standard books and the editing of Swahili literature. However the connections between Swahili and Islam and the coastal Arabs made the missionaries reject Swahili and the Binns Mission Report, published in 1953, argued that “because the present teaching of Swahili stands in the way of the strong development of both the vernacular and English teaching a policy should be followed which leads to its eventual elimination from schools” (in Cameron & Dodd, 1970: 10).

The missionaries and the colonisers had a common goal to “civilise the savages and to christianise the heathens”, thus they all aimed at civilising the inhabitants away from African culture and its world-view. They also needed an obedient work-force for lower posts in the administration and as servants. By using Runyambo/Ruhaya as the medium in schools the British could control what the locals could read, as they themselves were in control of printing in the local language. They could also control access to posts in the civil service as English was the language used in the official sector. This, at the same time, laid the foundation among the inhabitants for valuing European languages, mainly English, and de-valuing local languages such as Runyambo and Swahili. As schooling came to represent modernity and social and economic success, Runyambo and traditional language education and language use came to be devalued. The British also had political reasons to emphasise the spread of English among selected groups of people, as this was one way to weaken the growing anti-colonial movement among the Africans who used Swahili as a medium for communication (Legère, 1990). To summarise we can say that the traditional non-formal education was continued during the colonial period but that its role diminished and that especially the linguistic part of the traditional education was stigmatised. During the period of British rule English was valued and Swahili devalued although some standardisation of Swahili was carried out.

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64 All printing in Ruhaya seem to have been controlled by Christian missionaries.
It may also be noted that the epithet “Mzungu mweusi” (Black Westerner during this period was considered as a compliment (Rubagumya, 1991). Thus there was a shift in the symbolic opposition between speakers of Runyambo and speakers of other languages, from the pre-colonial opposition between the inside and the outside, to an opposition between different life-worlds and institutional worlds within Karagwe during this period. Language had started to become a gate-keeper for higher posts and was an important factor for the individual’s economic and social status.

4.2.3 1961–1980

Following independence in 1961-64 there was another shift in language policies and also in school policies in Tanzania. Swahili was promoted in many ways and the status of English was to give way to Swahili. This contributed directly to the rapid expansion of Swahili terminologically and geographically during this period. Rajabu and Ngonyani (1994) give three factors that strengthened Swahili in this phase: 1) its wider use, 2) translations and more domains served by Swahili and 3) the higher status it had now acquired. They also mention the subtle propaganda against English. Instead of being called “Black Westerners”, those who used English in domains reserved for Swahili were now accused of having “colonial hangover” (Rubagumya, 1991). With the focus on national unity the local languages became neglected in this process as they were regarded as encouraging ethnic rivalry and undermining national unity.

Initially the importance of academic skills in schools was stressed, what Buchert calls “Education for Manpower Development” (Buchert, 1994: 93). Swahili served as an official and national language and was from 1967 used throughout primary school. English was to be the medium for secondary school for a period while preparations were made to replace it with Swahili on secondary and tertiary level. In Karagwe and Kagera, the habit among the ruling classes of sending children to English-medium private schools in Uganda probably created more positive attitudes towards English and local languages than towards Swahili as a coastal language representing the Swahili-culture with its roots in Islam and Arabic culture and in the slave-trade. However at the same time there had developed strong ties between Dar-es-Salaam and the ruling class as the Bahaya and the Banyambo had become well represented in government.

4.2.4 1980–2000

Rubagumya predicted that during the first decade of the third millennium, English was likely to have given way to Swahili in Tanzania as Swahili became more developed (Rubagumya, 1994) although he also predicted that English was to remain as an important tool in higher education as well as a medium for

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65 However, there has never, in fact, been a decision taken to introduce Swahili as a official language in Tanzania, contrary to what has often been claimed (Legère, 1990).
international communication. However, during the 1980s and the 1990s Tanzania was the scene of three major structural (i.e. political and economic) changes: globalization on an international level; and, on a national level, deregulation of the economy (the ‘Structural adjustment plans’ imposed on Tanzania by the IMF and the World Bank) and the lifting of the restriction on private schooling. These policy changes were to have great influence on language ideologies in Tanzania. The Structural Adjustments Plans, forced on Tanzania in the mid 1980s, seriously affected the social sectors as a whole and the educational sector in particular. The introduction of school fees in primary schools together with decreasing economic resources lead to decreasing school results in governmental schools and a higher rate of school drop-outs. The falling standards in governmental schools together with the lifting of the restriction on private primary schools led to a mushrooming of private schools. This trend was very clear in Karagwe, where a number of private primary schools were established during this period and the number of tuition classes, mainly in English, increased, as all over the country. This means that in reality English proficiency among pupils and teachers in governmental schools decreased while those who could afford to send their children to private schools or private tuition could provide their children with higher levels of education through the medium of English. This has led to a tremendous boost in the value of English and a devaluation of Swahili and local languages. According to Rubagumya (1991) only a minority of the Tanzanian population, 5 %, had some knowledge of English. Thus 95 % were excluded from domains where English is used. The government’s rejection in 1982 of the proposal by the Presidential Commission on Education to change the medium of instruction at secondary and tertiary level from English to Swahili should be seen in this perspective. This is a clear case where there is a discrepancy between official language policies and their implementation and where this has clear connections with power relations. Following the national policy in Tanzania after independence, that Swahili should replace English as medium for education at secondary and tertiary levels, a policy that had been re-affirmed in 1969, 1970, 1974, 1979 and 1982 (Trappes-Lomax, 1990), the commission recommended in 1982 a gradual shift to using Swahili as the medium in higher education starting in January 1985. However the ruling party, CCM, and the Ministry of Education rejected the proposal, a rejection further stressed by the then President, Julius Nyerere (Lwaitama & Rugemalira, 1990). This rejection has been strongly opposed by linguists and educators from the University of Dar-es-Salaam (Trappes-Lomax, Besha & Mcha, 1982; Lwaitama & Rugemalira, 1990; Rubagumya, 1990, 1991, 1994; 66 School fees where withdrawn again in 2002.
67 According to Rubagumya one criterion for a private primary school to become registered is that the language medium is English. (Rubagumya, oral communication).
68 We can mention that a local language is often denoted *Kilugha* in Karagwe, a derogative for language.

[...] neither the World Bank/IMF nor the British Overseas Development Agency have attempted to question the wisdom of educational instruction in European languages. But, in the one country, Tanzania, that have dared to challenge the hegemony of the imperial language by replacing it with Kiswahili in the primary school, the educational language policy has quickly been seized upon as the culprit for supposedly poor academic standards. The double standards here are quite clear, and behind them may be the World Bank’s hidden agenda for its linguistic Eurocentrism in African education. (ibid: 92)

Roy-Campbell (2001) argues that “The African continent is the only continent where indigenous people continue to use foreign languages as their major means of assessing and disseminating knowledge. [...] Education for liberation and for self relief must begin with languages that do not impede the acquisition of language.” (ibid: 196-7).

During this period Swahili knowledge among part of the young generation probably also diminished as the number of children of school-age who did not finish primary school increased. However, as the domains of Swahili had increased, one may assume that some of these children acquired some proficiency in Swahili in non-official domains, such as in the market-places and streets. This is verified by my observations of children who have not received schooled education. Thus one may assume that the Swahili proficiency only decreased in remote rural areas where children had no contact with urban life. Poor children in urban areas, such as street children, usually have to rely on Swahili in their struggle for life. However these children become excluded from the uses of Swahili connected with schooling, such as meta-linguistic knowledge and schooled literacy. Thus Swahili has become a way to distinguish between urban and rural life and at the same time a gate-keeper to higher education and job in the official sector.

4.2.5 Language ideologies in a changing policy context

To describe language use in Tanzania, a theory for triglossia, based on Fishman’s theory on diglossia (see Fishman, 1972), has been used by Abdulaziz-Mkilifi (1972). This perspective recognises different domains for different languages with each language having a definite role to play. However, Rubagumya (1991) argues that this traditional perspective is inadequate for language behaviour in societies where the social and political relations between speakers are characterised by inequality. Instead he advocates a conflict perspective of

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69 One example of this is from a group of street children in the business centre of Karagwe, Omurushaka, sheltered by a welfare organisation. The boys come mainly from Karagwe but communicate mainly in Swahili. A new-comer, a boy of about 5-8 years of age, did not speak at all in the group. One day when he was alone with the man employed to care for the boys, the boy told him that the reason why he did not speak was that he was a Rwandan and that he was afraid that the other boys would send him away if they were to hear him speak broken Swahili.
diglossia, referring to Gardy and Lafont (1981) and Martin-Jones (1988). This conflict perspective recognises the conflict nature of diglossic situations and that language use is connected with social division between dominant and dominated classes. Researchers such as Martin-Jones (1988), Roberts (1987) and Eckert (1980) have argued that diglossia has its roots in the social and political history of a certain area. When we apply this theory to the situation for Karagwe today we can state that Runyambo is the low variety (L), the mother-tongue acquired at home and used in informal situations. Swahili is the language mainly learned at school and is the language of culture and communication on national level. Thus there is a diglossic relationship between Runyambo (L) and Swahili as the high variety (H). On the other hand English is the language of higher education, of the higher judiciary system and of access to technological information. Thus there is also a diglossic situation between Swahili, as L, and English, as H although it is only spoken by a small minority of the population. However the language situation is not static and the language policy has changed over time. In Table 1, I present an overview over the language policy, from the perspective of Karagwe, over the last 500 years. To make it more clear, the table only mentions languages of main importance. Thus languages such as Arabic, Kinyarwanda, Kisukuma and Runyankole are not mentioned, neither are other European languages such as French and Danish which also exist in the area.

From Table 1 we can understand that prior to 1900 Runyambo was the dominant language with other languages as additive languages. This means that Runyambo was used in all in-group domains, while other languages were used in communication with visitors and traders from outside. During the period of German colonisation the status of Swahili increased, mainly through formal education in schools, christianisation and by being the main tool of communication between the colonisers and the emerging lower African middle class. German was also introduced as an élite language through education and administration. This was the beginning of the devaluing of the vernacular, Runyambo.

During British rule German lost its status and was replaced by English as the language of the élite. The role of Swahili was played down during this period, which gave the vernacular a higher position. According to the conflict perspective the very existence of high and low varieties implies conflict and change. When Swahili lost domains, in this case, some were occupied by English (such as intermediate schooling and lower administration) and some by Runyambo (such as lower schooling and church services).

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70 Languages such as French, Danish and Swedish may be found in connection with missionaries and religious material.

71 We should remember that this is the period when the Mukama and his people fought with the colonisers and missionaries over the power in Karagwe (see 3.3.2). The end of this, as I see it, was when the Germans hanged Ntare, the heir of the throne, and the British abandoned the Muteko-schools, actually moving power from Bweranyange, the Mukama’s site, to Lukajange and Bugene, the Lutheran and Roman Catholic centres.
During the first period of independence, promotion of Swahili in all official sectors was at the cost of both English and local languages. English preference was denoted as “colonial indoctrination” while the use of vernaculars was blamed for tribalism and backwardness. A level of nearly 90% literacy and Swahili knowledge among the inhabitants was reached (see for example Mpogolo, 1985; Rubagumya, 1991). Nearly the whole generation born from the middle of the 1950s up to the middle of 1970s went to school, learned Swahili and the three Rs (reading, writing and arithmetic), that is the basic school skills. Most people also learned at least a few phrases of English.

During the 1980s and 1990s political and economic development created an élite who know English and reproduce themselves by sending their children to private schools or private English tuition. Overall school standards in governmental schools fell due to decreasing economic standards, and the number of drop-outs grew. The number of children that left school with basic skills and knowledge in Swahili was steadily decreasing. Accordingly the number of children growing up without acquiring neither literacy nor Swahili was increasing in rural areas. In urban areas, however, Swahili strengthened its position. Thus the position of Swahili was weakened in relation to English, while, at the same time, it was strengthened in relation to Runyambo. English gained new domains and was at the same time gaining in status. Thus Swahili was both H and L in the official policy. Swahili still served as the official and national language but in the policy implementation English gained domains from Swahili.

The policy of today is effective in building an élite enclosure of English speakers and a lower middle class of Swahili speakers and marginalizing the rest of the population. It also effectively devalues local languages, such as Runyambo, and traditional language education.

To summarise, we can state that through colonialism and missionary work, the outside/inside conflict between speakers of different languages in the pre-colonial kingdom Karagwe was turned into a conflict between speakers of different languages within the society. Earlier the ruling class of pastoralists and the commoners had spoken the same language. Although pastoralists in Karagwe had much in common with ruling pastoralist clans in neighbouring areas, the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Runyambo</th>
<th>Swahili</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>German</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1500–1900</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>Additional</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900–1916</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>L/H2</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>H1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1916–1961</td>
<td>L2</td>
<td>L1</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961–1980</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>H1</td>
<td>H2</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980–2000</td>
<td>L2</td>
<td>L/H2</td>
<td>H1</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

H = language with high status, a dominant language; L = language with low status, a dominated language; L1/L2 = one of the low languages (L1) was dominating the other (L2); H1/H2 = one of the high languages (H1) was dominating the other (H2); ↑ = the language was gaining new domains; ↓ = the language was losing domains.
conflict between languages was at the same time a conflict between people of different areas. This was now turned into a language conflict within geographical areas and between speakers of different languages. Parts of the ruling classes were selected for education, and thus also for knowledge in Swahili and German/English. This was thus a change to valuing people according to their “linguistic portfolio” (Stroud, 2002), from language constituting an ethnic marker to becoming a gatekeeper and a marker of economic and social status and from defining “us” and “them”, “inside” and “outside”, to defining social classes.

### 4.3 Language ideologies in contemporary Karagwe – an analysis

In previous sections we stated that there has been a conflict between official language policies and the implementation. What has been decided has not always been realised. Sometimes those who agreed on a decision were the very ones

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**Table 2: Language use in different domains in contemporary Karagwe.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Level/Event</th>
<th>Language(s) mainly used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td>National/International</td>
<td>Swa/Eng</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>Swa/Ru</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Small trade</td>
<td>Ru/Swa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Informal</td>
<td>Ru (Swa)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Primary school</td>
<td>Swa/Ru(^1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vocational training</td>
<td>Swa/Ru/Eng</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Secondary school</td>
<td>Eng/Swa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tertiary level</td>
<td>Eng/Swa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adult education</td>
<td>Swa/Ru</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Official</td>
<td>National/International</td>
<td>Swa/Eng</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>District/Regional</td>
<td>Swa/Ru/Eng</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal</td>
<td>Home</td>
<td>Ru (Swa)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neighbours</td>
<td>Ru (Swa)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Workplaces(^1)</td>
<td>Ru/Swa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural</td>
<td>Worship</td>
<td>Swa/Ara/Ru</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Literature</td>
<td>Swa (Ru)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Music</td>
<td>Swa/Ru/Eng</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TV/Video</td>
<td>Swa/Eng/Ru</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social events</td>
<td>Swa/Ru</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>News Papers</td>
<td>Swa/Eng</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Village/Family related</td>
<td>Swa/Ru</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Key:** Languages are given in order of estimated frequency, that is Ru/Swa means that Runyambo is used more often. Languages given in brackets are used in certain cases, such as in some families, in towns or in some congregations. Swa = Swahili, Eng = English, Ara = Arabic, Ru = Runyambo, including also Ruhaya in the case of cultural domains. In regional trade other languages such as Kinyarwanda and Luganda are also used.
who saw to it that it was never implemented. One example was when politicians on a national level decided that Swahili was to be the medium in primary school and then opened the market for private English medium primary schools where they put their own children. Another example is the rejection of the proposal for transition to Swahili as the medium in secondary school. This shows us again the conflict nature of language ideologies which will be even more obvious when we analyse language ideologies in contemporary Karagwe. We will see that what people think they should do is not always what they really do. In this section I will analyse language ideologies in Karagwe on a general level.

In Table 2, which is constructed from results in the field studies of this investigation, I present an overview of language use in different domains in Karagwe today.

From this table we may conclude that Swahili in Karagwe has a higher number of domains than Runyambo and that the number of domains for English are few. However we have to remember that the table says nothing about the quantity of use. Domains where Runyambo is mainly used most frequently, such as informal settings (homes, neighbourhood, workplaces and small trade), are domains where a majority of the inhabitants spend most of their time. This means that most people spend most part of their lives in a Runyambo-context. The domains where English is used are domains with high status, such as higher education and international communication. Furthermore those who use English are mainly persons who are perceived of as high status, such as politicians and administrators in higher posts and foreign “experts”. Thus the language with the highest status is the one least used while the situation for Runyambo is the opposite, low status and frequent use.

In this situation both Swahili and Runyambo are affected as languages. When people speak Runyambo they incorporate Swahili words and affixes, such as Kinyambo for Runyambo and connectors such as yaani (that is, which means) and kwa hiyo (therefore, thus). Swahili is affected mainly in pronunciation where Banyambo use l/r as allophones in Swahili, such as in pronouncing maleria (malaria) as [marelia]/[mareria]/[malelia] and also the use of glottal, unvoiced stop /h/ as allophones word-initially such as in alikwenda (he went) which may also be pronounced halikwenda by a Munyambo. The

72 Swahili and Runyambo are not mutually intelligible, although they are both Bantu-languages and share a similar structure. Also the phonetic system is more complex in Runyambo which has phonemic vowel tone and length and a higher extent of vowel harmony than Swahili. The two languages differ more in the basic parts of the language, the parts that children are most likely to have been involved in before school, while the more advanced levels of Runyambo, decontextualised and elaborated language, have been more affected by Swahili.

73 According to Rugemalira (oral communication) this variation between [h] and [/] is probably a transfer from Ruhaya which shows a tendency of dropping h, like in the following examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Runyambo</th>
<th>Ruhaya</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>omhoro</td>
<td>omoro</td>
<td>big knife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>omhini</td>
<td>omini</td>
<td>pin</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
incorporation of the prefix *ka-* as a marker of noun-class in the Nyambo-variety of Swahili is also significant. It is a diminuitive or slight derogative and very frequently used such as in:

- **Naomba kamia** I beg for a hundred (shillings)

  In standard Swahili this would be *Naomba mia*. In this case the prefix *ka-* diminishes the begging.

- **Katoto haka kadogo** This little child

  In standard Swahili we would have *Mtoto huyu mdogo*. The prefix *ka-* may also be used in the plural, *tu-*, such as in

- **Hutu tudogo** These small ones

  In standard Swahili *Hawa wadogo* (referring to kids in this case).

The frequent use of the suffix *-ga* to denote habitual sense is however according to Rugemalira (oral communication) transfer from Ruhaya. The suffix *-ga* in Runyambo is used in negative tenses but not to denote habit.\(^74\)

If we consider the education and socialisation of children we can state that most children are raised in a Runyambo-context with Swahili as a language used sometimes among adults or school children, usually only in single sentences or words. Daily communication, songs, dances, tales, riddles and poetry are in Runyambo. In school pupils are supposed to understand and interact in Swahili. Although teachers mainly interact in Runyambo between themselves, the teacher-pupil interaction is almost only in Swahili and pupils are generally not allowed to address a teacher in Runyambo. Only pupil-pupil interaction, outside the control of the teachers, is in Runyambo. After having finished standard seven, the majority of the pupils will then return to a Runyambo-dominated setting.

### 4.4 Summary and conclusions

The application of a conflict perspective on language ideologies in Karagwe has revealed a transformation of language policies from the pre-colonial days when language constituted a way to distinguish members of the outside from members of the inside, to a situation in the colonial and neo-colonial days where language has become a tool to distinguish members of different classes inside the community. Knowledge of Swahili and English is today used as a gatekeeper to higher posts and status. Thus English and Swahili are the high status languages, relative to Runyambo which holds low status.

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\(^{74}\) An example of the use of suffix *–ga* is: *Tunakulaga* (Standard Swahili: *Tunakula/Hula*, ‘We (habitually) eat’).
The difference in status for the three main languages in Karagwe may be described using the notions of centre and periphery, with English at the centre, Runyambo in the periphery and Swahili in the area in between. This may then be linked to the difference in status on a global level where the centre, that is the West, defines the norms while countries such as Tanzania are perceived as in the periphery. Blommaert (2003) gives a touching example of this relation when he presents a letter written to him from a 16 year old middle class girl from Dar-es-Salaam. The letter is written in non-standard English, something that in a global context puts it in the periphery as bad writing at the same time as the writing belongs to the centre in the Tanzanian context where it is given high status because of the language choice.

In this process of using language as a tool for sorting people and maintaining authority, schooling and literacy play important parts. In the next chapter I will analyse language ideologies held by teachers in primary school.
Literacy Practices in and out of School in Karagwe
Chapter Five

Teachers’ Ideologies on Language and Literacy in the School Context

Schooling and education hold high esteem in Karagwe. People put lot of effort to education, both for children and adults. Education is seen as the key to prosperity and for the future development for the family and the country. Expectations for the outcome from the schooling of children is high. Parents send their children to primary school although they need their work at home very badly, and they spend money, usually more than they can afford, to educate their children. Also many teachers are filled with fervour for their task to educate pupils, although this has decreased following the declining status and tougher situation for teachers. The official policy, founded by the former president, Nyerere, that education is the main tool for development, still has strong support. Thus demands and expectations for the outcome is high, which puts high pressure on both teachers and pupils.

Schools are important for the socialisation of children. While pupils learn academic knowledge, such as the three R’s, they are also socialised in relation to knowledge, learning and literacy. The specific school culture that has developed over time in the specific situation in Karagwe as well as individual teachers’ backgrounds are important features that determine how this socialisation is constituted.

Studies in the communication system of schools are studies of situated language use in one social setting. Courtney Cazden (2001) states that in classrooms, different to other institutions, such as for example hospitals, the basic purpose is achieved through communication. She identifies three features of language and a core of categorisations of language functions in classroom life:

1. the language of the curriculum: communication of propositional information
2. the language of control: establishment and maintenance of social relationships
(3) the language of personal identity: the expression of the speaker’s identity and attitudes

These features and functions are not restricted to classrooms but are also found in school related communication elsewhere, for example on the school compound. Cazden also gives three important educational questions that may be answered by an applied linguist:

- How do patterns of language use affect what counts as “knowledge”, and what counts as learning?
- How do these patterns affect the equality, or inequality, of students’ educational purposes?
- What communication competence do these patterns presume and/or foster? (Cazden, 2001: 3)

To analyse this in Karagwe it is necessary to understand language ideologies and communicative patterns. This means that language use in the school context has to be analysed from different perspectives. In this chapter I will analyse teachers’ ideologies on language and literacy. In the next chapter I will present literacy practices in and out of school.

5.1 Teachers’ ideologies

In the beginning of this study I interviewed 29 teachers in the five schools involved in the study about their views on literacy, learning and education. The interviews were carried out individually, except for in one case where two teachers were interviewed together, and the interviews were recorded and transcribed. In a later stage in the study I distributed a questionnaire among teachers in the schools, which was answered by 53 teachers in all. The questionnaire was about teachers’ language attitudes and language use and pupils’ skills (See appendix 1 for the questionnaire). In each school I also carried out formal discussions with teachers during seminars and discussions at staff meetings. Some teachers have been interviewed before observed lessons and in follow-up interviews after. Follow-up interviews have also been carried out after seminars. Apart from this, formal and informal discussions with teachers in different situations have given important information on teachers’ perspectives. Teachers in the two new schools that were constructed in connection with the original five schools in the study during the research period (see 3.4.2) have been involved in some of these activities.

Teachers’ ideologies to literacy are related to their perspectives on language, knowledge and learning. In the Western educational system, conceptions of

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75 I visited each of the five schools for several days during each field study and spent several days in teachers’ offices. I also made visits to several teachers’ private homes.
knowledge and learning have changed through history. Curricula that formerly used to put emphasis on products, facts and procedures to be learned now stress processes and strategies for learning and doing. This has influenced interaction in Western classrooms. In Tanzania the curriculum focuses on facts to be learned. The point of departure is that teachers should give facts and knowledge to pupils and in the implementation of the curricula in classrooms pupils mainly repeat and copy what is taught by the teacher. As we will see later, what is taught may be inconsistent and varying as teachers are generally poorly trained, but in the prevailing communication system what is said by the teacher is not questioned by pupils, and pupils do not ask for clarification in the case of uncertainties.

By far the majority of the teachers in Karagwe are Banyambo and were born in Karagwe which means that their mother tongue is Runyambo. Only four of the 29 interviewed teachers have a mother tongue other than Runyambo. Two are Bahaya which means that their first language is Ruhaya, which is very close to Runyambo, and that they did not consider learning Runyambo as a problem. Two teachers are Rwandan, one of them born in Ngara, the district bordering Karagwe in the south. His mother-tongue was Kinyarwanda and he learned Kihangaza from the environment where he grew up. When he married in Karagwe he felt a need to learn Runyambo, particularly to be able to greet people. He also felt a need to learn Runyambo when he taught lower classes as these pupils do not know Swahili well. Also one of the female teachers has Kinyarwanda as her mother tongue, but as she moved in with her family as a small child she acquired Runyambo from childhood.

However teachers vary according to several factors that influence their attitudes. Some of these factors are gender, age, educational level, ancestry and living distance from an urban centre. All of these factors influence both teachers’ status and attitudes.

Gender is an important factor for status in Karagwe (see chapter 3). Female teachers who are young and not yet married usually live in the home of their parents or a relative. Divorced women live either with their parents or on their own. Both married and divorced women generally have the main responsibility for the daily work in their homes, such as farming, cooking, fetching water and taking care of children. As maternity leave is three months this means that many

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76 In the curriculum for Swahili for primary school, goals are expressed with verbs such as: kwapatia (to give to them, that is the pupils), kumwezesha (to enable him/her), kunfanya mwanafunzi aweze (to make the pupil able) and kumpa uwezo (to give him/her ability). The curriculum for pre-school uses expressions like kuhimiza na kukuza maendeleo (to encourage and make development greater), kumjengea tabia (to build habits for him/her), kumwezesha kupenda (to enable him/her to like), kumpa fursa ya kujifunza na kukuza (to give him/her opportunity to learn and grow) and kumwandaa (to prepare him/her). Thus the actions of the teacher are focussed, following the pattern of teacher-centredness in curricula. Teachers’ actions are stated, such as to give skills and knowledge to pupils, while pupils are treated as passive receivers in the text.
female teachers have infants to care for while they are teaching. Women in Karagwe generally hold a lower status than men, but as educated people, most female teachers hold a higher status. Some of the female headmasters are strong leaders with authority among their staff. Relative to pupils and parents, all teachers have strong authority. In urban schools some female teachers are the wives of prominent persons and thus have high status.

Age and educational level generally go together in the way that older teachers are usually less educated, Grade B or C teachers, while younger ones all have a grade A certificate. Teachers of 45 years and above got their primary schooling in missionary schools and most of them are today devoted Christians. They got their teacher training during the period when many teachers were rapidly trained in the campaign for UPE (Universal Primary Education), and when, following the Arusha Declaration of 1967, the new nation was to be built with enthusiasm and manpower. They were an important part of the educated cadre and although they have seen a decrease in socio-economic status, many of them still play important roles in their societies, functioning as evangelists, choir leaders and village authorities and in most villages they are the highest educated persons. Among these are several very enthusiastic teachers. Teachers under 40 years got their education during the 1980s and 1990s, the period which saw a decline in economic conditions for education in Tanzania and the period affected by SAP (Structural Adjustment Plans, see for example 3.3.4). While for older teachers teacher education was nearly the only way to get access to higher education and higher status, for the young teachers teacher training was one way among others. For many students during the 1980s and 1990s, joining a teacher training centre was, and is still, a stepping stone for career development. It was relatively easy to be enrolled in teacher training, and having passed a TTC simplified possibilities for higher education and the possibility of getting other jobs. As the status for teachers decreased, many of them sought their outcome in other ways. Those who passed Mathematics and English, which are the subjects with the highest status, usually found other ways for advancement and never became primary school teachers. This means that those who started to work as primary school teachers over the last 20 years were not among the ones first selected for other jobs.

Another factor dividing teachers is the distance to an urban centre. Teachers in rural schools are more often male and older and were either born in the area or have married and settled there. Some of the young teachers who work in rural schools marry and settle there while others try to get a replacement. Teachers in urban schools are more often female, some being appointed there because their husbands work in the local administration. While rural teachers rely on farming as side-line income, urban teachers often rely on keeping a shop or a small enterprise in the family. While many teachers in rural schools are older and enthusiastic and proud of their role in educating the nation, many urban teachers
are less devoted and have placed their own children in private schools. Only rural schools were involved in this study.

One background factor that influences teachers’ attitude, is that they are appointed and usually have little influence on where they will be placed, which means that they have usually not applied for their placement. During the period of 2002–2003 many teachers were re-placed, sometimes from one day to another in the middle of the term following the low results the year before. This could mean that they had to leave their family and move to a distant place. As there is generally a lack of teachers in distant schools compared to urban schools, some were replaced to remote areas where living conditions were harsh with bad communications and no teachers’ house, in some cases not even a school building. Most teachers could not influence where they were to be placed and many teachers experienced the replacement as a punishment.

Teachers have seen a decrease in socio-economic status. What used to be a high status occupation is now in some cases an ordinary one. While they used to enjoy high status, many teachers now experience that their performance is questioned. Parents claim that teachers do not do their job and that they use pupils for their own profit. Teachers feel that they are blamed for pupils’ low results, while they find their working load increasing. The increase in the number of pupils in some schools has not been followed by an increase in salaries and status. When pupils were to be taught in shifts, without an increase in the number of teachers following the low results in standard seven exams 2001, this was also experienced as a punishment by most teachers.

This means that, although teachers generally see themselves and their work as important, they doubt that others recognise their importance. Teachers’ influence on their own situation is low and their role is to carry out what others have told them to do. The authoritative socialisation pattern from early schooling has continued throughout the school system (See 3.4.1). The rote-learning that prevails and the safety strategies developed from early classes are continually used. In this type of authoritarian system, what is promoted is that obedience is showed. For teachers this means to carry out what has been prescribed in teacher training, in curricula and textbooks. However demands on teachers are not realistic, such as having to teach up to 200 pupils at a time, teaching 30-50 lessons per week with a low salary, correcting exercises, carrying out other duties such as collecting statistical materials, supervising exams, taking care of school premises and the school economy and collecting school fees of different types among other duties.

At the same time every teacher faces his or her private situation with decreasing economic standards, decreasing coffee prices, increasing numbers of people relying on them due to the health situation (HIV, malaria and tuberculosis

77 Safety strategies such as avoidance and call-response, that are used by pupils and teachers, will be discussed in chapter 7. Examples of avoidance are when teachers avoid teaching certain lessons and when pupils hide at the back of the classroom or do not hand their exercises in.
are among the diseases that prevail) and rising costs for the schooling of their own and relatives’ children. The upgrading of teachers to Grade A put extra demands on many teachers. This means that it is in reality not possible for teachers to carry out all their duties, such as teaching all prescribed lessons.\textsuperscript{78}

\section*{5.2 Teachers’ attitudes to literacy and learning}

The perspectives expressed by teachers on literacy and learning are in general very homogenous. Teachers stress that they follow the teacher aid and the textbook.\textsuperscript{79} Their lesson plans follow the pattern given at Teacher Training Colleges: Objectives, Teacher activities, Pupils’ activities and Evaluation. Generally most teachers are confident and proud to show that they follow given patterns. On literacy acquisition teachers state that pupils first have to learn the vowels and then all syllables, words and sentences in turn. That this is how literacy is taught is confirmed by observations. Only a few teachers mention the teaching of consonants separately. Learning to read and write is something that pupils are supposed to do in lower classes, with the aid of pre-school. A male teacher in his 50s, teaching in standard 2, says:

\begin{quote}
Learning to read and write they do in standard 1 and 2. After that it’s mainly to answer questions. That’s what they write, answers to questions. We do it together in class. If everyone is to do it individually some will only write single letters.\textsuperscript{80}
\end{quote}

The main objective teachers mention for literacy activities in class for standards 3 to 7 is to test pupils’ skills. Writing is stressed and the dominant type of writing mentioned by teachers is the answering of “questions”. An old male teacher says:

\begin{quote}
First we give our lecture, we explain, some examples on the blackboard. Then we give them questions that they answer in their exercise books. Then we correct the answers.
\end{quote}

When explicitly asked for other writing activities some teachers mention writing summaries from lessons, taking notes, writing essays and poetry, but this was nothing that I could see either during my observations or in pupils’ exercise books, thus I assume that these activities are very rare. The most common reading activity mentioned by teachers is reading aloud in class. An elder female teacher in standard 1 says:

\begin{quote}
When explicitly asked for other writing activities some teachers mention writing summaries from lessons, taking notes, writing essays and poetry, but this was nothing that I could see either during my observations or in pupils’ exercise books, thus I assume that these activities are very rare. The most common reading activity mentioned by teachers is reading aloud in class. An elder female teacher in standard 1 says:
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{78} A rough estimation according to my observations is that an ordinary teacher teaches less than half of the lessons stated in the curriculum. However variations are great between different schools, time of year and subjects and between individual teachers.

\textsuperscript{79} Both teacher aids and textbooks are centrally produced, by Taasisi ya Elimu, ‘The Institute for Education’. They follow the curriculum closely and give detailed instruction on procedures and steps to follow. The adaptation to the situation in rural schools is low. In some plans and pictures the writers seem to assume a class size of 7-10 pupils and an abundance of materials.

\textsuperscript{80} Interviews were carried out in Swahili, the translations are the author’s.
When they read aloud they read all together or one at a time with the others listening.

Also in standards three to seven reading aloud is the dominant reading activity for pupils. A young male teacher says:

They read to exercise. They sit together many pupils with one book. Some only watch, they don’t read. Every pupil maybe reads three times a week. They are given one book for every desk. First the teacher reads and they follow in the text and listen to the pronunciation. Then one at a time reads aloud in class. Then you see that everyone can read.

If we look at what this teacher says, we find that he estimates that every pupil reads three times a week. But if we consider that according to the plan for Swahili followed by teachers\(^{81}\) roughly one lesson a week is planned for reading, that there are often about 70 pupils in a standards 5, 6 or 7, and that during the observed reading lessons about 20 minutes was used for pupils’ reading aloud, one may state that at least during Swahili lessons this is not possible. According to observations about five to ten pupils read aloud during one Swahili lesson. This would mean that every pupil would read aloud in class once in five to ten weeks. However observations also have showed that the frequency of pupils’ reading can not be calculated this way. Taking into consideration that not all lessons are taught, that a few pupils are frequently chosen to expose their skills for many tasks in class while others are not (using avoidance strategies, see chapter 7), and the fact that some pupils read also during other lessons, one can state that a few pupils probably read quite frequently, both silently and aloud, while most pupils do not read frequently in school. As many pupils often use different types of avoidance strategies some of them do probably not read at all. Thus we can state that although teachers stress the importance of testing pupils’ reading skills by having them read aloud in class, they only test the skills of a few pupils, and probably mainly the most successful readers among them, while the majority of the pupils may or may not practise reading during class. That some pupils do not read is confirmed by one of the younger teachers, a male:

There are always some pupils slipping away. About one fourth of pupils in standard 4 do not read well. In standard 7 there are only 35 pupils and their attendance is good. There is a bigger problem with standard 4 because there we also have those who didn’t pass the test last year.\(^{82}\) They may only attend one day a week as they have already given up. If you force them to read they will not attend the next lesson.

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\(^{81}\) The teacher aid (*Kitabu cha Kiswahili* 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7) gives six lessons for each chapter, which are 30 for each year. One lesson is silent reading and one reading aloud, but the silent reading seems to be seldom realised in classrooms in these schools.

\(^{82}\) In the end of standard 4 there is a test. Pupils who fail are generally to repeat the year. Note the low number of pupils in standard 7. In this particular school there are generally 70-80 pupils in the standards above two. One may suspect that the drop-out rate has been high in this class.
It is also worth noticing the order of activities given by the teacher; first the text is read by the teacher and then by individual pupils. The chance that some pupils do not actually read but instead repeat from memory what they have heard is obvious.

The few teachers that mention silent reading say that this is something pupils may do in their spare time, such as during a pause or when there is no teacher in the classroom. Some teachers also mention that pupils may borrow books and read them at home, although they say that this is rare and is not encouraged. Many teachers also say that most pupils are not allowed to read at home as parents need them to work in the household. In one of the involved schools the headmaster arranged for reading group activities in connection with the school library and for the construction of a special *Kibanda cha kusoma*, hut for reading, but before the plans had been realised he was transferred to another school, the hut was needed for the increased numbers of pupils in pre-school and the project fell by the wayside.

The importance of evaluation is stressed by many teachers. That also this follows a given pattern we can see in the following, said by a young, male teacher:

> When I correct I check the results of each pupil. Then I can see how many have understood. If more than half of the pupils have managed half of the questions it’s okay. In other case I’ll have to repeat. If 40% have not understood I’ll repeat once more.

That this is how teachers do their evaluation is confirmed also by observations and will be further discussed in chapter 9.

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**Table 3: Teachers’ self-report on language use in different domains.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Swahili</th>
<th>Swahili/ English</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Swahili/ Runyambo</th>
<th>Runyambo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In classrooms</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the school yard</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In teachers’ office</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At home with children</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>23(^1)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With neighbours</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At home to elders</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At the market and in shops</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preferred language to use</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{1}\)N = 53 although not all teacher answered all questions. In the table Runyambo stands for both Runyambo and Ruhaya. No teacher used the word “Runyambo” for the local language, instead they used Kilugha (a Swahili derogative for language), Kinyambo (Swahili for Runyambo), Lugha ya Mama (Swahili for mother tongue) or Lugha kieneji (Swahili for vernacular or local language).
5.3 Teachers’ language attitudes

In the questionnaire given to teachers they were asked about their language attitudes (see appendix 1). The answers together with observations revealed some interesting things about language attitudes held among teachers. Teachers were asked about what language they use in different domains (see Table 3).

All teachers said that they used Swahili in the classroom, one third also claimed to use English. This is confirmed by my observations, Swahili is the language used in teaching except for in English lessons. Only three of the teachers said that they also use Runyambo in class, two of the four pre-school teachers and one of the others. This is a slight under-estimation as most teachers in lower standards use Runyambo now and then in class even though there are variations between individual teachers. Observations also showed that pupils are generally not allowed to use Runyambo in class except sometimes in a few lower classes.

In the school yard nearly all primary school teachers claimed that they use Swahili, one claimed to use Swahili and English, which is according to prescriptions but not according to reality. No one of the teachers know enough English to be able to use it intelligibly in the school yard and of course none of the pupils would understand it. Two teachers, one pre-school teacher and one primary school teacher claimed to use only Runyambo in the schoolyard and seven primary school teachers mentioned that they used both Swahili and Runyambo. However, my observations showed that both Swahili and Runyambo are used by most teachers in all school-premises, outside classrooms. This shows that most teachers over-estimate their use of Swahili (and English) in their self-reports.

Teachers overestimated their use of high status languages in teachers’ offices even more. All teachers claimed to use Swahili in the staff room, nine also claimed to use English and none mentioned a use of Runyambo, while my own observations revealed that the two languages used in staff rooms are Swahili and Runyambo and that the frequency is quite equal between the two. English is never used, except for occasionally single words by some teachers. This over-estimation of the use of language with perceived high status is not surprising in the view of language attitudes as seen in 4.3.

Also in other domains teachers over-estimated their use of Swahili and English. In domains such as homes, the neighbourhood and the marketplace some teachers claim only to use Swahili although this is contradicted by my observations. In all observed homes Runyambo was used to a great extent. Only in one home, the home of two teachers who lived on the school premises near a town, were parents observed to use mainly Swahili to their children. However also in this home Runyambo was used in most other interactions. According to my own observations Runyambo is the dominant language in homes, in informal settings such as among neighbours and in marketplaces with Swahili as an additional language used now and then, according to interactants’ proficiency and preferences (see 4.3).
Teachers’ expressed preferences for different languages were homogenous. Of the 53 teachers 43 said that they preferred to use Swahili and 44 also said that they saw Swahili as the language of greatest importance for the future of the country. A few preferred to use both Swahili and Runyambo, while only one teacher said that she preferred to use Runyambo (a pre-school teacher) and one preferred English. A few mentioned also English as a language of importance for the country. Female teachers showed slightly more preference for Runyambo, while male teachers showed a higher preference for English.

Teachers were asked to estimate Swahili skills among their pupils, both written and oral. There was a great variation in their estimations especially for younger pupils. Pupils understanding Swahili without problems in pre-school were estimated somewhere between 5 and 35 % and in standard 1 10-90 % while the rate given for pupils in standards 6 and 7 varied between 80 and 90%. According to my own observations, only very few pupils in pre-school understand spoken Swahili, perhaps less than 5 %. This was also confirmed in discussions with teachers where they claimed that pupils in pre-school do not understand Swahili. The following was said by a young, male pre-school teacher:

If I tell them a story in Swahili they start to jostle one and another and whisper. I can see at once that they don’t understand. But if I tell them a story in Runyambo they listen eagerly and rejoice.

However in standard 7 I estimate that nearly all understand spoken Swahili as well as are able to explain themselves in Swahili. Still this shows that teachers are aware that many pupils do not understand Swahili, while they claim to use only Swahili in class.

Teachers’ estimations of pupils’ proficiency in reading, writing and talking Swahili varied even more. Their estimations of pupils who could make themselves understood in Swahili in pre-school ranged from 25 to 50 % of the pupils while in standards 6-7 answers ranged from 50 to 100 % of the pupils. Most teachers estimated that all or nearly all pupils in standards 6-7 could understand the news, read a newspaper and a story book and understand the news on radio, while the range was great for others. The percentage given for pupils in standard 1 understanding the news varied between 10-50 %, reading a newspaper 2-100 %, reading a children’s story 3-100% and writing intelligibly 9-60%. The range shows the great variation in teachers’ estimations.

There were teachers who claimed that most of their pupils in pre-school or standard 1 could read a daily newspaper, while they claimed that they could not read a story book for children. The contrary is what one would expect when one considers the higher complexity of texts in newspapers than in children’s books. Others claimed that most pupils in lower standards could explain themselves in

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83 This estimation is based on interviews with the most low-achieving pupils in writing in standards 6 and 7 in the schools.
84 All these are in Swahili.
Swahili, while they said that they could not understand Swahili. Some claimed that only ¼ of their pupils in standards 1 and 2 and pre-school could understand Swahili, while they said that half of the pupils could read a newspaper. There were also teachers that claimed that the number of pupils that could write Swahili intelligibly was higher than the number that could understand Swahili. The variability shows that teachers only have a slight idea of pupils’ proficiency and that they probably over-estimate it. Possibly the need to be able to read fast is not recognised by the teachers as most people are likely to read for example a newspaper seldom and thus do not have to read it fast. One teacher claimed that one newspaper could be read for a whole month in one house. This may be referred to my assumption that most teachers seldom read books and newspapers themselves and that thus they do not realise the level of reading skills needed to read a newspaper.

Although teachers claim to read letters (range 3-212 per year), to read newspapers (1-36 per month) and books other than schoolbooks (2-30 per month), this may also be an over-estimation. In interviews teachers claim that people generally do not read or write in pupils’ homes and that those who find books and letters in their homes are only a few. The cost of a newspaper, about 300 Tanzania shillings, Tshs, does not make it probable that a teacher would be able to buy one newspaper a day. The availability of newspapers also does not make such a high amount of reading probable. In one of the schools newspapers are available in a town five kilometres away but irregularly. In no other of the villages are newspapers easily available. For example, two of the teachers who claim to read a newspaper every day live in a village that is fifteen kilometres from the nearest centre, and even there newspapers are seldom available. The nearest place where they could buy a newspaper fairly regularly is 35 kilometres away and there is no car in the village, nor are there any bus services. Also the availability of books makes me doubt teachers’ reports on reading. Even in teachers’ homes there are generally no books, except for occasionally a Bible. It may of course be the fact that people read the same text again and again or that only a small part of a newspaper is read every day and that this is what is behind teacher’s reports. When we discuss the teachers’ claims about reading habits we also have to consider that there is barely any teacher who has electric light in the house and that most teachers can only afford a kerosene lamp. Furthermore few female teachers can spend time reading at home as work has to be done during daylight and in the case there is a kerosene-lamp in the house this is rarely used by the woman as she spends the evening in the kitchen cooking supper and the kerosene lamp is usually put in the mulyango or outdoors in the space between the main building and the kitchen.

Teachers were also asked to estimate the future for their pupils. Also here the variation was great. Remarkably most teachers estimated that between one third

85 A teacher’s salary was in 2003 in the range between 68,000 and 480,000 Tshs per month (about 65-450 USD).
and half of their pupils would go on to secondary school, while in reality the figure is only a few percent. Notably very few admitted that any of their pupils would not finish standard seven although the reality is that quite a high number drop out during primary school. 21 of the 53 teachers did not answer this question at all, while 11 answered zero.

The variation can probably be referred to the teachers’ situation. Their instinct for self-preservation together with pupils’ avoidance strategies make them overestimate pupils’ skills (see chapter 9). Other reasons for the variation in answers may be that teachers were not used to questionnaires with this type of question. As reflection is not encouraged among teachers and safety strategies do not encourage teachers to investigate pupils’ real level of knowledge, teachers are probably not used to reflecting on these things (see chapter 9). Over-estimation of skills and of use of high status languages are in this way built-in in the system. We also have to remember that a questionnaire handed out by a researcher from Europe fits into the authoritative type of literacy that we will see later is dominant in schools (see 6.1). It is also possible that teachers differed in how they understood questions. To “write intelligibly” might have been perceived according to the expected level at pupils’ respective ages, which may mean to be able to copy from the blackboard. Reading a newspaper may have been perceived as to read collectively the way reading is often carried out in homes.

5.4 Summary and conclusions

The sorting function of language and schooling in Karagwe becomes more evident when we analyse teachers’ language ideologies and their attitudes to teaching/learning. It is obvious that language ideologies in schools favour the small minority of children that are raised in an environment where Swahili is used, such as urban middle class contexts, while for by far the majority schooling implies drastic changes in language use. The stigmatisation of use of Runyambo becomes more evident when we see teachers’ overestimation of their own use of Swahili and of pupils’ proficiency in Swahili, and when we observe pupils’ denial of any difficulties with Swahili whatsoever. This may also be perceived as safety strategies as it is in the interest of both teachers and pupils to overestimate pupils’ Swahili proficiency.

If we return to Cazden’s language functions in school (see the beginning of this chapter), language of the curriculum, of control and of personal identity, we find that teachers use Swahili as the language of the curriculum and of control, while they use Runyambo to express their personal feelings. However pupils, who at least in the lower classes do not master Swahili, do not have access to a language to express themselves at all, except for in the secret pupil-pupil interaction. This probably makes the controlling task for the teacher easier.

What counts as knowledge and learning in schools is affected by patterns of language use and by the fact that the focus in school is on repetition and copying of “schooled knowledge” in Swahili and English. Hence important knowledge
from the pupils’ perspective, such as to be able to guess the teachers’ intentions and to be able to memorise without reflection, is connected with Swahili and English at the same time as pupils’ understanding of the academic content is implicitly not perceived as important. This also affects teachers’ and pupils’ perceptions of literacy. In the next chapter different literacy practices in Karagwe will be analysed.
Chapter Six

Literacy Practices in Karagwe

In the previous chapters I claimed that schooling holds an important role in sorting pupils through language ideologies. This is a process where literacy plays a crucial role. In this chapter I will analyse literacy practices in Karagwe, that is people’s perspectives on literacy, the ways they make sense of literacy and the uses they make of literacy in their day-to-day lives.

Karagwe has over the last century changed from being mainly an oral society, depending on oral communication in most of its activities, to become a society using both literacy and orality in different situations and on different levels. Literacy is nowadays present in the lives of the Banyambo in many different ways. The different literacy practices that exist in Karagwe today are a result of both external and internal factors. Important external factors are the ways literacy was introduced and imposed in the area and these external factors still exert pressure. Western forces are not less today, in the era of post-colonialism and globalisation. Internal factors are the ways people objectify literacy and give it meaning from within the society.

As we saw in 3.3.2, literacy was introduced in Karagwe together with Christianity and a Western type of formal education. Thus the history of literacy is closely connected with the history of education and Christianity in Karagwe. The word for reading in Runyambo, for example, *okushoma,* also means studying and praying with studying as the unmarked meaning. Researchers such as Besnier (1995) in Polynesia, Bloch (1993) in Madagascar, Kulick and Stroud (1993) in Papua New Guinea and Street (1993) in Iran have shown in similar cases that, although literacy was introduced in a top-down manner, people did not passively receive literacy, but they made sense of it, related it to their lives and strove to make use of it in ways they perceived as relevant. While literacy apparently has shaped people’s lives, they have themselves simultaneously shaped literacy to make it a tool in their own day-to-day settings of life.

In most homes in Karagwe literacy is not very frequently used in people’s daily lives. In short very few Banyambo read and write frequently and with good command of literacy while the majority read and write on a rudimentary level and only occasionally make use of literacy. Main literacy practices are related to
schools and religious life. Pupils bring exercise books home from schools, occasionally also a textbook. These are sometimes read by children. In some families prayers or religious texts are read during morning or evening prayers but this is not very frequent, except in a few families. Main literacy practices involving adults are connected with informal letters to and from relatives and friends. Common for these literacies is that they are often shared. A text, be it a letter, a school book or a religious text, is commonly read out aloud and discussed among a group of people. As texts are commonly written in Swahili and discussed in Runyambo most literacy practices are bilingual.

In primary school there are naturally more literacy practices present. Signs and records are kept by teachers and headmasters and this is apparent for the pupils for example during the attendance call after the morning parade. In classrooms, pupils main literacy practice is “reading” from the blackboard, many times without actually seeing what is written, and copying “questions” (see chapter 5, compare also 1.2 on literacy versus reading and writing).

In society, literacy is used in a variety of ways. As we saw in chapter 4, language is related to power, and as literacy is an aspect of language, literacy too is related to power. In the following presentation I will structure literacy practices in Karagwe according to their relation to power. I will divide them into three groups which I will name accordingly: 1) dominant literacies, 2) semi-dominant literacies and 3) dominated literacies.

6.1 Dominant literacies

The literacy practices in the first group, dominant literacies, are highly valued in the society and are used to govern and regulate the life and actions of the inhabitants. They are standardised and normative, form is more focused than content and they are often examined and deemed “right” or “wrong” according to formal norms. These literacy practices are prescribed by authorities such as schools, governmental institutions and, to a lesser extent, religious institutions. They are mainly in Swahili but English is often used when one of the interactants is a non-Swahili speaker or when one of them is of high status. In some contexts, such as in the systems of banks, post and telephone, both Swahili and English are used, often simultaneously, one part of the text being the translation of the other, although most people, if not all, master Swahili in these contexts. Ruhaya or Runyambo are not used. Dominant literacies are mainly used in correspondence involving authorities. Private persons use these literacies mainly to apply for aid and for applications such as for employment, studies and holiday. In classrooms these literacies are mainly used to test pupils’ skills.

Examples of literacy practices from this group in school, in which form is more important than content, are rules, regulations and official letters patched to the notice board in the headmaster’s office. In this room there is always at least one notice board where schedules, rules and certain statistics are patched. Sometimes there are also some official letters from the district office. If the
board is too small and the advertisements too many they will be patched directly to the wall or to a cupboard in the room. Apart from these advertisements there may be a wall calendar and there are usually also some pedagogical posters, usually about topics such as AIDS prevention, good farming or different scientific topics. The content of the papers attached to the walls in the headmaster’s office may be the following:

- The time-table for all classes, of the dates for the school year and numbers of lessons per teacher
- Statistics about pupils (number, gender, number of disabled children and orphans) and teachers (grade, year of exam, wage grade)
- Tables of academic responsibility among the teachers (teachers are usually divided into groups, responsible for different subjects, with one of the teachers in charge)
- Rules for the school
- Table of school projects
- Tables of other responsibilities, such as pupils’ monitors
- The names of the persons in the school-board
- Official letters from the District Education Office

Also these papers are mainly in Swahili but sometimes in English and they are seldom read. The headmaster may have read them – the main part is usually written by himself – but in his daily work he does not read them. Teachers, pupils and parents do not enter the office without a reason and do not spend their time there reading on the walls. They quickly finish their task and leave the room. The most common task bringing them there is to talk with the headmaster or to fetch something, such as a piece of chalk (pupils), an attendance book (teachers), or to discuss the payment of school fees (parents). Now, if these advertisements are seldom read, what is their function? We might get a clue if we look more closely at the texts and how people relate to them.

For these advertisements, the form is more important than their content. We can start by looking at the time-table. The time-table is always irreproachable according to regulations given by the authorities. The number of lessons per week for each class and subject always follows the stated stipulations. However I never came across a single school day where what was stated in the official time-table was in accordance with lessons actually being taught. After lunch, in all schools, lessons are not taught at all more or less as a rule. Very often lessons in subjects such as Maarifa ya Jamii, ‘Social Sciences’, and Stadi za kazi, ‘Handcraft’, are realised as cleaning the school yard, working in the school shamba, working in teachers’ homes or, most frequently, not at all. That is, pupils sit in

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86 See 3.4.7.
87 See 3.4.1.
88 See 3.4.1.
their classrooms, while teachers do something else. Teachers might be in the teachers’ office, in their own homes or elsewhere. Lessons in religion rely on volunteers from different religious congregations who are poorly paid. Thus the number of lessons taught in religion varies a lot. The numbers of lessons not being taught vary between schools and also between days. One day most lessons in a school may be taught while there might be none the next day. The reasons for this vary, but apparently the time-table in the headmaster’s room does not correspond to lessons actually taught. In 2002, for example, about six weeks after the start of the school year, new regulations from the District Education Office forced some of the schools to remodel the whole time-table. Due to low results in the final exam in primary school for the whole district the previous year, pupils mainly in standards 4 and 7 were to be taught in two shifts. There were lot of misunderstandings and teachers were particularly annoyed with having to teach more lessons per week, in some cases an increase from 28 to 55 lessons per week and teacher. This caused an increased discrepancy between the official time-table and what was actually realised, as teachers showed their resistance to the policy by a lower frequency of “teaching activities”, that is they occupied themselves with things other than teaching.

It is also interesting to study the school rules. On the notice board in all of the five main informant schools, there is an advertisement about school rules. One rule is always kuwahi (to be on time). Pupils and teachers are told to be on time, in particular the time to arrive in the morning is regulated. Pupils are expected to arrive before 7.15

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89 To someone not acquainted to school context in Tanzania this may seem blameworthy, but we should remember that there are many duties teachers are supposed to carry out that intrude into the teaching, such as attending meetings, supervising tests and exams, visiting the District Office, being demanded to bring information and statistics of varying types, calling new pupils and so on.
to carry out certain duties. The teacher in charge is also supposed to arrive at that time, while other teachers are usually expected to arrive before 7.30. The school day starts at 8.00, according to the time-table. However many pupils and the majority of the teachers are not in time in the mornings. Pupils who are late are sometimes punished while I never saw teachers being punished. In all schools there is a notebook where teachers are supposed to note the time they arrive every morning. In most cases the time written does not correspond to the time when teachers actually arrive. In one case an officer from the District Education Office visited one of the schools and gave the teachers a sharp reprimand about being on time. He stated that teachers that were late were to lose their salary for that day and that headmasters that did not take measures would lose their posts. At this very school teachers are usually late, but most school days the majority of the teachers have arrived before the first lesson. During the inspector’s talk none of the teachers commented about what he said but the day after only one teacher was on time for the first lesson, and that was the teacher in charge for the morning duties and the morning parade. The others arrived 60–120 minutes late. We can compare this behaviour with the way children use passive discourse in their learning in the homes (see 7.1 and 8). As children do in homes, teachers listened, neither questioned nor disputed what was said from the authority, still they did not obey, rather the delay the next day may be regarded as a silent protest or resistance.

Another rule on the board in every headmaster’s office is the rule about language use in school. No language is supposed to be used in school except for Swahili and English. However, this rule is on the wall in the headmaster’s office, the room in the school together with the teachers’ office, where Runyambo is used most. Parents visiting the headmaster invariably address him/her and are answered in Runyambo and teachers and the headmaster frequently use Runyambo in their discussions with each other. The place in school where Runyambo is used least is in the classrooms and those using it there are the teachers. In this case teachers’ behaviour may be experienced as resistance but also as comfort. As teachers are more comfortable when using Runyambo for familiar matters it is natural for them to use it also in school when discussing such matters.

A third example from a school board is an official letter from the District Education Office attached to the board in one school. The letter stated that teachers were not allowed to use pupils as workers in their own homes or in their shamba. This letter was dated about six months back and had apparently been attached to the board for the whole time. This was the one among the schools involved in this study where teachers used pupils most as workers in their own homes and their mashamba, ‘fields’. The headmaster’s home was among the ones where pupils were instructed to work.

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90 In one of the schools the notice also states that no other language, except Swahili and English, is to be used in homes. In this very area there is no Swahili speaker at all in many homes, not to mention any English speaker.
From this we can conclude that the reason for attaching these advertisements to the notice board is not that they should be read and obeyed. However, following the passive discourse used by children in homes in interaction with adults, where children are expected to obey at any cost (see 7.1), one might conclude that the main reason is to show obedience and attention to what one is told by the superior, although this does not mean that one actually obeys. To show obedience, in this case, would be to listen without contradicting and not to show disobedience. This is also what children do in their passive voice. Children do not always obey, but they are careful not to show their disobedience. This may be defined as a form of resistance, which is common in an authoritarian system such as the Tanzanian schools system.

Also the posters are included in this group as they follow the same pattern. They are produced centrally, often in collaboration with a foreign aid-organisation. They are then distributed to the schools, but as they do not fit into the usual
ways of teaching that dominates in schools, they are rarely used, but hang on the walls of the headmaster’s office. Thus this may also be seen as resistance by showing obedience without obeying. I would also like to include books in the library in this category. Some of the schools were involved in a library-project where they were given books for the school library. The books were mainly tales for children, traditional East-African folk-tales written down and illustrated, and non-fiction books on different topics considered relevant. However, these books also mainly remained on their shelves in the library and, although both teachers and pupils claimed that pupils might borrow the books, I never saw this happen.

In one case I myself brought a pile of books to a school from the District Library, for the school to use for one week. During the week the books were only skimmed through by the headmaster. A few teachers looked at the front covers but the books did not reach the pupils. From this we can conclude that teachers do not see the ways this type of books may fit into their teaching. This is not surprising, as the main reason that teachers give for giving their pupils a reading or writing task is to test their ability. Thus teachers do not find the suitability of this type of books. However lack of books is one of the problems teachers mention frequently, although the books they ask for are the official textbooks. As they normally only have five to ten textbooks for each class in each subject, and the pupils usually number between 50 and 90 in a class, what they ask for are more copies of the textbooks.91

Teachers are involved in another literacy practice in school that I include in this group. That is the keeping of records of different type. Attendance books are kept in the mornings and all lessons should be planned and the plan written in a special notebook. Each teacher keeps his or her own planning book and this is a typical example of dominant literacy where the form is more important than content. Each lesson plan should follow a stipulated formula (objectives, repetition, lecture, assessment, evaluation, teacher’s activities and pupils’ activities). The planning books are read in the case of inspection. The inspector usually comments on “mistakes” in following stipulated formula, but is not likely to comment on the fact that each teacher usually plans only 2-3 of the 6-8 lessons he or she is supposed to teach each day. Lesson plans on Mathematics and English are commented on more frequently than are plans on Maarifa ya Jamii, ‘Social Sciences’, and Sayansi Kimu, ‘Home science’.

Some types of religious literacy may be included in dominant literacies, such as the reading of the Bible and the Qur’an. In some congregations this reading is regulated by reading schemes and the reading is often done collectively after which the text is discussed and interpreted. The interpretation is aimed at understanding the text. If the text is in Swahili it is not easily understood by many people as the language of the Bible is on quite an abstract and complex

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91 However I came to witness, during the later part of my study when in some cases the number of textbooks increased, that even when there were many textbooks in the cupboard, the teacher only took out ten when she went to teach in a class with 70 pupils.
level. When the text is read aloud it is often introduced by expressions such as: *Kitabu kinasema ...*, ‘The book says …’. *Kwenye Bibilia tunasoma ...*, ‘In the Bible we read …’, *Maneno ya Mungu yalikuwa ...*, ‘God’s words were …’ or *Nitasoma ilivyoandikwa ..., ‘I will read as it was written…*. This type of reading, word for word with interpretation but without critique, also resembles the relation adult–child where the reader is supposed to passively receive and *kuhurira* (Swahili: *kutii*, ‘to show obedience’) and to show *makune* (Swahili: *heshima*, ‘honour’).

Another frequently occurring literacy practise in this group is the marking of belongings, such as furniture and bed sheets in guest houses, schools and other official places. Most institutions mark their belongings with letters and figures. In a school, for example, every piece of furniture is listed in a book kept by the headmaster and marked accordingly with symbols for the name of the school, the room where it belongs, the number of the item itself. There are certain persons who do this marking as an enterprise.

Other examples of dominating literacies are advertisements and letters from authorities such as offices at village, ward or district level, the office of the parish or the headmaster of the primary school. The letters may be sent by mail but often they are brought directly by people, such as school children, who might be given the task to copy them in case several copies are needed. This type of advertisements can also be attached to for example a tree to be read by people passing by. The task of the letter is usually to call people for a meeting, to demand school fees and school funds, taxes or other fees or to advertise a job vacancy. The purpose of the letter or advertisement may also be to inform people about some regulations or decrees, such as not to light grass-fires or to watch out for *UKIMWI* ‘HIV/AIDS’. Central in a town or larger villages, boards are often erected with decrees such as: *Watoto yatima ni sawa na watoto wako*, ‘Orphans are equal to your children’, or *Weka mji safi*, ‘Keep the town clean’.

Letters are also important, for example as permissions. A person who for example wants to visit an institution or an authority, such as a sector of the health service or a school has to “come with a letter”, that is a permission letter by a superior in the organisation or system in question. This notion of “coming with a letter” is very important and an opportunity to show authority. This is an area where I myself made many mistakes by failing to “come with the proper letters” on several occasions. Also privately it is common that people “come with a letter”. A child sent to do an errand may bring a letter written by the parent and a person asking for help often does this by “coming with a letter”. However I include this type of private letters in the second group, semi-dominant literacies.

### 6.2 Semi-dominant literacies

The second group, *semi-dominant literacies*, consists of literacies initiated and prescribed from authorities but used by inhabitants to influence their own lives and in interaction between people in the villages and homes. This type of literacy
is often in Swahili but may also be in Runyambo. The degree of normativeness and standardisation is lower than in the first group, and if these literacy practices are examined they are more likely to be commented on according to the content, such as amount of litres of milk given by a cow or numbers of buckets of beans harvested from a shamba. The function is emphasised but also the form. One example is when women’s groups are instructed on how to use literacy to plan their meetings, how to write an agenda and the minutes. In a group there are usually some who are more qualified and who are elected as chairperson and secretary. This might be a female primary school teacher, but often a woman that did not finish more than the seven classes of primary school. The instructions are given by leaders or women employed by one of the NGOs. The instruction may be given at seminars, bringing leaders of several groups together, or in their own premises.
Other examples are “clinic-cards” showing the growth of pregnant women and infants, and record-books for project cows and micro-loans. The clinic-cards are pre-printed cards, which due to shortage are often replaced by note-books of the type used in schools. They are filled in by local assistants to the nurse at the “clinic-days” once a month. At the same time the women get some basic health care instruction and sometimes short seminars on child rearing. For many women in rural areas this is the only time they leave their home area and meet people from other areas. These clinic-cards are often treated carefully by the mothers. In case the infant has to be brought to a hospital or a dispensary, the clinic-card is also brought.

Some persons are given project cows free after they have attended a seminar of one week. At the seminar they are taught how to keep the cow fenced, how to treat her and keep her healthy. They are also taught how to keep record of the amount of milk, of when the cow is covered, and when she gives birth. The first cow-calf is then returned to the project as payment. People from the project keep visiting these persons and studying their record-books.

Furthermore there are some NGOs giving out micro-loans to women. These loans are also given together with instructions on how to tend the loan and instructions on simple book-keeping, using note-books. The note-books are studied by the loan-administrators together with the loan-keepers, and the loan-keepers are given advice. As Banyambo women traditionally are not involved in sale-farming except on a small scale, this is usually a new skill which empowers the woman in the family. During seminars participants read and write, although mainly collectively.

One important difference between literacies in this group and in the first is the mutual respect that often exists between the teacher/instructor and the learner/reader in this case. This mutual respect resembles the active child-child learning in the homes that I will describe in the next chapter. In both cases one person (or a few) teaches another (others) and in both cases the learner is actively engaged, asking questions and interacting with the teacher. The most obvious difference is in the respect shown the learner by the instructor. While pupils are supposed to obey at any cost in school, group members interact with their instructors.

Another important difference between this group of literacies and the first, dominant literacies, is the focus both on content and form. Women’s groups are taught how to plan the agenda, how to write the minutes, to write time-tables and speeches down for meetings and so on, but the form is taught as a tool to help the women in their task. Also in this case the leaders show the women respect, sensitively giving them advice and carefully making sure that the women are not discouraged. One example was when a young, female accountant inspected the women’s book-keeping by studying their note-books. When she discovered that

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92 Recall that married women live outside their clan and thus outside the area where they grew up.
one woman had mixed everything in one row, date, income and costs, and then added all up, including the date, she sat down and instructed the woman patiently, in Runyambo, using both the woman’s own book and figures, and making sure she had understood, without mocking her or in any way showing impatience with her mistake. The book-keeping of a project is likely to be assessed by a local leader but comments will rather be on the outcome of the project than on formal features.

Examples of religious literacies in this group are the reading of religious pamphlets in Swahili and Ruhaya, but I would also classify the reading of the Bible in Ruhaya as belonging to this group, as the use of written Ruhaya is not promoted by authorities. Another type of religious literacy are the fund raising schemes found in the Lutheran church. Those members of the congregation that like to may promise to raise a certain amount for the church the following year. In church the person will then find his or her personal envelope where he or she is to put the collection. This is then added up until the promised sum is reached.

Some types of advertisements may be referred to this group, such as commercial advertisements. They are more focussed on the content and on getting the message across than official advertisements in the first group. Furthermore they do not follow a common form and standardised norms. Some examples are posters advertising beers, soft drinks and medicines, such as: Safari Lager – inaburudisha, ‘Safari Lager – it refreshes’, and Punguza maumivu na Panadol, ‘Lessen the pain with Panadol’.93

Personal letters are also referred to this group. They usually follow given norms and there are clear regulations on how they should be written, which are taught in school. In many cases these letters are produced and read through

93 Note that the selling of traditional beer, such as pombe and gongo, would not be advertised through literacy, but in the traditional way with a green leaf on a stick.
mediators. That is, people who do not know how to read and write still produce and receive letters by using a family member, a neighbour or a child as mediator. Children told me that this is something they do quite often and that there has to be a sense of trust between the mediator and the mediated. As one boy in standard seven explained:

Tunawatunzia siri zao. We keep their secrets for them.

These private letters are quite formal, although they are not corrected and deemed right or wrong, like official letters in the first group. As the letters are usually sent between relatives and close friends the message is about family matters, such as salutations (following formal patterns), the health of the family members, invitations to weddings and burials or requests for economic subsidies, mainly from pupils in boarding schools to their relatives.

The exercise books that school children bring home every day from schools may be used in another type of literacy that may be referred to as semi-dominant, involving mainly children. At home, if there is time between other duties, children may sit together and read from the note-books, or from school books when they are brought home. Usually elder siblings read for younger ones. This
may be the way many children learn to read and write, by being read to, and sometimes being explicitly taught by elder siblings. Many children refer to how their elder siblings teach them and explain to them what they have not understood in school. Also other relatives may be involved. Adults may ask a child to read to them, but most commonly only children are involved. Thus this is an example of schooled education being learned through the active child-child discourse, (see 7.1) although outside the school environment.

6.3 Dominated literacies

The third group of literacies, dominated literacies, are not used in communication with authorities, neither are they prescribed or explicitly taught in school. The level of normativeness and standardisation is low, and all languages in the area are used. Swahili, English and Runyambo are the most common but also examples of Luganda, Kinyarwanda, French, Arabic, Japanese, Chinese, and German may be found. Code-switching is frequent and also “Swahiliisation” (or “Bantuisation”) of English words, such as *kuovateki* ‘to overtake’, and *andasiketi* ‘underskirt’. One example of this group is decorations used mainly in homes but also in places such as churches, offices and bars. These types of decorations are used very creatively. They range from writing words of wisdom in the form of decorations to using written materials, such as school children’s note-books and newspapers, to create garlands, flowers and imaginative shapes or simply to cover walls.

The decorations are often dyed the same way as grass is traditionally dyed for plaeting. Another example of how literacy is used for decoration was in the house of a newly married couple. The wall in the *mulyango* had been covered with mud in a light colour and the words “LOVE” and “NAISHINAE KWARAHA” (a non-standard-spelling in Swahili for standard Swahili *Ninaishi naye kwa raha*, ‘I live with him/her in harmony’, together with flowers and decorative patterns, had been painted using mud in a darker colour.

In this case a traditional way of decorating houses had incorporated written text. Also other traditional decorations, such as those plaited in dyed grass, often have inscriptions imbedded. More modern decorations are wall-calendars and papers attached to the walls which usually have sayings, religious messages or words of wisdom written on them. A popular type of decorations are *emota*. These decorated papers with written words of wisdom, such as: *Ninaishi niwezavyo Siishi mtakavyo*, ‘I live as I can Not as you want’.

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94 In Rwanda, which boarders Karagwe, French was the colonial language and in two of the villages involved in the study there are many Rwandans.

95 It is quite odd to note that Chinese and Japanese appears in different places although probably not one single person can understand or read it. This is a result of the fact that much industrial goods are imported from The People’s Republic of China and that most cars are Japanese.

96 From the back of a taxi: *Tafakari kabla ya kuovateki* (Think before overtaking).

97 From a letter written to the author by a girl in standard five.
In homes the mulyango is the place where decorations are found which resemble this type of literacy. Other examples of dominated literacies are:

- A *chitabu cho bosika* (a book where shares of an inheritance are written)
- A diary for important occasions which is kept in some homes
- Advertisements such as *Tunauza soda bei nafiu*, ‘We sell soda low price’, or *Tunatoa huduma ya kufua na kunyosha nguo*, ‘We assist with washing and ironing clothes’
- Writings on walls and doors such as *Stoo ya baba*, ‘Father’s store’, and *Bafu*, ‘Bath-room’
- Sayings printed on *kanga*, a type of cloth used mainly by women
- Signs on taxis and small shops
- Secret letters

*Chitabu cho bosika* is a note-book kept by some elderly persons. In this book shares of their inheritance is written. This may be written very informally, using pen or pencil, in Runyambo, and may be changed over and over again (there are laws on how a legally correct will should be written). A diary is kept by some people where important occasions may be recorded. The occasions vary from family matters such as births and deaths to events of national or international importance, such as the death of *Baba wa Taifa* (‘The Father of the Country’,

*Picture 6: Decorations on a mud-coloured wall in a home.*
that is president Nyerere) and the attack on the World Trade Center in New York in 2001.

An example of how such a diary may also be used for other personal matters, such as emotional writing, is the book kept by an elderly woman, Ma Martiale. The book, which is a big exercise book with cardboard covering, is basically a *Chitabu cho bosika* where she has written down her will about the inheritance of her ownings.98 But through time she has used this book to handle her emotional feelings. When she has felt that she has been mis-treated by other people, mainly relatives but also neighbours and other persons, she has written down her view on what has happened. This has then become her secret book, which her relatives will be allowed to read when she is dead. Thus she has created a way to handle injustice she feels has been done to her. Her writing is in Runyambo and she makes many spelling mistakes, such as mixing letters and using non-standard word boundaries, but she writes lengthy narrations, up to several pages for each occasion.

A list with important occasions is used by SAWATA, *Saidia Wazee Tanzania*, ‘help the old in Tanzania’. On the list is given the year certain occasions

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98 The woman showed me the book once but because of the language and the frequency of misspellings I was not able to understand the text. When I later asked her for permission to read the book she wrote me a narration of her life of several pages, which I could read with the help of a translator. The privacy of the book was apparent at the same time as she was apparently proud of the book and eager to show both her writing skills and to express her thoughts to me. Some of her relatives told me about the content of the original text.
occurred, such as when different Bakama took the throne or died and the years of the World Wars. These lists are then used to try to state the age of old people who do not know their birth date. There are also lists made by fortune-tellers where each year is given a name in Runyambo.

Advertisements in this category are found on for example walls, doors, trees and small shops. A small duka, ‘shop’, may have names written on them, such as Kabegambire Bakery (a Runyambo-name combined with a ‘non-standard spelling of ‘Bakery’. Note that this was found on a shop that does not sell bread). In school we find children’s scribbling on school-desks, walls, floors and school-yards and writings on roof trusses and walls made by craftsmen. These dominated writings are frequently done with chalk but also pens, pencils, sticks and fingers (on the ground and on the soot on kitchen walls) are used. On desks mainly ball pens and sharp tools are used. Notably some of these dominated literacies are accepted and promoted in churches, while they are not accepted in schools. Churches may be decorated with the above described decorations, while
schools are not. The only type of dominated literacies I have found in schools are children’s scribbling and craftsmen’s markings.

Buses are frequently decorated in fancy styles with names and sayings, often religiously inspired. These are usually painted or made from self-sticking plastic in fancy metallic colours. Names and sayings are in many different languages,
most commonly in Swahili, English, Arabic and Runyambo. One example of a saying on a local bus is *Kabelinde akutwale* (Runyambo for ‘Let Kabelinde take you/bring you’). A humorous one had BOING written on it (referring to the aeroplane type) which is a very imaginative association in connection with these worn-out buses on the bumpy roads in Karagwe.

Women wear *kanga*, which is a certain piece of cloth sold in pairs. These are worn on top of other clothes, one piece usually as apron/skirt and one to wrap the shoulders and sometimes the head. *Kanga* are also used in the household for different purposes, such as towels, napkins, dusters, bed sheets, to carry infants, to wrap dead bodies and so on. The *kanga* are printed in colourful patterns with a Swahili saying, such as *Kikulacho ki nguoni kwako,* ‘That which eats you is in your clothes’, which is a traditional Swahili proverb. The saying is put strategically to be visible when the kanga is worn as a skirt or to wrap the shoulders and people discuss these sayings. Also when a pair of kangas is given as a gift, the saying is usually taken into consideration and discussed. Some women are even said to wear certain *kanga* consciously to scorn each other.

Secret letters passed between individuals I also count as dominated literacies. Banyambo generally have many secrets and have developed sophisticated and intricate ways to exchange information secretly. In an extended family members keep secrets and a husband and a wife are generally anxious not to reveal more than necessary to each other about for example their eventual economic resources. The woman usually suspects that if her husband were to get to know about her resources he would decrease his economic contributions to the
household. In this secrecy co-wives, mistresses and members of respective clans are also often involved. In this interactional pattern secret notes and letters have become important. These are delivered personally or often by a child.

Among the print present in Karagwe there is another type that we may also include in dominated literacies, although people do not read them nor do they show interest in their meaning. This type of print is represented by slogans and writings on for example tee-shirts, imported vehicles and packing on imported goods. The printing on tee-shirts is found in several languages, due to the big market in second-hand-clothes. The print on vehicles is usually in Japanese and the text on the packings is usually in Chinese, as that is mainly where they come from. One may argue, following Brandt and Clinton who refer to the study by Besnier (1995), that print of this type “enter into the cultural and historical facts (...) even without the mediating permission of a local literacy event” (2002: 342). Thus, although people can not read some of these texts, for example in Chinese and Japanese, and usually do not bother to read them, for example on tee-shirts, these literacies exist as artefacts although they are not involved in literacy practices among people.

6.4 Summary and conclusions

As I have argued, different types of literacy practices relate differently to power and have different functions. This may be summarised as in Table 4.

As is illustrated in the table, semi-dominant literacies may be perceived as a stage on a continuum from dominant to dominated literacies. Of course most types of literacy have social, cultural and economic functions, but when it comes to their main functions they differ. I claim that the first group, the dominant, prescribed literacies have a main function to test and sort people and thus to maintain authority. The second group, the semi-dominant, mainly have a developing function, particularly in the economic and health fields while the last group, the dominated literacies, mainly have an aesthetic function. I argue that the dominated literacies are stigmatised as they are not found in authoritative,
official contexts such as school and offices, and rather in small, rural churches than in big, urban churches. However, people are usually not ashamed of them. Rather the use of them is restricted to private and rural areas. Thus there is also a potential for liberation and resistance in these literacies as people use them in their struggle with life, although on a macro-level they hold low status.

However the situation is more complex than that. People use literacies from all groups. Low educated people and poor peasants from rural villages may also use dominant literacies. They occasionally read a newspaper and they may write formal proposals for aid, such as for different projects or personal favours. They usually get access to these literacies through the use of mediators such as an educated relative. This means that at the same time as authorities maintain their power by using dominant literacies, poor people may resist the authorities by using mediators. There is thus constantly an interaction between the different groups of literacies, in both directions, both top-down and bottom-up.

If we return to the continuity between literacy practices in homes and in school, we find a discontinuity in children’s experience. The literacy practices of the dominant type which dominate in the school context and in classrooms are not likely to have involved children in homes before they start school, except for those children who have been taught by adults or elder siblings. At the same time, those literacy practices that they are most likely to have met in homes, that is the collective reading of prayers and the Bible and the keeping of records and written songs, prayers and speeches, are not practised in school. While literacy is practiced in context in homes, it is practised out of context in school. The effect of dominant literacies used in school is that the few pupils that rapidly acquire what they are supposed to are encouraged to use the dominant literacies and are thus socialised into literacy practices useful in higher education and higher posts. The majority who fail to acquire expected reading and writing skills rapidly, are socialised into a pattern of resistance and avoidance. They may acquire enough reading and writing skills to use them in their daily activities in life but very few will reach higher literacy skills.

The types of literacies that the majority will use in their life, semi-dominant and dominated literacies, are not taught in schools. Thus pupils are socialised to devalue these literacy practices while they do not learn them well enough to be able to write for example an agenda, procedures from a meeting, book-keeping and memoranda from their activities. This means that the majority will not achieve enough proficiency to be able to use literacy for their own economic development.
Chapter Seven

Discourses in Important Networks and Contexts in the Society

Literacies are practiced in terms of communication and interaction between people. To better understand literacy practices, we need to understand the contexts and discourses in which they are included. An important part of social life for people in Karagwe are the different types of networks people are involved in. Networks are continually constructed and reconstructed through people’s interactions, and children are socialised in relation to these networks. The networks are based on communication, both spatial and linguistic. Karagwe is intersected by roads. Most of these roads are what in Western terms would be considered paths and are only passable by foot. This system of roads dates centuries back and much of the history of Karagwe can be referred to them. The paths saw the armies of the rival kings passing by and they saw kings being transported in processions. On these roads brides have followed their relatives in the important exchange of the wedding, a procedure very important for the construction of networks of relations through gifts. In the 19th century the trade caravans used them and numerous feet of unfortunate slaves walked on them on their way to the coast and further transport overseas. Some of the paths have been constructed to enable them to be passed by bicycle. Very few have been turned into roads for motor vehicles. As cars and buses preferably climb and descend the numerous mountains of Karagwe in a serpentine mode, there are sometimes two parallel roads, one serpentine road for cars and bikes and one climbing as the crow flies for walking people and cattle. To this day there is no road with an asphalt surface in Karagwe, only a few have a surface with sand, the rest consist of the bare ground, that is varying from ceramic clay to pure stone.\textsuperscript{99}

This network of paths is important for the interaction between people and for their social life. People spend a lot of time walking on the roads to carry out

\textsuperscript{99} In fact, the first road with asphalt surface in the whole Kagera region (except from some roads in Bukoba town), that is the part of Tanzania west of Lake Victoria, was constructed in 2002-2004, but to the sorrow of the Banyambo did not reach Karagwe.
different types of actions. Walking on these roads, dusty or slippery depending on the weather, means interacting with numerous people on the way. Greetings are exchanged, and news and gossip are passed on. There are numerous reasons for travelling on the roads. People travel to visit friends and relatives and thus the networks are continuously maintained and reconstructed. They walk to find help in health matters, cattle are moved to and from pasture, to the butcher, to a buyer or to insemination. People carry their loads to and from the market or other places where they can buy or sell their goods. They are held up, robbed, they die, give birth, they are carried and give each other lifts on the roads. All this is carried out mainly by foot, sometimes by bike, rarely in an overloaded car.

Through this construction of a road-network, people have constructed networks of relationships. To a Munyambo these networks are crucial and constitute a base for security. When you have positive relations with many people you are more likely to have someone to get help from in the case of need. The exchange of gifts and help with one and another constitute the cement in these nets. Children are socialised into these networks from an early age. Infants are carried by their mothers and as soon as they start to walk they are sent to do errands. They keep on doing errands walking on the roads during their childhood. A child of seven years may be sent up to 50 kilometres to a relative with a message, which is often delivered in the form of a written letter.\footnote{That this is really the case has been observed in different ways during the study.} The child will then stay until he or she is sent home again, which may be after a few months. Toddlers may spend extended periods (sometimes years) in the house of a relative, such as the maternal grandmother or a maternal aunt (remember that married Banyambo women live outside their clans, which in this case may mean that the child may live outside both the clan of the mother and the father). Children may be given to other families to help in the house-hold, for example to baby-sit in families where there are no children of suitable age for that important task.

When the children reach five years they are supposed to start pre-school, which in many cases means walking 4-8 kilometres to school on narrow paths. In reality this is one reason why the school start for many children is delayed. The road and the distance is too tough. In poor families a child may be sent to look for a job. He or she may be picked up by an adult on the road, who needs some help in the house-hold, or ends up as a street-child in a town. There are street-children as young as two and three years and girl prostitutes as young as eight years in Omurushaka. Children may also run away from harsh conditions, many times caused by step-mothers and step-fathers, follow the roads and look for new opportunities.

These networks are important in people’s lives; they provide security, economic exchange, help, health, information and social contacts. In this interaction Runyambo is almost exclusively used. One example may give a richer picture of what this interaction may look like. Ma Fadhili was walking on
the road when she met a man from her home village, 50 kilometres away. He had been lucky in his fishing and was now walking to town to sell his fish. As she happened to have 500 shillings she bought some fish. In the same time she got some news from home. Ma Fadhili asked him to pass by her house the next time he was selling fish. The man then continued to town while Ma Fadhili went home to cook. The next day, when he was on his way back home, he passed by her house and asked her to write a letter to her father. She did so, and the man then took the letter with him on his walk back. He arrived at his home the same evening, and the next morning he sent a child to the house of Ma Fadhili’s father with the letter. This is thus an example of a child being involved in a common literacy practise in the home context.

If roads and paths constitute an important network overall, which people in Karagwe have to relate to, there also exist specified networks constructed for different reasons and involving different people. Two traditional networks are the networks of clans and the networks of boys from the same age-group in the Muteko-schools. The system of Muteko-groups was destroyed with the destruction of the traditional educational and political system while the clan-system is still important. Very few Banyambo would marry inside their own clan although not all follow totems and taboos any more. New networks have been constructed, and are still constructed, for different reasons and different groups. Religious networks, in different congregations, cut across clans, ethnic and geographical borders. Since independence, and following the policy of the party, CCM, and the policy of international aid-organisations, people have formed groups of different types. The political system of Tanzania with villages, vitongoji and kata (see 3.1) is one type of grouping which is of varying importance for people’s lives. The traditional groups, have been adapted to the formation of NGOs, which organise mainly groups of women and farmers. This has become an important tool for adult education over the last decades of the second millenium and also an important way for people to improve their lives. Other networks are those created through schooling and trade.

I will now present the interaction pattern and the discourses in some key networks. The term “discourse” is here used in the sense of what Gee called discourses with little “d” (Gee, 1996). With Gee, a number of sociolinguistic researchers have given the term “discourse” a broader scope than the pure linguistic (Morgan, 1997). They argue that the ways of using language of a social or cultural group have bearing on other dimensions of peoples’ lives, not only on language. Particular discourses do not just arise out of a language ideology or

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101 Remember that the ruling clans were endogamous. People claim that even today no one outside the former ruling clans could marry for example a Nyankole-girl as the dowry would be too high, that is too many cows. However marriages across the borders of the kingdom were, according to Professor Rubagumya (personal communication), very common for the ruling clans in the great lakes region.

102 CCM, Chama Cha Mapinduzi, was the only party in Tanzania until in the 1990s when a multiparty-system was introduced.
social practice but help constitute it. Following Papen (2001) I will use a perspective of discourse which “refers to themes, attitudes and values, expressed through written or oral statements, symbols, images and behaviour, which at a given time and place, within a certain institutional or non-institutional context, are deemed appropriate and meaningful and make a claim to truth” (Papen, 2001: 42). This sense of “discourses” is summed up by Morgan (1997) in four points, which all have a bearing on literacy:

1. Discourses constitute and are constituted by social practices and institutions.
2. Discourses ‘converse’ or ‘argue’ with one another. Some of these conversations or arguments may take place within as well as between individuals or groups.
3. Discourses do political work. Therefore discourse is always involved in circulating and promoting certain ideology in preference to another. It may do so all the more effectively if the knowledge and form of life so promoted are taken for granted as common sense.
4. Discourses help constitute not only the objects spoken and written about but also the speaking, writing subjects and their sense of self, their subjectivity.

My analysis will start with the context where children mainly spend their time before starting school, the homes. Then I turn to the society outside home and the discourses in some key networks where most pupils in Karagwe will spend their adult life.

7.1 Discourses in homes

In the analysis of interaction and communication in homes in Karagwe the focus will be on children’s perspectives, as this is of greatest relevance here. To describe the discourse where Banyambo-children grow up I will choose the case of one of all the small children I have met, Jeska, and try describe her environment from her perspective. The life of this little girl in many ways resembles the lives of thousands of other infants in Karagwe at the same time as it is a single case with its own characters.

Jeska is the youngest of six children in her family. She lives in a newly built house not yet finished. The house is constructed of sun-dried bricks and is as grey as the ground it is erected on. There she lives together with her mother, Ma Katunzi, and her five elder siblings who range from four to thirteen years of age. Their house is built on one of the many hill-tops about seven kilometres from one of the main towns in Karagwe. Close to their house is the house of her

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103 The home of Jeska is one of the homes where I spent extensive time throughout the study, both in their daily life and during formal celebrations.
father’s elder brother, where he lives with his wife and children. A path leads from these two houses to the house of the head of the extended family, her grandfather. These three houses are surrounded by the mashamba, of which each household has its part. As in most homesteads in Karagwe the main part of the mashamba consists of banana plants, growing like small forests around each house. This hill has been the home for this extended family for about ten years. Formerly they lived on a farm in the valley, close to the small river, but the unsettled times with bands of robbers harassing inhabitants, made the grandfather decide to move with the family to the more secure hill-top. He also took this opportunity to establish an Anglican congregation and erect a church on the hill-top.

The home of Jeska is warm. Although there is more wind on the hill-top than in the valley, the sun is often burning strongly. Her first year Jeska spent mainly in the arms or on the back of her mother or one of her elder siblings. When she was able to sit by herself she was put on the dusty ground now and then, but only for a few minutes and then in the centre of relatives and their activities. Her mother and her siblings were never far away, except for the three eldest children who left for school every workday and returned at noon or in the afternoon. Jeska’s father was very seldom around. He worked in town and only visited the family occasionally. Jeska participated in the daily work in the home, either in the arms of somebody or on their back. During her first years her mother’s breasts were always available for her. She soon learned to grab them by herself when she was in her mother’s arms and she was seldom denied them.

The daily activities were centred around food, water and cleanliness in the home. Jeska was present while water was fetched, people washed and dressed themselves, firewood was collected, work was done on the mashamba, the house was improved, food was prepared and cattle were taken care of. She was also present when elder siblings came from school and helped each other with their home-work. She saw them change to the white and blue school uniform in the morning and take it off when they returned. Sometimes she was brought to the neighbours’ houses, the households of her uncle and grandfather. Once a month she was brought to the klinik, ‘the child welfare station’. There she spent a day with her mother and 100-200 other mothers from the area and their infants sitting under some trees in the school yard which was the location for the activities. She was weighed and measured and sometimes given a vaccination, but most of the time she spent in the arms of her mother or some of her mother’s friends, waiting for their turn. All this she was part of and she could observe the environment from her secure place in someone’s arms or from someone’s back and during most of this time she was spoken to and cuddled. The language used to her was usually Runyanbamo. Swahili she could hear sometimes spoken between adults or used by children doing schoolwork but usually everyone addressing her spoke Runyanbamo.
The cuddling and caring of her was usually gentle and joyful. She was treated as a source of joy. She was often thrown in the air, accompanied with rhythmic, simple talk.\textsuperscript{104}

– Jesi! Jesi!

Jesi is her nickname.\textsuperscript{105} This is said rhythmically and with a strong stress and a high tone on the last syllable -si (underlined parts):

Dada we! Dada we! You sister! You sister!

Like most Banyambo-children, she was spoken to in a simple language and often given simple questions and commands, usually without the speaker expecting an answer from her. The use of high tone and stress on the last syllable is used to make salient what is said and to involve the listener, in this case the infant. We will return to this way of calling for attention later.

Jeska’s interaction was mainly with women and children, but even if men in Karagwe are usually busy elsewhere and with other activities, they often take the opportunity to communicate with children, not only their own. When Emanuel, a married man in his late thirties, visited a friend’s home he was put on a sofa with one of the infants in the house, Imani nine months, while tea was prepared. Emanuel started to play with the infant by placing him in front of him in the sofa and gave him a battery he found on the table:

\textit{Shika! Shika! Nenda kampe mjomba!} Take! Take! Go and give it to uncle!
\textit{Nenda kampe mjomba!}\textsuperscript{106} Go and give it to uncle!

Putting the battery on Imani’s back, under his T-shirt:

\textit{Unabeba moto! Unabeba mtoto!} You are carrying a child! You are carrying a child!

Putting the battery on Imani’s head:

\textit{Unachota maji! Unachota maji!} You are fetching water! You are fetching water!

During this interaction he gave the infant commands and training that were relevant for the child’s situation. Small children are often told to go and give something to someone who is close by and when Imani is only a few years old he will probably be carrying one of the smaller children in his home on his back

\textsuperscript{104} Underlined text refers to syllables pronounced with high tone and stress. This intonation pattern will be discussed more in what I call call-response interaction in chapter 9.

\textsuperscript{105} As most Banyambo-children Jeska has several names. Apart from her nickname, which is used here, she also has a traditional name and a Christian name.

\textsuperscript{106} As I was present Emanuel used Swahili during the whole interaction with Imani. He told me that he would have used Runyambo, had I not been present.
now and then and also start to learn to carry water on his head. The infants sit quiet and observe. They seldom try to say anything and people usually do not expect infants to speak.

When Jeska started to walk she was taken care of less by her mother and instead elder siblings, her paternal grandmother and other relatives became more and more important as care-takers. She then started to toddle around, following her sisters and brothers in their activities. Girls often interact with toddlers, cuddling and playing with them. The environment where Jeska spent her life grew more and more. As Jeska’s mother was engaged in women-group activities together with her female friends, Jeska often had the opportunity to interact with other children of her age. At the age of two years she already had a best friend, Paurina, with whom she spent more and more time. As they were girls and spent their time in a female environment, their games were female, such as carrying “dolls” on their backs, “cooking” and “washing clothes”.

In these extended families it is not unusual that children move between families, as mentioned earlier. Thus children in Nyambo-families are usually seen as assets and as important members of the family. It is important in child-rearing in Karagwe to see to it that children are not spoiled, *ateinewatesa* (Swahili: *kutowadekeza*). When an infant is weaned he or she is supposed to rely mainly on siblings. A toddler or a child should not cry, should behave properly towards elders, and be self-reliant to a greater extent than is common in for example Swedish families. Although parents are careful not to spoil children this does not mean that they do not show them affection. However, this is usually done quietly and discreetly.

When the child continues to grow, the upbringing becomes more and more sexually biased. Girls spend more and more time with elder sisters and female relatives and boys with male relatives. This means that the girls are kept close to the home, mainly working in the kitchen, in and around the house and on the mashamba. The part of production that is for consumption in the household is usually the responsibility of women, while the cash production is mainly a male activity. Thus girls mainly care for the hen and occasionally a house-pig, while boys mainly look after the cattle which is pastured, goats, cows and sheep. The number and type of cattle of course varies with the economic standard of the family. In the mashamba the women usually have their part, producing food such as food bananas, millet, maize, beans and other vegetables, while the men are responsible for beer bananas and cash crops such as coffee. The men are also

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107 The most important family form in Tanzania is the extended family. This means that in Swahili the word “mother” does not only refer to one’s own, biological mother, but also to the mother’s sisters and the wives of paternal uncles and often to all grown up women in general, that is all women who are mothers. The same counts also for “father”. To distinguish the biological parent terms like *mama aliyenizaa* (the mother who bore me) or *baba mzazi* (parental father) are used. Also the words “sister” and “brother” have broader connotation-fields than in the West, covering also the cousins on the paternal side. In Runyambo this system of relations is very complex and it is beyond the scope of this work to go deeper into this.
usually responsible for the buildings. This division is not strict and in case of a
good harvest some of what was intended for food may be sold and vice versa.
However commonly the economy of the woman is separated from that of the
husband, which means that what she may earn by selling from her part will
become her own money. The number of boys and girls respectively in the family
also decides who is allotted what work, but generally girls spend their time
together with female relatives close to the house, that is their lives are mainly
spent inside, while boys spend their time with men and travel more, that is they
are more in outside arenas (see 3.3.1 and Carlsson, 1989). However some of the
female responsibilities, such as fetching water and fire-wood, generally bring
women a distance from home also, as does visiting female friends.

During their upbringing strong emphasis is put on respect for older people and
on obedience. Important concepts in child-rearing are: amakune, ‘respect for
rank’, okuhurira, ‘to obey, to listen’, and omutima ‘heart’ (that is politeness and
proper behaviour).

A good Munyambo-child does not disturb the elders. It is important that
children learn to greet correctly and the system of greeting and politeness is
complicated. The inferior should always greet first and is responsible of using
the correct greeting. Thus children learn to greet very early. For example the first
thing to do for a child in the morning is to greet his or her parents and other
adults in the family politely, saying: Mba! This is said by toddlers while touching
the forehead or the cheeks of the elder. The same greeting is used by all people
to elder persons but commonly only toddlers touch the face of the elder. Instead
elder children, adolescents and adults stretch both their hands, which are held
palms together, towards the elder. The first Swahili-word commonly expressed
by small children is: Shikamoo! (the polite greeting to a superior person). It is
also important for children to keep to the side not to disturb the adults. For
example when a guest arrives at the house, the children should great the guest
politely, see to it that the guest gets in contact with some of the adults in the
house and then get out of the way and leave the adults on their own. A normal
Nyambo-house always has a mulyango gwa abaseija (a room where guests are
received, traditionally a room only for men, sebule in Swahili, see 2.5). Children
and women traditionally sit in the room behind, isenje/ebiso/endugu, and peep
quietly through the door to follow what happens in the mulyango.

Children in Karagwe are normally involved in two different discourses, one
active and one passive. Children interact actively with siblings and child
relatives, asking questions, joking, giving comments and so on. As elder siblings
are usually responsible for the care-taking of small children they are also
responsible for part of the education of the younger ones, as we will see under

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108 In this greeting there is a continuity according to the deference to be shown, where the
greatest deference is to lay flat on the ground. This was traditionally used to the Mukama but
also to the husband and father in some homes. Nowadays the greatest deference commonly
shown is to kneel down in front of elder persons or in formal ceremonies.
8.1. Children from the age of about 15 months are mainly taken care of by elder children. This is thus the discourse where most time is spent by toddlers and also where much of their socialisation is taking place. This is contrary to the interaction with parents and other adults where children hold a passive position. In this discourse children are supposed to observe, watch and listen, while remaining passive. They do not normally ask questions or comment. Instead they repeat what they are taught or carry out what they are told to do. While adults do not usually expect infants to answer, they often demand toddlers to do so, as one female adult meeting Benjamini, 2.5 years old:

Benjamini! Umeponaa? Niambie bas!  Benjamini! Have you recovered? Tell me!
Niambie bas!109 Tell me!

Also Benjamini’s father, a primary school head master, seemingly tries to persuade him to repeat by joking with him when he has wet himself in the school office:

Wewe kajinga! Wewe kanini?  You are a little fool! What are you?
Wewe kanini? Sema! Wewe kanini?  What are you? Say! What are you?

However, the child does not usually answer, which is accepted by the adult. While adults teach children, the responsibility for learning is on the children, either in the passive reception-exercising or in the active interaction with other children. Children who fail to learn are blamed by adults, either for being munafu, ‘lazy person’, ateine majezi, ‘having no intelligence’, that is a slow learner, or atarukuhurira, ‘being disobedient’.

Thus children in Karagwe are socialised in relation to language through both active and passive interaction. In the homes they meet mainly Runyambo but also Swahili to a varying degree, according to factors such as the distance to the district centre or a town and the level of education and occupation of adults in the family. Probably boys meet more Swahili as the male discourse is more external while the female discourse is more internal. In the active interaction between children and adolescents, Runyambo will be used almost exclusively. Only in connection with schooled education, such as reading from note-books or school-books and when school-children teach younger siblings, and with religious activities, will Swahili (and occasionally a few English words and phrases) be used.

The passive interaction children are involved in with adults includes both formal and informal discourses. Common informal discourses are when children are ordered to do errands and the instruction of children in duties in the home. In these interactions children are normally told what to do (usually in the imperative but sometimes also in the subjunctive). Formal discourses are, among others,

109 Note the intonation.
formal ceremonies and religious education and services in homes. The latter are mainly carried out in Swahili, except in poorly educated families in remote, rural areas, who use Runyambo (or other local languages such as Kinyarwanda in homes of refugees). In Muslim ceremonies both Swahili and Arabic are used. In family ceremonies such as weddings and burials, children are mainly spectators but there are certain parts of the ceremonies that are performed by children, such as in the burial and wedding ceremonies. In many families there are occasions where the whole extended family is gathered and where individuals give speeches. In these cases children may also volunteer, and are often encouraged to give a speech. In church services and Christian education children participate passively, as do most adults, and the interaction is similar to the teacher-pupil interaction in school (see 6.2). Although people are involved in prayers, songs, call-response interaction and reading the Bible, in churches the initiative is with the performer, that is usually a priest or an evangelist.

Traditionally in homes in Karagwe, as mentioned in chapter 3, the linguistic repertoire included the telling of folk-tales, the use of riddles and proverbs, composing and declaiming of poetry and songs. The telling of folk-tales traditionally took place in the kitchen after sunset while the food was cooking. Usually an adult (often an elderly woman) told the story while women, girls and small children were gathered in the kitchen, and men and adolescent boys sat outside the kitchen listening through the open door.  

As I mentioned in 3.3.1, sophisticated and elaborated forms of language were traditionally used on many occasions and in different settings in Karagwe. Today this artistic use of Runyambo has decreased a lot in frequency. The telling of folk-tales in families is rare and most discourses for elaborated use of Runyambo have given way to Swahili. However there is a trend for new forms of artistic use of Runyambo and Ruhaya. Music groups flourish and songs are composed both in Swahili and Runyambo, often with a political or educational message. A famous song-star from Bukoba, Saida Kalori, composes songs in both Swahili and Ruhaya, and she is praised in Karagwe in particular for her performances in a traditional style. Echivugo, the self-praising by young men described in 3.3.1, has decreased even though young people, even some young women, are said to compose their echivugo poems.

One speech act deserves special attention when we study language education and that is narration. To better understand call-response interaction in classrooms, which will be discussed in chapter 8, it is relevant to study narration among the Banyambo. As in many newly literate societies, oral communication holds an important place in Karagwe. Here this will not be analysed on a deeper level. I will focus on some features of relevance for classroom interaction. Generally narration holds a strong place in Karagwe. People quite often “take the floor” and keep it for a long time, without being interrupted. During my study this happened many times in situations I was involved in. In a conversation,

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110 This is also a time of the day that many male family members spend visiting friends.
involving two or more persons, one person, male or female, took the initiative to narrate. The narration could be quite long, up to an hour, during which the listener(s) were only expected to give feedback such as responses to calls (see below) or support such as *Ehee*, ‘Mmm’, *Ndiyo*, ‘Yes’, *Akaal*, ‘Is that so!’, repetitions and so on. One example was when I visited a family in their home. The elder sister of the husband in the family came to see me. She sat down and after the usual greetings she started to tell me about her bad health and how she had been (mis-)treated by doctors and health workers. The narration took more than 50 minutes during which I was only expected to give the usual response.

One feature very often used in narration is what I will call call-response interaction. This resembles what we saw in the interactions with infants. The speaker calls for the listener’s feedback by using high tone and stress on the last syllable of what is said. In Swahili stress is normally on the penultimate syllable of each word. In call-response the speaker calls for the listener to give for example some information in the narration or to give part of a word, like in the following examples (A is narrator and B is listener):

A: Nilipofika niliona nini?  A: What did I see when I came?
B: Mbwa        B: The dog

A: Nilimwo  A: I saw
B: na         B: him

(In the last example *Nilimwona* is one word in Swahili and the part left out is part of the verb-stem.)

Should the listener fail to give the right response the speaker would fill in the right one. Call-response interaction is very common in different types of narrations and also in the frequent formal speeches. Among the Banyambo, as in the rest of Tanzania, many persons are keen speech-givers. We will return to this type of interaction when we analyse different discourses.

7.2 Networks and discourses outside schools and homes

Most people in Karagwe will spend most part of their life after having finished primary school in the home or its close environment. This is more so for women than for men as women are traditionally more occupied with “inside” activities and men with “outside” (see 3.3.1 and Carlson, 1989). In the urban areas people spend more time outside the immediate home area compared with in rural areas. Those Banyambo who have been fortunate to enjoy schooled education on post-primary levels spend more time in the “outside” arenas, such as in activities connected with business (at the market-place, on roads and at shops among other places) on entrepreneurial activities or wage-earning. Important “outside” arenas are schools, health centres and hospitals, religious organisations and churches and offices (governmental, non-governmental and private). Here we will analyse
7.2.1 Religious discourses

The Banyambo are religious. The concept of a non-believer is not easily understood by a Munyambo. Traditional beliefs have to a great part given way to Muslim and Christian outlooks on life through the last two centuries (see 3.2). As we saw earlier, the Christian missionaries not only conveyed Christian belief and life-style but also distributed schooled education and economic and political possibilities to some of the inhabitants. Also the Muslims brought economic welfare to Karagwe, but as we saw (in 3.2) their influence never became big in the area, except in business matters. This means that the political élite today in Karagwe is mainly Christian, as in many parts of main-land Tanzania. Thus, although the majority of the Banyambo may not be Christians, the political power is held by the Christians. The economic power, however, is shared between Muslims and Christians as many of the businessmen and entrepreneurs in urban areas are still Muslims. Many different congregations are represented, the biggest are the Lutheran Church and the Roman Catholic Church. Some of the smaller ones are the Pentecostal Church, The Anglican Church, The Seventh-Day Adventists, The Balokole (see Larsson, 1991) and the Baptists. These congregations form networks, with neighbours sometimes belonging to the same congregation. Different churches are dominant in different areas, but in urban areas members in the same household may belong to different congregations, even the husband and wife may visit different churches. People do convert between congregations, although this may cause family problems (even if not necessarily).

In many homes, religion is present in most activities. Morning prayers are held in some families as well as evening prayers, and many people involve God in their daily communication and include sayings such as: Tumshukuru Mungu, ‘Let’s thank God’, Mungu atatusaidia, ‘God will help us’, Bwana asifiwe, ‘Praise the Lord’ and the like in their talk. “Yesu!” is a very common exclamation, particularly among women. Bible studies and sermons are visited

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111 The Zanzibari part of Tanzania, that is the islands of Zanzibar and Pemba, is estimated to consist of about 95 % Muslims.
regularly, children are sent to Sunday-school and events such as baptising, confirmation, marriage and burial are important religious activities. In many of these activities formal speech is used and praying, preaching and giving speeches are important speech activities.

Although in the beginning of the missionary activities religious activities were often carried out in Ruhaya/Runyambo, nowadays Swahili has replaced them in almost all religious activities. Bibles in Ruhaya are available and used, as are religious pamphlets in Ruhaya, but official religious discourse rely mainly on Swahili. Only on rare occasions, in remote areas, may Runyambo be used in for example sermons and then only in code-switching with Swahili. Note however that elder people in praying may use words like Omukama (Runyambo for the king) and Katonda, ‘the great spirit’. Religious hymns are still sung occasionally in Runyambo/Ruhaya but Swahili has clearly become the dominant language in official religious discourse. In formal religious activities, such as sermons, Bible studies and Sunday school, the leader is usually an evangelist or sometimes a priest but the congregation is made to participate in different ways. The leader uses call-response interaction in ways similar to narration in homes:

Mchungaji: Nani anataka kutudanganya?
Msharika: Shetani
Mchungaji: Shetani

Mchungaji: ... na hapo Mungu alinisaidia
Washarika: Bwana asifiwe

Priest: Who wants to cheat us?
Member in the congregation: Satan
Priest: Satan
People in the congregation: Praise the Lord

We see that call-response interaction, the intonation-pattern with the speaker using high tone and stress to mark the listener’s turn and low tone to repeat or give the answer is used in this context, similarly to the ways it is used in narration.

7.2.2 Non-governmental organisations and their discourses

Many Banyambo are organised in non-governmental organisations (NGOs). This has been the official politics both of Tanzanian authorities and aid-giving organisations, such as the Swedish SIDA (Swedish International Development Agency), which has been one of the important contributors of aid to Tanzania over the latest four decades. These NGOs have mainly worked on a local basis by encouraging people to organise themselves in groups. Some religious

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112 The example is from a small Pentecostal church. Call-response interaction is more frequently used in rural than in urban churches, and more in the Pentecostal church than, for example, in the Lutheran church.

113 Some of these Non-Governmental Organisations active in Karagwe during the period of this study were, apart from KARADEA (whom the present writer is co-operating with), AKORD, CHEMA, CARITAS, KADEA, MAVUNO and SAWATA. Some religious congregations also organise women’s groups.
congregations also encourage the forming of groups. A group may consist of a group of farmers or a group of women. This has been well in line with the traditional local way to organise people in groups to help each other in cases such as burial, marriage, when having given birth and in the case of illness. These groups have also often encouraged the “local banks”, that is when a group of people agree to collect a certain sum from each member for example per month and then giving the whole sum to one of the members in turn. This type of organising groups also fits in with the Tanzanian political ten-cell system (see 3.1). According to Professor Kaijage (personal communication) this type of group is not endemic in Tanzania but has evolved over time through influence from several sources. In times of relative welfare they usually fade away, while they grow in importance during hardships, such as economic constraints.

These groups have had great importance both on macro-level and on micro-level. Through different foreign aid-organisations, money and aid have been directed to these groups and the organisations have been used to distribute education of different types. Different projects on appropriate technology such as water harvesting, wood-saving stoves, agro-forestry (including tree-planting), solar electricity and solar cooking have been introduced. Engagement in an NGO and a local group has also had great effect on many individuals, in particular some women and children. Women are for example given micro-loans and support to initiate small income-generating projects. Although some men resist that their wives get organised in this way, they usually give in when they realise the economic contribution this may give the family. I have already mentioned that women traditionally hold a weak position in Karagwe and that they, as well as children, are expected to obey men at any cost. Polygamy and alcohol consumption among men have left many women as the sole provider for the family. Through their organising in women groups they have not only been provided with tools to improve their and their children’s economic and health situation but also confidence to stand up and speak on their own issues. In the groups women are trained to plan and hold a meeting, to keep minutes and to keep records, traditionally not female activities.

In these groups women have grouped themselves according to their own preference, usually due to kinship and neighbourhood. This type of organisation is very popular, especially among women in the countryside. A common task for the group, and usually the basic reason for establishing the group, is to help each other in case of need.

Many groups become members of one of several local NGOs active in the area. Through this organisation they get some education and economic aid in the form of appropriate technology. The meetings with the women groups are sometimes held in the shadow of a tree, but when the meeting is held in a home they use the mulyango. As the traditional place in the home for women is isenje/ebiso/endugu, ‘the women’s room’, the kitchen and the area around it, many of the women tend to avoid sitting in the room where the meeting is held.
However, the women leaders gently encourage the women to enter the *mulyango* and to join the meeting. As many women are used to using the passive discourse in such situations, the leaders make an effort to listen carefully and emphatically, and to encourage women to speak out and to actively take part in the meetings. They also show consideration of the women’s feelings and for their situation. For example many women in rural areas are usually shy to speak in public but the women leaders then give them the opportunity to talk privately.

In these group activities both Swahili and Runyambo is used. In the local groups women usually interact in Runyambo, but in seminars and meetings on NGO-level Swahili is the main language, used in combination with Runyambo. People engaged in this development work, such as women leaders, are usually very sensitive to the women’s situation. This is also apparent in their language use. Although seminar leaders usually use Swahili, they make sure that everybody understands and they translate when necessary. Some of the elderly women do not understand Swahili well and hesitate to speak Swahili. As elderly persons are respected among the Banyambo, it is quite common that the chairperson of a group does not speak Swahili. This is usually handled by leaders in a respectful way. While young women may be blamed for not using Swahili when speaking officially for the group, elderly women are not. On the whole, leaders and trainers in this discourse are usually sensitive for the women’s feelings, such as shyness and embarrassment about speaking in public, while they at the same time try to encourage women to speak out and to make them proud of themselves.

A meeting of a women’s group, which is, for example, receiving an official guest, would follow certain formal rules. There would be an agenda with points such as the opening of the meeting, speeches, drinks, food, song, poems, gifts and inspections of projects, and the closing of the meeting. The whole meeting would usually be a public event taking place out-doors, with grass on the ground and mats and chairs for the guests and decorations with colourful cloths (typical honourable tokens for the guest). Group members would be dressed up in their best clothes, if they can afford to they would wear similar clothes or pieces of cloth. It is interesting to note that also in this discourse, when leaders meet women in women-groups, call-response is used. Here is an example of an experienced local female leader, Ma Eliza, instructing women in a new group:

Ma Eliza: Mvulana wa miaka kumi na nane ni mtu mzima, anaweza kufanya nini?  
Women: Marry

Ma Eliza: *Kuoa*  
Women: *Marry*

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114 Underlined parts are pronounced with stress and high tone and parts in italics in low tone.
Sometimes she herself gives the answer:

Ma Eliza: Hela tunavyofanya nini?  Ma Eliza: Money, the way we do what?
*Tunavyozitafuta.*  *The way that we search for them.*

Fingers are often used to get response:

Ma Eliza: Nafanya kazi hizo  Ma Eliza: I do these *jobs* (showing two fingers)
Akina Mama: Mbili  Women: Two
Ma Eliza: *Mbili*  Ma Eliza: *Two*

In this case we see that call-response interaction is used to involve the listeners, to make sure they understand and to make them listen intensively. In this discourse listeners also ask questions.

To summarize we find that the type of interaction involved in women groups and NGOs in part resemble the active child-child discourse in homes. Leaders use both Swahili and Runyambo and although Swahili dominates as the language of higher status, the understanding of individual women is considered. The interaction between women and between women leaders and women is active. Call-response is used to make the women listen attentively and to create a sense of homogeneity. The women ask questions and are actively engaged in the interaction, while the women leaders strive to understand the women’s problems and to make sure the women understand.

7.2.3 Official discourses

Governmental offices and the civil servants play a more or less important role in people’s lives. Public offices, such as the post and telephone offices, the police offices and the courts, may only involve some people, while others have little contact with them. The telephone net only reaches the two biggest urban centres (the mobile telephone net is under establishment), and as the post services are irregular and there are only few post offices, most people rely on personal delivery of letters. Thus perhaps more letters are distributed through traditional networks than through the official mail system. The only inhabitants likely to visit a bank are the more well-off and there are banks only in the two biggest towns. Other public domains such as the educational system and the health system are more likely to reach most inhabitants. The political system, with its ten-cell system as a base, is supposed to reach all inhabitants, but as people keep moving in, especially in remote areas, and many of these are nomadic pastoralists or illegal immigrants, there is probably a “grey-zone”.

In these different discourses, Swahili is the dominant language together with English. As very few master English, Swahili is used more often, but those who know English often use English as a sign of their superiority and power. In the bank, for example, all three languages, English, Swahili and Runyambo, are used but in different situations. Signs and forms are written in English and Swahili,
although nearly all the customers master Swahili. Bank officials speak Swahili to each other, code-mixing with English. Their training is in English and thus many terms connected with banking and economics are in English. Nowadays computer terms in English are invading. One example is this instruction given by a bank official (a female) to a minor official (a male)\(^{115}\):

\[
\text{Ufunge kompyuta tu, ila \textbf{save} kwanza, unisavie bas, hapo ndipo ufunge.}
\]

Just turn off the computer, but \textbf{save} first, \textbf{save} for me, then you may turn it off.

In interaction with customers the officials speak Swahili, except for when they speak to customers who are familiar to them or are elderly, then they greet them first in Runyambo.

The official discourse is mainly authoritative and hierarchic (for its political organisation see 3.1). Most people do not have the power and the opportunity to claim their legal right, for example, when offended by someone of superior rank. Generally, in the official context, Swahili is the language mainly used with more or less code-switching to English, depending on the individual’s education, status and power or their wish to express education, status or power. Runyambo is used in greetings and discussions on personal matters.

### 7.2.4 The informal economic sector as discourse

The informal sector has great economic and social importance in Karagwe, as in the whole of Tanzania. People buy, sell, borrow and lend goods of different types. A typical Nyambo-household is not self-supporting. Products from their own shamba are exchanged with other people or are sold for money. This money is used to buy other goods, such as beer, food, cloth, clothes or industrial goods, if they are not spent on their own house, medical care or the children’s education. If money is available people try to start projects, such as keeping a cow, some goats, chickens or a pig or hiring a day-labourer to cultivate a piece of land for cash crops such as cabbage or tomatoes. The traditional cash crop, coffee, has been exposed to falling prices which has reopened the black market for coffee across the borders to Uganda, with all risks and new types of interaction involved in that.

Parts of this interaction takes place in the big markets, which is held two days a week in the big towns and once a week in bigger villages. In these markets the government have introduced more or less authority, such as taxation and hiring out marked places for sellers. However probably most economic interaction takes place outside official market-places on roads and paths and in homes, that is people exchange products and services with each other, thus continually constructing and re-constructing the networks.

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\(^{115}\) The boldfaced words are English and pronounced in English. Note the incorporation of “save” in \textit{unisavie}, (please) save for me.
This sector is of great importance for the majority of the Banyambo, not only economically but also socially. While many parts of the official sector involves only the better-off, the informal sector involves all people. In this discourse Runyambo is the dominant language, but all languages in the region are used. Regional trade involves people from all over East Africa. This means that a multitude of languages are used, such as Luganda (for example for the illegal marketing of coffee), Kinyarwanda, Kirundi, Kinyankole, Luhaya, French and of course Swahili. In this sector people with multilingual competence are important. This is thus a regional speech community where multilingualism plays an important role (see Stroud, 2003, for a discussion of the importance of regional speech communities elsewhere in Africa.) This also means that Runyambo is of great economic value to people in Karagwe. Without mastery of the local language it is impossible to take a full part in the local network system which constitutes a base for this economically important sector.

7.3 Summary and conclusions

We see that different types of networks play an important role for the Banyambo and for stability and economic development in Karagwe. In these networks Runyambo is very important as the most frequently used language, while English is only used occasionally and mainly to mark status. Most of the interaction is oral but literacy exists on most levels and plays a central role in creating and maintaining authority. We also see that literacy outside school is often collective and combined with numeracy and orality. As for children’s language socialisation it is interesting to note that they learn through two types of interaction, passive with adults and active with other children. For Banyambo this continues through life, with active interaction used in interaction with people perceived as of equal or lower status and passive in interaction with persons perceived as superiors. This ranking, as we have seen earlier, involves age, gender and social, political and economic status.

Interesting features that have a potential for literacy education in the oral communication pattern are the long turns in narration and the call-response interaction. Through the narrations children are socialised to listen attentively and to hold monologues and they also learn decontextualised language. These are skills that are important for schooling and literacy acquisition (see chapter 1). The call-response interaction socialises children to listen attentively and to focus on what is told/taught, which is relevant for schooling, particularly in this setting with big classes.

In the next chapter I will analyse how children are socialised in relation to literacy.
Chapter Eight

Children’s Socialisation in Relation to Literacy

Children acquire language while being socialised through language. This process of becoming social, through which all children with normal development become members of their own social group, is culturally constructed and historically situated (Philips, 1993). In cultural terms, the transmission of cultural knowledge, that is acculturation, is accomplished through language use in situated face-to-face interaction. During this process, normally situated in the children’s home and close environment, care-givers ensure that children learn to display and understand behaviour that is appropriate in different social situations (Ochs & Schieffelin, 2001). The role of language in acquisition and transmission of socio-cultural knowledge has been studied by among others Elinor Ochs (1988), Bambi Schieffelin (1990) and Don Kulick (1992).

These processes of language acquisition and early socialisation are clearly interwoven and interdependent. Thus it is relevant to speak of language socialisation. Literacy is an aspect of language and is acquired in the same way as language. Thus as we saw earlier, children are socialised in relation to literacy skills in a socio-cultural situation that affects how they make sense of literacy. Literacy learning is a social act that is effected through interactional exchanges. In the process of learning to read and write children not only acquire specific reading and writing skills but they also, in interaction with their environment, build an understanding of how different types of literacy may be used and of how to relate to them. As literacy is related to learning and knowledge, the analysis of how children in Karagwe are socialised in relation to literacy will also consider how they are socialised in relation to language, learning and knowledge.

To build an understanding of how Banyambo socialise their children in relation to literacy, I will start to analyse children’s literacy socialisation in homes and then literacy socialisation in school.
8.1 Early socialisation in homes

As we saw in previous chapters, children in Karagwe are normally involved in two different discourses, one active and one passive. Children interact actively with siblings and other children, asking questions, joking, giving comments and so on. As children from the age of about 15 months are mainly taken care of by elder children, this is the discourse where most time is spent by toddlers and also where much of their socialisation takes place. This is contrary to the interaction with parents and other adults where children hold a passive position. In this passive discourse children are supposed to observe, watch and listen, while remaining passive or carrying out demands. They do not normally ask questions or comment. Instead they repeat what they are taught or carry out what they are told to do. While adults teach children, the responsibility for learning is on the children, either in the passive reception-exercising or in the active interaction with other children. A child who fails to learn is blamed by adults, either for being munafu, ‘a lazy person’, ateine majezi, ‘having no intelligence’, or atarukuhurira, ‘being disobedient’.

Thus children in Karagwe are socialised in relation to language through both active and passive interaction. In homes where literacy is used, small children will meet written text mainly as spectators and together with other family-members. They will carry out errands involving written messages. I mentioned earlier that religious texts and prayers are read in some homes and that pupils may take out their exercise books at home and read for younger siblings. In both of these literacy practices, reading is mainly a collective activity and the text is usually discussed among people. In the case of religious texts, such as the Bible, the discussion is usually about the meaning of the text. If the Bible is read in Swahili, translation to Runyambo is also often one part of the discussion among participants. The text is interpreted word for word, sometimes with reference to what the evangelist or the priest has said in this special case.

As for “schooled literacy” in homes, I mentioned that school children may read to younger siblings or to an adult to show their proficiency. In the latter case they also often “teach” the smaller ones. This means that children may learn not only schooled knowledge, such as the three R’s in homes, but also that they may be socialised to school patterns of communication and behaviour. That is, part of what they are supposed to learn in school they may learn at home, and those who teach them are mainly elder siblings. Another literacy activity that is mainly carried out collectively in homes is the writing and reading of letters. In many families, when a letter arrives, the family is gathered and the letter is read out aloud. Also the writing of a letter may be carried out collectively. In many cases some of the family-members can not read or write, usually the elders either because they never learned it or because they have become long-sighted and do not have any glasses. Still they send and receive letters but with the help of mediators. Signs and writing on walls, doors and on the ground involve both adults and children.
One literacy activity that is usually carried out individually in homes is the keeping of records. Adults who keep records of the progress of a loan-cow or a micro-loan, who keep the minutes from a meeting and so on, usually write down the facts individually. Results may be discussed between adults but usually the record-keeping is an individual activity.

This means that many children, those who live in homes where literacy is used, mainly meet literacy as a collective activity and that they take part in the practices mainly as spectators or mediators. They watch and listen and are sometimes taught, mainly by elder siblings.

This is thus a bilingual context where literacy practices are mainly in Swahili but also in English, Ruhaya/Runyambo and other languages.

8.2 Socialisation in primary school – to learn to do school

Above we have seen that children in homes learn through active interaction with other children and in passive interaction with adults. We have also seen that proper behaviour, politeness and co-operation are important. These presuppositions children bring to school. I will start to analyse what happens when children begin school in Karagwe. The first stage is normally pre-school. In pre-school pupils are supposed to be prepared for schooling. They are socialised to follow the passive discourse as in the child-adult relation in homes. They follow the same pattern, listen, watch and repeat what is said by the teacher and do what they are told to do. A few new features in school communication, that children have usually not met in homes, are that pupils are asked test-questions and are required to demonstrate their skills and to have them evaluated. They also learn proper school behaviour such as to stand up while talking or being individually addressed by the teacher. The active discourse that they used at home they will learn to hide and to interact in secretly as interaction between pupils is prohibited in class. This socialisation mainly takes part in pre-school and the first classes, the classes with the highest number of pupils in the classrooms.

Many pre-school classes are situated in huts made from sticks and mud or under trees. The number of pupils in the visited pre-school classes varied from 20 to 150. This means that one teacher, in pre-school often a standard 7 leaver without further education, may be on his or her own, handling a group of children that do not understand Swahili, children who for the first time in life leave their homes and sit together with a large group of other children. The teacher usually tackles this demanding task by using the authoritative power available, for which the cane is one tool.

The call-response type of interaction that we saw earlier was so frequent in narration, preaching and giving speeches is explicitly trained in pre-school and in the lower standards. Usually children are given some formulaic answers to give after certain “questions”. The following examples are from two primary-school classes: (Mw is Mwalimu, the teacher, and W are Wanafunzi, the pupils):
Teachers prompt for these answers several times during the lessons, such as in the following example. Pupils are also encouraged to shout the answers out loudly, which they generally do with great enthusiasm:

Mw: Safi?
W: Kabisa!
Mw: Safi?
W: Kabisa!
Mw: Sasa mtakwenda nje mucheze kidogo, halafu murudi darasani nitatoa hadithi, nitatoa nini?
W: Hadithi
(...)
Mw: Safi?
W: Kabisa!
Mw: Sasa tutasikiliza hadithi. Nitatoa hadithi munisikilize halafu mtatoa, sawa?
W: Ndiyo!
Mw: Sawa?
W: Ndiyo!

T: OK?
Ps: Absolutely!
T: OK?
Ps: Absolutely!
T: Now you will go out and play a little, then you shall return to the classroom and I will tell you a story, what will I tell?
Ps: A story
(...)
T: OK?
Ps: Absolutely!
T: Now we will listen to a story. I will tell a story and then you will tell, OK?
Ps: Yes!
T: OK?
Ps: Yes!

Code-switching is not very frequent although Runyambo is used more in pre-school classes than in primary school. Some teachers in pre-school use Runyambo to explain. In the following example the teacher repeats in Runyambo what he has said in Swahili (parts in italics are in Runyambo):

Mw: Leo tumepata mgeni, tumepata? W: Mgeni
Mw: Ehe tumepata mgeni amekuja kuwatembelea atawapiga picha baadaye atawasikiliza mnayojifunza atawaangalia mnayyoandika sawa?
W: Ndiyo!
W: Zawadi!

T: Today we have got a guest, we have got?
Ps: A guest
T: Yes, we have a guest she have come to visit you and she will take photos of you afterwards she will listen to how you learn and she will look at how you write, OK?
Ps: Yes!
T: Now, we have a guest. She has come to visit you. She has come to see how you write, how you read, how you tell each other stories, and all that you do. Therefore she will look at which all things that you will do? All that you do. Then she will take photos of you, then she has brought you gifts, she has brought you?
Ps: Gifts

Note that the responses that the teacher calls for are invariably in Swahili. I have never observed a teacher calling for a response in Runyambo.
8.3 Children’s socialisation in relation to literacy in school

We have seen that some children have been socialised to schooled literacy in homes. This may have involved answering test questions and exposing individual skills and may also have involved both skills in coding and decoding written texts and an understanding of how literacy is used in school. However this usually took place in the active discourse in interaction with other children and in a mix of Runyambo and Swahili.

In the school environment children meet literacy in the form of boards and notices attached to walls, attendance books and the exercise-books of pupils in higher classes. This first contact with literacy in school gives pupils experience of what I call dominant literacies, that is literacies that are authoritative, that call for obedience and have a focus on form, not on content. However whether these texts are read to them will depend mainly on other children.

The way pupils are introduced to literacy is very homogenous in different schools and with different teachers. Children are initially taught the vowels, then syllables. The first vowel, ‘a’, is usually introduced like this: First the teacher shows the pupils lower-case ‘a’ and says [a]. The pupils repeat in chorus, first the whole class, then row by row and lastly individually. Some pupils are called to go to the black board, one at a time, to point at the ‘a’ and to say [a]. The teacher then instructs the children to write ‘a’ in the air and on the floor, using their fingers. They are taught the song about the vowels, the first verse about /a/:

Hii ndiyo a, aaaa
Ina mkia nyuma, aaaa
This is a, aaaa
It has a tail behind, aaaa

Then the pupils might be sent out to write ‘a’ in the sand on the school yard. As the next step the teacher will draw some lines on the blackboard and write some lower-case ‘a’ on the lines, about five per line. The pupils are told to copy the a:s in their exercise-books. After they have finished the teacher walks around the class marking the letters written. The markings are for example “Vizuri” (Good), a tick meaning: OK, or a line across the page meaning bad. In some cases the page is torn out and occasionally the whole exercise-book is torn by the teacher.

Following this the other vowels are presented, always in the order /e/, /i/, /o/ and /u/, each adding its own verse to the vowel-song. These vowels are then practised as a string of letters over and over again throughout pre-school and standard one. If you ask a child from these classes what he or she learned in school one day the answer is most probably: “a, e, i, o, u”.

The next step is to introduce the consonants and to form syllables. The first consonants taught are usually ‘b’, ‘ch’,117 and ‘d’. Each consonant will be

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116 In my informant schools most classrooms for standard one have desks for all children, even if usually three or four children share a desk built for two.

117 Ch is in Swahili the spelling of the affricate [tΣ].
introduced the same way as the vowels with the extension that as the last step the consonant will be put before each of the vowels to form syllables, such as <da>, <de>, <di>, <do>, <du>. These vowels will then be combined to words such as: dada ‘sister’, kaka ‘brother’, baba ‘father’. As Swahili syllableless are mainly of the structure CV, quite a number of words may be constructed early. These are the main literacy teaching activities during pre-school (which is one or two years) and standard 1, and it is repeated several times during these years. We will look at an example from a pre-school class at the end of the first year:

Mw: Sawa, Daniel tutajie irabu mojawapo ... simama! Irabu!
D: (haisikiki)
Mw: Irabu irabu irabu ehe?
M 15: (haisikiki)
Mw: (haisikiki) ni neno siyo irabu, Ivone
I: a e i o u
Mw: Vizuri sana mpe zawadi
W: (makofi)
Mw: Kwa hizo ni irabu irabu ehee hizo ni irabu aaa eee iiii ooo u! ni nini?
W: Irabu!
Mw: Ni nini?
W: Irabu!
Mw: Ni nini?
W: Irabu!
Mw: Irabu hizo tunaita irabu
W: Irabu
Mw: Irabu, zote ni irabu tunazi ita irabu irabu, tuna irabu tuna
W: Irabu
Mw: Irabu nani anaweza kunitajia sirabi mojawapo? Nani anaweza kutajia mojawapo? (haisikiki) Nani atajie silabi?
Silabi silabi silabi silabi silabi (haisikiki) silabi? Alisi?
M 17: Ba be bi bo bu
Mw: Ba be bi bo bu vizuri sana hizo ndizo silabi, mwingine? Mhm
T: OK; Daniel mention one of the vowels for us … stand up! Vowel!
D: (Inaudible)
T: Vowel vowel vowel well?
(P 15: (Inaudible)
M: (Inaudible) is a word it’s not a vowel, Ivone
I: a e i o u
T: Good, give her a gift (that is: congratulate her)
Ps: (claps)
T: Therf these are vowels vowels well these are vowels aaa eee iiii ooo u! What is it?
Ps: Vowels!
T: What is it?
Ps: Vowels!
T: What is it?
Ps: Vowels!
T: Vowels these we call vowels
Ps: Vowels
T: Vowels, all are vowels we call them vowels vowels, we have vowels we have
Ps: Vowels
T: Vowels who can tell me one of the syllable (the teacher exchanges the l in silabi for r)? Who can tell me one of them?
(inaudible) Who may mention a syllable?
Syllable syllable syllable syllable syllable (inaudible) syllable Alisi?
P 17: Ba be bi bo bu
T: Ba be bi bo bu very good these are really syllables, anyone else? Mhm

Then the lesson continues with other syllables. Follow-up interviews with and observations of pupils showed that, already at this early stage, pupils had learned copying strategies, that is they copied “letters” but without being able to connect the letters with their respective sound. A telling example was observed when another pre-school class had been sent out to rest. One little girl stayed behind on her own in the banda (big hut) serving as the classroom. She went to the blackboard where four lines with numbers were written like this:
The girl seized the stick that the teacher had left in the room, pointed to the figures one at a time, starting from the top left, saying rhythmically: a e i o u. She managed to point to one figure and say one vowel at a time. After she had finished the lines she started again, this time from the top right, saying: 1 2 3 4 5. This clearly shows us that the learning is mainly social. Her behaviour was according to social convenience of the classroom but not academically right. She had acquired social competence, that is she had learned “to do school” (following Kullberg, 1991), but she had not acquired the academic content.

There is one phenomenon in the teaching/learning of letters that further complicates pupils’ learning, the naming of letters. Pupils are taught reading and writing in both Swahili and English during standard one and they are thus taught both English and Swahili names of letters. This means that vowels such as /i/ and /e/ are named [i] and [e] respectively during Swahili lessons and [ai] and [i] respectively during English lessons which is likely to confuse pupils, and sometimes also teachers. Following the higher status of English there is a tendency to use the English names also in Swahili lessons. Some consonants also cause confusion. That many teachers pronounce the name of H as [heitch], following the free variation between glottal stop [ʔ] and the glottal fricative [h] in the Nyambo-variety of Swahili does probably not cause much problem. However, when it comes to the letters ‹l› and ‹r› the confusion is greater. As [l] and [r] are allophones in Runyambo, most Banyambo transfer this to Swahili, although they are two distinct phonemes in Swahili. We have seen in earlier examples that teachers tend to mix /l/ and /r/ both in their speech and in their writing. However, in the teaching of these two letters most teachers discern their pronunciation, in the way that ‹l› is called [elu] or [eru] while ‹r› is called [ala] or [ara]. This is consistent in spelling also outside school. The Lutheran church (ELCT) is for example called [elusiti] or [erusiti] while the Roman Catholic Church (RC) is called [alasi] or [arasi]. This is not likely to cause pupils many problems in schools and in Karagwe society, but in a Swahili context their spelling is likely to not follow standards on this point. In the next chapter we will see that teachers make spelling mistakes following their pronunciation.

After the two first classes in school, children are supposed to have acquired basic reading and writing skills. Literacy will then be used in ordinary school work. Copying and chorusing will be used in this process in the way that pupils copy in their note-books what is written on the blackboard or in their textbooks, often without understanding what they are copying, and they will repeat in chorus what the teacher says. Pupils are for example often seated up to ten with one book when they are supposed to read from their textbooks, as the number of
textbooks is small, which means that only a few of them are actually able to see the text. One passage is usually first read out aloud by the teacher while pupils are supposed to follow in the books. Then the same passage is often repeated in chorus by the pupils. During this process usually only a minority of the pupils actually look at the text in the book, the rest repeat, or pretend to repeat, what the teacher has read while they look elsewhere.

If you ask children in standards 3-7 what they have done in school one day they will probably answer maswali, ‘questions’. This refers to the assessment task that teachers usually write on the blackboard at the end of the lesson. These questions are then copied by pupils who write the answers which are usually given as alternatives, or fill in missing words. The notebooks are then supposed to be handed in, corrected and marked by the teacher. This copying is the major writing activity pupils do in school. Usually there is not enough time left at the end of the lesson to finish the task, but pupils are supposed to finish the work in their spare time, that is when no teacher is teaching. If there is time during the lesson for pupils to do their exercises, the teacher will occupy him- or herself correcting finished work or go to the staff room to wait for the exercise books to be handed in. In many cases the copying and solving result in totally unintelligible sentences. The questions and exercises are often constructed in a way that enables solving without understanding the task, as we will see in the examples from the lessons in the next chapter.

The main reading activities stipulated in curriculum and teacher aids in standards 3-7 are kusoma kwa sauti, ‘reading aloud’ and kusoma kimya, ‘silent reading’. As we saw earlier, in chapter five, in a normal lesson of 40 minutes, about ten pupils will read aloud, about 1-2 minutes each, and during a lesson in silent reading usually the teacher first reads the text aloud and answers content questions. The pupils are seated 7-10 to each book and given about 5-10 minutes to read the same text. In this way extremely little reading, that is decoding written text, is actually done by pupils in school. Instead the focus is on making pupils look and feel busy, while their main literacy activities are repetition as reading and copying as writing.

8.4 Summary and conclusions

We find that the two types of discourse children are socialised in, the active and the passive, are used also in socialisation to literacy in homes. In some homes children are also passively exposed to Swahili through adults and to schooled literacy through elder siblings. Probably some children learn literacy skills and schooled behaviour through elder relatives or siblings in homes.

In school the children are involved in the passive adult-child interaction while the active child-child interaction is carried out secretly among pupils. Literacy in school in the passive discourse is mainly of the dominant type with focus on form and pupils are introduced to literacy through Swahili and by exercising separate skills.
We can state that the way used to introduce literacy in school is synthetic and abstract. Starting with vowels and then syllables means presenting literacy broken down into small parts. As teachers neither read nor tell stories or other texts for pupils in the lower grades, this is the main literacy practice that introduces pupils to literacy in school. The practising of single letters and syllables is the main activity in pre-school and the main part of standard 1, and pupils may spend years in school without meeting print in a meaningful context.

When we compare with language learning and literacy practices in homes we find that in both homes and schools, children learn by listening attentively and that the responsibility for learning is on the pupils. However, while children may meet literacy used in a meaningful context and mainly in collective activities in homes, in school they meet print broken down to meaningless pieces such as vowels and syllables. As this is carried out in a language they do not master, extremely high demands are put on pupils who will have to memorise without understanding most of what is memorised.

We can also state that extremely little time is devoted to explicit or direct instruction in reading and writing strategies and to exercise literacy. The fact that most literacy practices pupils are involved in in school are aimed at testing their skills affects their perception of literacy and promotes safety strategies such as copying, repeating and different avoidance strategies. In this context safety strategies become even more relevant. In the next chapter I will analyse what happens in the interaction between teachers and pupils in classrooms.
Chapter Nine

Classroom Interaction

When studying classrooms in a context like Karagwe it is important not to be blinded by what you do not see but to ensure you analyse what you actually see. As stressed by Wright, if Western perspectives of what counts as “good pedagogy” are made the point of departure, “interpretations of classroom methodology which differ from what is expected, may then be taken as teachers’ failure to comprehend and implement the curriculum” (Wright, 2001). Most research on classroom-interaction has been carried out in the West (for example by Cazden, 1983; Lindberg 1995; Garpelin, 1997, 2003). Observations in poor countries have commonly, with a patronizing air, characterised what has been observed as rote-learning and chalk-and-talk. However, as stressed by Wright, the study should neither focus on “what ought to exist according to Western standards” nor of “seeing traditional methods as problems to be eradicated. Instead these should be considered as resources” (Wright, 2001: 76, emphasis in original).

As mentioned earlier, pupils in Karagwe are involved in passive discourse with teachers, that is initiatives are taken by the teacher and the pupils’ role in the classroom is a passive one. The type of interaction used may be characterised as Question-Answer-Evaluation-interaction. The only active discourse involving children in classrooms is the sub rosa118 interaction between pupils outside the supervision of teachers, such as whispering and secretly helping each other. Pupils learn to obey teachers, as they would elders in homes, at any cost. Official curricula and text-books are highly normative and prescriptive and neither teachers’ nor pupils’ own initiatives are encouraged. On the whole the school discourse is very formalised. Lessons follow a common form (repetition, lecture, exercises, correction) and the teacher-pupil interaction follows a homogenous pattern. Traditional language use and language education in the form of proverbs, riddles, songs, poetry and folk-tales is found also in the school context, but here it takes a different form. In homes these types of language use were

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118 I use the term sub-rosa for the private, secret and intimate interaction among pupils in classrooms outside the supervision of teachers, following Perry Gilmore (1986).
practised creatively and orally, in Runyambo and in interaction between people, but in school the riddles, proverbs and the tales are given by the textbooks and teaching aids and are always in Swahili. This means for example that pupils are given proverbs from mainly a coastal context, which many times neither pupils nor teachers understand, such as *Penye mawimbi kuna mlango* ‘Where there are waves there is a door’, a metaphor for an opening in the coral reef). Tales, proverbs and riddles are generally not used in lower classes.

There is wide agreement about what are the main characteristics of classroom interaction in primary schools in post-colonial states around the world. Studies on schooling in areas where economic resources are scarce and where both teachers and pupils work under hard conditions, such as in former colonies and developing countries, have shown typical features such as a formulaic type of classroom interaction and a chanting-like interaction of the call-response type where teachers promote pupils’ chorusing (see for example Aziz, 1981; Watson-Gegeo, 1992; Arthur, 1994, 2001; Ndayipfukamiye, 1994; Chick, 1996; van Lier, 1996; Schieffelin, 1997; Heller & Martin-Jones, 2001). Focusing on the chant-like chorusing in primary school in Zululand, South Africa, Keith Chick (1996) named the type of classroom interaction he observed “safe-talk”, claiming that the function of this type of interaction was to create safety. He argued that teachers and pupils in co-operation managed to create an image of successful teaching and learning by using safe-talk and in the same time hiding the fact that not much learning was taking place. In Peru, van Lier (1996) found similar interaction patterns in primary school classrooms. Hornberger and Chick (2001) compared these findings and concluded that safe-talk served to save the faces of teachers and pupils while simultaneously constituting a barrier for pupils’ learning. As neither teachers nor pupils became aware of what pupils actually knew and what they did not know, pupils were not taught necessary pre-knowledge to learn what they were supposed to. Hornberger and Chick (ibid) argued that the main factor causing safe-talk was the fact that pupils were taught in a second language which was an ex-colonial one (English in South Africa and Spanish in Peru) and that pupils belonged to a minority group which was systematically discriminated against in the educational system and in the societies at large. This may be compared to reports from the US on call-response interaction and on active vocal audience in Mehan (1992). According to Mehan teachers were in these cases reported to interact in ways similar to patterns in the local (black) community and pupils were reported to score higher in these classes than in classes where teachers did not use these interactional patterns.

When we study classroom interaction in primary schools in Karagwe, the picture becomes more complex although we find many similarities with the examples given by Hornberger and Chick (2001). Also in Karagwe the classroom situation and the school context as a whole put teachers and pupils under high pressure. This gap between expectations and what can possibly be expected put teachers and pupils in a situation where there is a high risk for
failure. Teachers want to retain their status. They strive to be seen as good educators who succeed in teaching what is demanded in the curricula, both the official curriculum and the actual or hidden curriculum, while pupils on their part want to escape the punishment that falls upon bad learners. Instead they strive to receive the benefits given to good learners such as credits and marks and in the longer run certificates and good positions in society. In such a situation, teachers and pupils are likely to create ways to reach their goals. Also in classrooms in Karagwe the typical, chanting-like chorusing is used, which resembles the call-response interaction that we have met in previous chapters (see for example chapter 7). By using interaction of the call-response type, teachers prompt for pupils’ chorusing. I have found four types of call-response used by teachers in primary schools in Karagwe:

(1) Repetition: Pupils repeat words or parts of teacher’s talk.
(2) Confirmation: Teachers ask questions of the type: “Are we together?”, “Do you understand?” and “Isn’t it?” The answer is invariably: “Yes!”
(3) Content-question: Teachers ask questions on the content taught.
(4) Completion: Pupils are requested to complete words, clauses or sentences in the teacher’s talk.

Teachers mark pupils’ turns prosodically by using high tone and stress on the last syllable. Often the teacher repeats the answer, or gives the correct one if pupils fail, in low tone. I will give some examples from my observation. The first two are from standard 1. Pupils are generally encouraged to shout the answers, which they do with great enthusiasm:

Repetition
Mw: Hii ni a! Hii ni?
W: A!
T: This is a! This is?
Ps: A!

Confirmation
Mw: Tunakunywa maji safi, sivyo?
W: Ndiyo!
Mw: Eee?
W: Ndiyo!
T: We drink clean water, don’t we?
Ps: Yes!
T: What?
Ps: Yes!

Content-question
Mw: Tunaandika barua aina tatu.
Tunaandika barua aina ngapi?
W: Tatu!
Mw: Tatu
T: We write three types of letters. How many types of letters do we write?
Ps: Three!
T: Three

Completion
Mw: Nyumbani tunaweka maji safi.
Nyumbani tunaweka maji ...
W: Safi!
Mw: Safi
T: At home we keep clean water. At home we keep water…
Ps: Safely!
T: Safely

Curriculum is here used in a wide sense, as demands put on teachers and pupils.
The last type, completion, is more abstract and is more often used in higher classes. In the following example from another standard 7 class only the last syllable is left out:

Mw: Hapa unaandika shilingi, hapa unaandika
W: Senti
---
Mw: Yeye alikuwa kiongozi wa Afrika ya mashariki na ka ... na kati

T: Here you write shillings, here you write Ce...
Ps: Cents

---
T: He was a leader of East-Africa and Cen...
and Central (-Africa)

In this example the teacher himself gives the answer, in low tone. We saw that pupils are socialised into this type of interaction already in homes and in preschool. In the following example the pupils in a preschool class first misunderstand and give the wrong answer and are corrected by the teacher:

Mw: (...) ya pili inasema pamoja na kupewa zawadi, amepiga na nini?
W: Zawad
Mw: A a, amepiga na nini?
W: Mapicha
Mw: Ee?
W: Mapicha
Mw: Picha ni picha, amepiga?
W: Picha

T: (...) and second it says that together with being given gifts, what has she taken?
Ps: Gif
T: No no, what has she taken?
Ps: Pictureses
T: What?
Ps: Pictureses
T: Pictures it’s pictures, she has taken?
Ps: Pictures

At first look this call-response interaction may seem to have the function of assessing pupils’ knowledge, to help teachers make sure the pupils have understood. However after a closer look, we find that pupils usually do not need to know the content to answer the questions. In the second type, yes/no-questions, pupils would not answer no and in the other types the answer is usually given. What pupils need to understand is the interaction pattern. Thus I conclude, with Chick and Hornberger (2001), that the function of this type of interaction is mainly social, not cognitive. It gives teachers a chance to manage to handle a seemingly impossible situation by giving pupils turns, camouflaged as test questions, testing pupils’ knowledge but in reality filling a social function. This is done in co-operation with the pupils. I also agree with Chick and Hornberger that one function of this interaction is to create safety by saving the face of teachers and pupils and that while this interaction hides the fact that nearly no academic learning is taking place, in fact, at the same time it prevents academic learning.

However the call-response interaction does, as we have seen in previous chapters, have other functions as well, such as to make people listen more attentively and to engage and activate listeners. Only in the two first examples

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120 The Swahili noun *picha* ‘picture’ does not take a prefix in plural but the children made a mistake to add a plural-prefix, *ma-*, thus saying wrongly *mapicha*. 
above is the answer given. In the other three it is supposed to be given by the pupils (which pupils in the last two examples fail to do).

This chanting-type of interaction soon becomes predictable to students and becomes part of a system that Hornberger and Chick call safe-time (2001). I prefer to call the different strategies used to create safety in classrooms safety strategies to include other strategies such as avoidance and resistance and to call the prompt-answer interaction call-response as what is common in all these cases is that the teacher, or other speaker, prompt or call for response.

I will now analyse the interaction in two Swahili lessons, one in standard 1 and one in standard 7, to see how call-response and safety strategies may be used during lessons.

9.1 Lesson in standard 1

Swahili is not only the medium from the first day in primary school (except from English during English lessons), it is also taught as a subject. In this very school there is no pre-school so children start directly in standard 1. The pupils number about 200 in the classroom and there are not enough desks, which means that about half of the children jostle one another at the desks while the rest sit on the mud floor. The teacher, Debora, is an experienced teacher in her late forties and with a good reputation. The topic for today’s Swahili lesson is the grammatical structure -ki- -ta- (which may be compared with “If … then”). Debora begins the lesson by repeating the task from the last Swahili lesson, when the topic was Kufua ‘To wash clothes’. She then introduces the topic of the lesson by writing on the blackboard:

Mvua iki nyesha sita weza kufua. If it rains then I will not be able to wash the clothes.

Tukifauru mtihani tutapewa zawadi. If we pass the test then we will be given gifts.

Tukifauru is misspelled, it should have been Tukifaulu. She then continues by introducing the structure:122

1 D: Sasa mkiangalia kwa mbali kuna D: Now, if you look at this at a distance there
2 mwungo msemo ambao unatoka katika hali is a construction a saying that comes from the
3 ya kutegemeana, sivyo? state of depending on each other, isn’t there?
4 W: Ndiyo Ps: Yes

121 This is based on the observation and recording of one lesson. The recording was made at the end of the first year, second semester. In this case this means that most pupils are beginning to learn Swahili as a second language. The lesson was observed, tape-recorded and transcribed, the teacher’s lesson-plan was studied as were the pupils’ exercise-books. The teacher was interviewed afterwards. The lesson follows the teacher aid and the textbook of Kiswahili Darasa la kwanza, lesson number 30 (Masood, 1997).

122 D is the teacher, Debora, W are wanafunzi, the pupils. In the following lesson extracts high/low tone and stress is not marked. The teacher uses the common prosodic features mentioned earlier.
During the introduction Debora uses call-response interaction and the answers are more or less implicit in the discourse. Still only 5-7 pupils raise their hands to answer. We see that pupils do not have to understand the -ki- -ta- construction to answer. The questions pupils are given are: sivyo? ‘isn’t it?’, line 3, and ‘don’t I?’, line 8, E? ‘What?’, line 10, sitaweza kufanya nini? ‘What will I not be able to do?’, line 21. The answer kufua is the topic of the lesson and given in the content and in line 24 kunyesha kwa nini? ‘the falling of what?’ Here -nyesha, which means falling of rain or raining, is a verb commonly followed by mvua ‘rain’. After a while she turns to the blackboard and starts to write the assessment for the lesson. To the right she writes five sentences, which she copies from a book in her hand, and to the left she writes five words. Each sentence contains a dash where one word is left out which is to be found among the words to the left. The sentences and the words read:123

zikikauka (if they dry) Ukinifilia nguo _
itakusaidia (If you wash (my) clothes for me _)
(I will help you) Baba _ sabuni nitafua viatu vyangu
ukinifilia (Father _ soap I will clean my shoes)
(If you wash (the clothes) for me) Nguo _ nitapiga pasi
akininunulia (Clothes _ I will iron) _ bibi nguo zake atafurahi sana

123 In the textbook only three of these sentences are given, the last three (Nguo ..., _bibi ... and Ukinisaidia and the words: zikikauka, nitakusaidia and Ukinfulia). Note that Ukinfulia is written with capital U in the teacher aid.
(if he/she buys me) (_ grandmother her clothes she will be very happy) nitakushukuru
(I will thank you) Ukinisaidia kufua nguo _ kupiga pasi
(If you help me to wash the clothes _ to iron)

When Debora copies she makes another mistake in her spelling, *ukinfulia* should be *ukimfulia*, which she discovers during the lesson. This word is then to be written with capital letter as it is to be placed initially in sentence four. She goes on explaining and in her explanations she mixes meta-language, talking about language, with object language, talking about the reality, and also direct and indirect speech.

27 D: Kwa hiyo bado ni hali ile hali ya
28 kutegemeana. Sasa ukiangalia sentensi yetu
29 inategemaa unaongelea watu gani. Hapa ni hali
30 ya mimi peke yangu kwamba sita mimi
31 mwenyewe sitafua ni mmoja sivyo
32 W: Ndiyo
33 D: Hiyo mvua haina wingi au umoja kwani ni
34 mvua mvua ikinyesha, sivyo?
35 W: Ndiyo
36 D: Mimi sitafua ... ninaongea habari zangu.
37
38 W: Ndiyo
39 D: Lakini ninapoongelea watu wengi, inabidi
40 huku pia, sentensi, itabidi ibadilike. Sentensi
41 yangu, tu ki tukifaulu au wengi. Kwa hiyo na
42 halii ya kutegemaa bado tutaiweka katika
43 wingi: Tukifaulu tutapewa nini?
44
45 W: Zawadi
46 D: Lakini bado unaweza kuiveka katika wingi
47 kwa ajili ya mvua, kwanza: Mvua ikinyesha,
48 hatutenda mnaona ! ... mm kwa hiyo halii hi
49 bado inatuambia hapa mtu mmoja nitasema
50 mwenyewe, sitaweza. Ukiwa wengi, mvua
51 ikinyesha hatutaweza sisi wengi. Bado ikiwa
52 wingi, na hapa ni watu lakini mimi mmoja pia,
53 nani ataweza kui kutunga na kuibadili iwe mtu
54 mmoja ikiwa wengi: Tukifaulu mtihani
55 tutapewa zawadi. Reza sema habari zako!
56 R: Nikifaulu mtihani nitapewa zawadi.
57 D: Mpigie makofi.
58 W: (makofi)
59 D: Vizuri, nikifaulu mtihani nitapewa nini?
60 W: Zawadi.

D: So, still it’s that state the state of dependence.
Now, if you look at our sentence it depends on what people you are talking about. Here it is the state of me alone that I wi I myself will not wash the clothes it’s one isn’t it?
Ps: Yes
D: Thus rain has no plural or singular because it’s rain rain falling. Isn’t it?
Ps: Yes
D: I will not wash the clothes … I am talking about myself.
Ps: Yes
D: But when I talk about many people, it has to there also, the sentence, it has to be changed. My sentence, if we if we manage it’s plural. Therefore also this state of reliance still we will put it in plural: If we manage what will we be given?
Ps: Gifts
D: But still you can put it in plural because of the rain, first: If the rain is falling, we will not go you see! … mm therefore this state still tells us here one person I will say myself, I will not be able. If it is plural, if the rain is falling we will not be able we many. Still if there is plural and here are people but also me one, who may com compose it and change it becoming one person if plural if we pass the test we will be given gifts.
Reza say your information
R: If I pass the test I will be given gifts
D: Clap your hands for him
Ps: (clap)
D: Good, if I pass the test what will I be given?
Ps: Gifts

124 The term meta-language is here used as an opposite to object language, meta-language describing “talk about language”, such as in lines 36-37: ninaongea habari zangu (I am talking about myself) and object language “talking about reality” such as in line 36: Mimi sitafua (I will not wash the clothes).
The explanations become confused in many ways. First she claims, in lines 36-43, that the two parts of the sentence, that is the two verbs, have to have the same number, which is not the case. In fact, one of her own sentences from the assignment is an example where the two parts of the sentence differ in number: *Nguo zikikauka nitapiga pasi* (If the clothes dry I will iron.) This explanation becomes even more confused when she uses *mvua* ’rain’ as an example claiming that the rule is not applicable for *mvua* as it does not have a plural (lines 33-34). However she herself used *mvua* in different numbers in the beginning of the lesson (lines 13-15): … *mvua zinanyesha naweza kusema: Mvua ikinyesha ‘… the rains keep falling I can say: If the rain falls’*. A second confusion is that she mixes meta-language and object language and direct and indirect speech. In lines 39-43 she starts the explanation with direct speech. She then uses indirect speech and a meta-perspective until the final question: *Tukifaulu tutapewa nini? ‘If we manage what will we be given?’* Then she starts to switch between the two perspectives also inside the sentences in lines 45-50, for example in lines 48-49: *kwa hiyo hali hii bado inatuambia hapa mtu mmoja nitasema mwenyewe, sitaweza ‘therefore this state still tells us here one person I will say myself, I will not be able’. She continues:

61 W: Nikimfulia bibi ngu zo zake atanishukuru
62 sana.
63 D: … e tena?
64 W: Nikimfulia bibi ngu zo zake atafurahi sana.
65 D: sh sh soma tena
(Here the teacher notices her spelling mistake on the black board and corrects it)
66 W: Nikimfulia bibi ngu zo zake atafurahi sana
67 P: If I wash grandmother’s clothes for her she will thank me a lot
68 D: … e again?
69 P: If I wash grandmother’s clothes for her she will be very happy.
70 D: Nikimfulia ipo wapi? Ipo pale? Ipo?
71 W: Hapana
72 D: Where is “If I wash for her”? Is it there? Is it there?
73 P: No
74 D: A it isn’t there, who now (…) Number four number four read for us Asha
75 A: If you wash grandmother’s clothes for her she will be very happy.

Debora’s own copying mistake confused the pupil who tried to make sense of the sentence. Although Deborah corrects her miss-spelling, she does not recognise the problem for the pupil but acts as the reading problem was entirely his own. First he uses nikimfulia, ‘If I wash the clothes for her’, and atanishukuru, ‘she will thank me’, which makes sense but does not follow the given pattern. Then he tries by combining nikimfulia with atafurahi, ‘she will be happy’, which accords with the given sentence. However nikimfulia is still not among the given options. During this interaction it was impossible to observe if the class-mates
tried to help this boy by whispering or in other ways but this does seem plausible. The first “misreading”, nikimfulia for ukinifulia could well be a misreading, although we can not know whether the one who misread was the boy himself or a class-mate trying to help him. The second mistake, atanishukuru for atafurahi, is probably not a common misreading but probably the reader has made a mistake in interpreting the task itself. Atashukuru is quite similar to nitakushukuru which is one of the options to the left, while he was supposed to read the sentence to the right, atafurahi. If the boy (or his classmates) did not actually read but tried to solve the task by remembering what was said by the teacher, these mistakes make sense as the options he tries are among the given words.

After this Debora leaves the pupils to finish the work on their own. After the lesson 73 of the roughly 200 pupils hand in their exercise books. Out of these 73 no less than 50 had copied the sentences in a way that made them totally incomprehensible. Only a few of the remaining contained “correct” or nearly correct solutions. Some of the readable copies read:

**Ukinitulia nguo mamaananiituliiga**

Correct: *Ukinifulia nguo mama atani ..., ‘If you wash my clothes mother will ... me’. This child has mixed f and t in the first word, which makes the text uncomprehensible, *Ukinitulia* means ‘If you calm me down’, but this lesson and all the written sentences was about washing clothes, *fulia*. In the last written “word” the child is apparently lost, and after this the child had only copied one more of the total five sentences.

**Baba sabuni nitafua viatury Angu**

Correct: *Baba akinunua sabuni nitafua viatu yangu*, ‘If daddy buys soap I will clean my shoes’. The last two “words” in the pupil’s writing indicates that he is only copying without really understanding what he is reading/writing.

The ways these pupils had copied the task resemble what van Lier found in Puno (1996) where pupils had copied lines from the blackboard vertically, that is without understanding. Apparently some of the pupils had developed a strategy to avoid punishment and to create safety by copying, although most of them unsuccessfully, while the majority used a strategy of not handing their work in at all. Only about 10 % of the pupils had copied the sentences and put a word in the place of the dashes. One of these pupils had written: *nitasukulu* (for *nitashukuru*), clearly not copying but reading from the blackboard and then striving to write the text down, with typical spelling mistakes. However this was

125 We should remember that pupils read from the blackboard, which is for some of the children at quite a distance. Any sight problems would interfere here. The fact that many children jostle on the floor, under benches and behind each other and the blackboard is in a very poor condition make the task to read from the blackboard not an easy one.
not appreciated by the teacher who crossed the word with her red pen. Here we can see an example when a pupil apparently tries to construct knowledge of her own, that is she reads and writes by storing the word in her brain, but is punished. Note that one of her spelling mistakes, exchanging ő for ő is similar to one of Debora’s own spelling mistakes.

If we analyse this lesson, which is quite a typical lesson in earlier years in primary school in Karagwe, from a learner perspective, it is obvious that this type of language use and language teaching is not easily understood by pupils. We see that there are many obstacles for pupils’ learning in this lesson. Among the difficulties are:

- Abstract and complex language content becomes more abstract by language use, such as the teacher’s mixing meta-language with object language and also mixing direct and indirect speech which makes explanations extremely difficult to understand. No account is taken of the fact that Swahili is a second language for probably all pupils in the class. Runyambo, the language that pupils know, is not used once during the lesson.
- Language use becomes more abstract by the type of assignment used. The assignment is of a very common type in Tanzanian schools. This type of cloze sentences is very abstract by its construction and rarely occurs outside the school context. For most children of this age and stage, an omitted word inside or initially in a sentence is very abstract. We can compare with the task of constructing questions to given answers or in mathematics questions of the type $x + 2 = 3$, a type of task that is common in school discourse but less frequent outside. Such tasks are usually difficult for pupils without long experience of schooling. In this case the task is also difficult because there is more than one possible solution for at least three of the sentences (the three first ones), although only one is considered correct.
- The teacher’s mistakes confuse pupils.
- One-way interaction with teacher initiative is used, which is not pupil sensitive. Because of the safety strategies, such as interaction which hides pupils’ knowledge (and their lack of knowledge), the teaching does not start from pupils’ pre-knowledge.
- Pupils respond by copying or by resistance, such as not raising their hands, not handing their assessments in and by using avoiding strategies in other ways.
- Literacy is used to assess pupils’ knowledge, or rather to assess their copying skills.
- The teacher does not make creative use of her own linguistic knowledge. In both Swahili and Runyambo there is, for example, a marker for indirect speech, \( \text{Eti/Ati} \). This marker is put initially, directly in front of indirect speech, like in: \( \text{Eti, unaitwa} \), ‘Somebody says: You are called’; that is: Somebody calls you. It is very frequently used in children’s speech in
Runyambo and Swahili in Karagwe and also in adults’ speech. This would here have been a very convenient way to mark the difference between direct and indirect speech, but Debora does not use it once during the whole lesson.

9.2 Lesson in standard 7

In standard seven education is very much directed toward the final exams. Swahili lessons follow a pattern given in the teacher aid: Msamiati, ‘vocabulary’, Miundo, ‘constructions’, Kusoma, ‘to read’, Utungaji, ‘composition’, Methali/Vitendawili, ‘proverbs/riddles’ and Inla, ‘dictation’. As the topic of Miundo is seen as important by most teachers, I will analyse such a lesson also at this level, that is the beginning of standard 7. The teacher is Richard, an ambitious, young teacher with high self-esteem as a teacher. Richard is considered a good teacher. He has a joyful attitude towards the pupils and often makes them laugh at the same time as his appearance is strict. He has planned his lesson in advance and the plan is written according to Tanzanian lesson plan writing. It is clear that he intended to give me the impression of a “good” Swahili-lesson. The pupils number 60 in the classroom. He starts the lesson by writing the date and Kiswahili on the board. Then he writes the topic of the day: Aina za maneno vivumishi, ‘Word-classes attributive’. Richard gives a proverb: Dunia tambara bovu, haikawii kunyauka, ‘The world is a bad plain, it immediately dries’, and asks the pupils to give another with the same meaning. One pupil answers: Elimu haina mwisho, ‘Education has no end’, a traditional Swahili proverb, which he rejects. However he does not insist but starts to introduce the topic of the lesson by writing seven types of words, that is the word-classes, on the blackboard. Then he explains the word vivumishi, ‘attributives’, by saying that they give information about words or nouns and that they give sifa, ‘characteristics’ or ‘qualifications’. He looks in the teacher aid when he explains. Then he gives seven types of vivumishi and for each he

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126 This lesson was also observed, tape recorded and transcribed. The teacher’s lesson plan was studied and he was interviewed before and after the lesson. Pupils’ exercise books were studied after the lesson and three groups of pupils were interviewed a few days after.
127 Attributive here is a Swahili word-class including adjectives, some pronouns, numerals and genitives.
128 These proverbs are common in the Swahili context.
129 He gives the following Swahili word-classes:
   i) nominofina (n) (nouns)
   ii) vivumishi (v) (attributives)
   iii) viwakilishi (w) (pronouns)
   iv) vitenzi (t) (verbs)
   v) vielezi (e) (adverbs)
   vi) viunganishi (u) (conjunctions)
   (vii) vihishi (h) (prepositions)
130 He gives the following:
   (i) vivumishi vya sifa (adjective attributives)
   (ii) vivumishi vya idadi (numeral attributives)
gives a few examples. Richard also asks the pupils for other examples and theirs are always of the same type as this. For example when he gives *mtoto mzuri*, ‘a good child’, a pupil gives *mtoto mbaya*, ‘a bad child’, when he gives *wale*, ‘those’ in class 2, then *yale*, ‘those’, in class 6 is given and for *changu*, ‘my’ in class 7, he gets *wangu*, ‘my’ in class 2. As Debora in the previous standard one, also he makes spelling-mistakes during the lesson such as *hodali* for *hodari*, ‘skilled’, and *ngodolo* for *godoro*, ‘mattress’.

When 35 minutes of the lesson have passed, Richard starts to write the assignment on the blackboard, copying from the teacher’s book. While he writes, pupils start to look for their note-books. They start to whisper when they realise that they do not have them and the monitor runs off to the staff-room to fetch them from Richard’s desk. When he returns three pupils help each other to distribute the books. This is done independently by the pupils while Richard is writing. The assessment is written like this:

**UTUNGAJI**

Mwanafunzi ________ hujisomea kabla ya kufanya mtihani.

__________ siku ya (This line he wipes out.) ________ siku ya mtihani iwadiapo

Husoma vitabu ________ kwa ajili ya maandalizi ya mtihani

__________ siku ya mtihani iwadiapo

huwa tayari kuchagua majibu kumwezesha kuushinda mtihani ________ . Kwa hiyo ni wajibu wa kila mwanafunzi kuutumia muda ________ kwa kujisomea vitabu ________

**COMPOSITION**

A ________ pupil studies before doing the exams.

__________ the day of (This one he wipes out.) ________ the day of the test arrives

He/she studies the books ________ because of the preparations for the test

__________ the day of the test arrives

he/she is ready to choose the answers that will enable him/her to pass the test ________ . Thus it is the responsibility of each pupil to use the time ________ to study the books ________

Line five should have ended with full stop, showing the pupils that line six is a new sentence. This causes the pupils problems later when trying to fill the right words in. When Richard finishes writing, the time is out, so the pupils will have to finish the assignment afterwards. When Richard leaves the classroom the

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(iii) *vivumishi vya kuonesha* (demonstrative attributives)
(iv) *vivumishi vya kuuliza* (interrogative attributives)
(v) *vivumishi vya kumiliki* (possessive attributives)
(vi) *vivumishi vya A-unganifu* (attributives of connecting -a)
(vii) *vivumishi vya majina* (attributives of names)
(vii) (Sic!) *vivumishi vya -ote, -enyewe, -enyewe* (attributives of -ote, -enyewe, -enyewe, all, with, self)

Swahili, as all Bantu-languages, has several noun-classes and attributives take concordance in congruence with the noun. What these children did was that they used the same attributive with a different concord.
teacher for the next lesson immediately enters. Then most of the pupils have not even copied the assignments.

The monitor later brought Richard the exercise books of 35 of the total 60 present pupils, that is 58% of the pupils handed in their assignments. The solutions resembled each others. The same mistakes were made by many pupils. Thus it seems as they had helped each other. Line six, where the gap opens the sentence and where Richard had missed the full stop on the previous line, is misunderstood by most pupils. Many pupils put in words that give a totally unintelligible text. The teacher accepted different solutions if they made sense but he missed many words and points in his marking. He did not correct other mistakes in the assignments such as miss-spellings or incorrect letters. Neither did he mark other grammatical mistakes such as vitabu wote (should have been vitabu vyote). Of the 35 collected assignments two were marked 7/7, which means seven out of seven correct, eighteen (that is less than 30% of the total 60 pupils) got 4/6 or above. Two pupils’ work was marked with a slash. Overall the marking gives the impression of hurried work. Richard’s own remarks in his written evaluation of the lesson is that out of the present pupils 3/4 had understood well. When I pointed out that 42% had not given him their assignment he looked surprised. He claimed not to have noticed this.

During follow-up interviews, two days later, only a few of the pupils showed a vague idea of what had been taught. These pupils could mention the word vivumishi, ‘attributives’, and connect it with expressions like mtoto mzuri (a good child). Two pupils tried to give one of the seven types of attributives: vivumishi vya viwakilishi and vivumishi vya nomino, which would translate: ‘attributives of pronouns’ and ‘attributes of nouns respectively (that is a mixture of different word-classes and types of attributives). No one could explain either the word vivumishi or any of the words for other word-classes.

When I analyse this lesson I find that:

- As in the previous standard 1, language use is abstract.
- The teacher relies on teaching aids and explanations are few.
- Pupils rely on copying strategies.
- Pupils use avoidance strategies such as not handing their books in.
- Only very few of the pupils recall anything of the academic knowledge taught during the lesson a few days later. Those few are only able to repeat some of the words used without showing any understanding.
- The importance of pupils’ exercising is not recognised. That pupils were not given time during the lesson to do the exercises and that the teacher left the classroom when pupils started to write is symptomatic and is another example that shows that there is no awareness of the amount of time requested for practising for pupils to acquire literacy skills.
9.3 Safety strategies and interaction between teachers and pupils

We learned from the Swahili-lessons above that schooled education constitutes a high risk situation for teachers and pupils. The risk that the teacher will fail to teach what she or he is supposed to teach is apparent and pupils are at high risk of being subject to punishment. This of course effects the classroom discourse. Hence it is not surprising that we notice different types of safety strategies used during both lessons, such as chorusing, copying and pupils secretly helping each other and trying to avoid failure in different ways. These safety strategies are created and maintained by teachers and pupils in co-operation both in lower standards and in higher ones. We also saw in the previous chapter that the call-response interaction is explicitly trained in pre-school and that more advanced forms are used in higher standards. We have seen several examples where pupils are explicitly and implicitly socialised to copy and not to think creatively. There is a similar example from a standard 6 and a lecture on grammatical concordance in Swahili. When the teacher gives examples like: kikombe kimevunjika, ‘the cup is broken’, pupils give examples such as kitanda kimevunjika, ‘the bed is broken’. When one pupil gives Hiki ni kikombe, ‘This is a cup’, the teacher does not comment on the grammatical concordance, instead he changes the expression to Kikombe hiki ni kizuri, ‘This cup is nice’, making it more similar to his own example.

In the above studied lessons from standards 1 and 7 we saw that pupils also hide their lack of understanding in different ways, such as by not asking, although they apparently do not understand. During my field studies I asked pupils of standards 6 and 7 to write short essays. Although I told pupils that the writing was to be read only by me and would not be corrected, some pupils brought pre-written texts to the lesson and handed them in and others wrote “fake” texts in the way that they wrote consecutive series of letters, such as amnamnammana or even not letters but instead tokens similar to letters. However in none of the classes (in total ten) did any pupil ever ask me any question in connection with the task. Apparently pupils had developed strategies for creating security by not showing a lack of knowledge or understanding. Avoiding failure may also be done by not handing in notebooks, not answering and not raising ones hand. Other ways are sitting in the back of the classroom to avoid the teacher’s attention, playing truancy by “hiding in the bushes” (see 3.4.5), staying at home or running away also from home. This may be perceived of as being done in co-operation between pupils and teachers as teachers seldom do such things as ask for remaining exercise books, ask pupils who sit in the back or follow up why certain pupils do not come to school. In some cases I met with pupils who told me that they had refused to go to school for months because

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132 All pupils who fulfilled this task were given a pencil and an exercise-book. This may have forced some of the pupils to hand their work in. In another situation they may have chosen to avoid handing their work in. Also the number of pupils present was higher during these lessons than during other lessons.
they had felt that they had been offended or insulted by a teacher. This is an active form of resistance from pupils, instead of accepting they hide their (lack of) knowledge or themselves or actively refuse to co-operate.

We can state that this type of education seems to be extremely inefficient, the outcome is low and pupils’ potentials are not used, such as their linguistic knowledge. Methods used during lessons promote passive rote learning and pupils’ attention is focused on escaping punishment rather than on active construction of knowledge. On the whole we see that much of what is done in the classroom contributes to pushing pupils out. This was especially clear in the first example, the crowded standard 1 class, where much blame was put on pupils during the lesson and only a small part of the pupils handed in their assignments.

It is tempting to blame the teachers so we have to remind ourselves that both Debora and Richard are hard working teachers, with good reputations and ambitions for their pupils. None of them, for example, use the cane or other types of corporal punishment frequently and none of them are among those teachers who are often absent from lessons. Why, then, is so much done which makes the education so ineffective? If we want to understand the situation better we have to involve also the teachers’ perspectives in the analysis.

There are many factors that may have contributed to this situation:

- The teachers’ situation is difficult with crowded classrooms in combination with high demands and expectations from parents and from an authoritative school-system with a leadership which is often perceived as capricious by the teachers. This is further stressed by the decrease in teachers’ social and economic status and the lack of support from superiors as well as from some parents, which is experienced by teachers.
- Teachers’ training is on a low level academically and the awareness of how children develop languages is very low. Those responsible for the Swahili curriculum and for Swahili education in teacher training are generally not aware of results from research on language acquisition in children. In classrooms like these all children learn Swahili as a second language and rarely meet Swahili outside the school, a fact that is seldom taken into account by authorities, for example in curricula, text books and teacher training. Traditions also play an important role in what happens in school. The ways schooling and literacy were introduced by missionaries and colonisers and the ways it has been treated through history is likely to have affected what happens today. Thus common sense and school traditions have greater influence on what happens in Tanzanian classrooms than initiated research.
- Teachers between 40 and 60 years of age are among those educated during the first period of independence in Tanzania, a period where the quantitative expansion of education was enormous and a period when economic resources were small (see 3.3.3). These teachers then formed the
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This period Tanzania’s resources for research and tertiary education have been small.

- The authoritative school system and the frequency of punishment promotes obedience and disencourages reflection. Not only pupils but also teachers are punished. We saw for example that following the low results in the standard seven exams in 2001 there was a re-organisation in schools which in most cases resulted in an increase in the numbers of lessons each teacher was required to teach. Also the replacing of many teachers was perceived as a punishment.

- Throughout the school system what is local and vernacular is stigmatised. When the teacher in standard one does not use eta/ati to mark indirect speech in the classroom, while it is so common outside, this shows us that she is probably not confident enough to use communicative markers from outside the school context in class. In this discourse teachers rely on teaching aids and instruction from authorities and their own experience from their earlier education while their creativity is not encouraged. This means that methods imposed by missionaries and colonisers have not been contested and that the adaptation to local conditions is small. The stigmatisation is also apparent among pupils. All pupils claim that Swahili, as a subject, is very easy, and they claim that they master it, also those pupils who have not even acquired basic literacy skills at the end of standard 7. This is in clear contrast with subjects such as Mathematics and English that most pupils claim to have difficulties with. On the whole local and indigenous resources such as language knowledge and language teaching/learning methods have been stigmatised. We saw in 3.3.1 that children traditionally learned advanced language skills through poetry, tales and so on but these educational forms are stigmatised together with all that is seen as traditional, non-Western and backward.

9.4 Summary and conclusions

The school context in which teachers – and pupils – act in Karagwe may be described by the image of two curricula, one intended and one actual. The intended curriculum is represented by regulations and stipulations such as official curricula, textbooks, teacher aids and teacher training, while the actual curriculum is what is actually carried out, which may also be called the hidden curriculum. Following the intended curriculum obedience is central. Teachers make their plans, following textbooks, teacher aids and patterns learned in teacher training and during their own schooling. They fulfill demands from authorities with formulaic teaching of separate skills and there is little room neither for their own creativity and reflection or for their pupils’, and they make evaluations to show that they have succeeded in teaching what they should.
Repetition and copying of facts are perceived as important and literacy is mainly used to test pupils’ skills to create an image of successful literacy acquisition. In the case the façade crackles, for example in the case of tests or exams, the blame is put on pupils for being lazy and disobedient. In this context it is relevant for teachers to see failure in tests as disobedience as it is the pupils’ responsibility in school to obey, which includes learning what they are supposed to.

In this authoritative system, teachers and pupils are accordingly not creative in their implementation of official given directives, as this would not imply obedience. However to carry out this task under prevailing conditions, one needs both creativity and reflexivity. This is seen in the different types of safety strategies developed with the aim to save the face of teachers/pupils and to create an image of successful teaching/learning. This makes it relevant to talk about the actual, or hidden, curriculum, where we see teachers/pupils striving to cope with the situation and to solve the seemingly unsolvable equation of on the one side high expectations and demands and on the other side harsh conditions in life. One example of creativity among teachers is the tendency not to teach stipulated subjects such as Siansi kimu ‘Home science’, to exclude lessons of silent reading and to avoid prescribed exercises such as group discussions.

Teachers are not only faced with problems in school, but also problems in their private life outside school affect their job. As most Banyambo they have to deal with increasing economic demands and social instability, which affect their living conditions. For most teachers teaching is no longer their main economic activity, as it used to be, but they have had to find other ways to meet the need of their families. Thus the main objective for the job as a teacher may be to fulfill what is demanded to receive the salary, or if possible to raise it. In this case some teachers are very creative. It is more important to impress a visiting officer than to make sure pupils learn what they should. In this perspective safety strategies play an important role, creating an image of successful teaching. Hiding failure becomes built to the system. If some pupils are pushed out, the working load for teachers will decrease and to use pupils to work in their homes or on their mashamba is another way for teachers to ease their burden. In this perspective the use of safety strategies becomes even more relevant. By using different strategies teachers strive and manage, at least to a certain extent, to show that they do what they are supposed to in spite of the harsh conditions.

Also for language attitudes and language use we may talk about two curricula; the intended which states that Swahili and English are the languages that should be used and developed in school, and the actual curriculum in which teachers and pupils use the languages that suit their needs, Swahili and Runyambo. However power relations are evident in the fact that pupils are not allowed to use Runyambo to teachers and only secretly in the child-child discourse.

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133 Anyone acquainted with school in Tanzania knows that the reception of an official guest at a school is usually quite impressive and that preparations have often taken weeks, during which there has been no ordinary teaching in school.
Thus we can state that teachers’ language ideologies and the way language is used socialise pupils into certain language and literacy patterns, with dominant literacies that focus on form and on separate parts of language and with Swahili and English as high status languages and with Runyambo as a language with low status. Traditional uses of Runyambo that were used to develop language skills are devalued. The same counts for different literacy practises. What counts as literacy in school is formal repeating and copying in Swahili and English. Important knowledge is to be able to copy and repeat and to follow given patterns and this is mainly thought to be learned by observation and imitation while actually much of the learning may take place in pupils’ sub rosa activities where they help each other secretly. The level of literacy skills pupils are expected to acquire is low, mainly rudimentary skills such as coding and decoding written text, and there is little awareness that pupils need to develop more advanced literacy skills, such as fluency and speed, or of the amount of practise needed to acquire these skills.

Official curricula presume pupils’ knowledge of Swahili as a first language and, although nearly all pupils in these schools have Swahili as a second language, teachers have no guidance in how to teach Swahili as a second language to children, except for the explicit rule of “Swahili only” in school, which implicitly concerns only pupils. I conclude that these attitudes to and uses of literacy and language mainly have three effects:

- Inequality in pupils’ educational possibilities with the favouring of pupils who have been exposed to Swahili and literacy before school
- Safety strategies to hide failure while at the same time preventing pupils’ learning
- Low level of achievement of academic content in schools
Chapter Ten

Discussion

This study has focused on the connection between literacy practices in school and the society in Karagwe and the efficiency and relevance of literacy education in school. The ethnographic perspective of the study has provided a complex picture, what we with Geertz (1973) may call a “thick description”. This perspective of literacy as a phenomenon involved in context will also be used in the discussion. This means that the existing economic and political situation will be taken into account in that for example scarcity of resources and a hierarchical system will be included in the situation. A discussion of eventual change in that respect is not within the scope of this study.

In the study, literacy practices have been observed and analysed from different perspectives both on a micro and macro level, taking local, regional, national and global factors into account. Literacy as language, as knowledge and as learning has been analysed through different factors, such as hierarchy, religion, family and kinship, age, gender, group affiliation, modernity contra traditionality, coast contra inland and language ideologies. The different factors map onto each other, and a complex web appears where different factors interact in an intricate way. This has enabled the identification of different problems in literacy education in Karagwe, such as gaps between the intended and the actual curriculum, discontinuity in language use and irrelevance in literacy education. Furthermore inequalities in schooling caused by official language policies have been identified and light has also been shed on classroom interaction and the double function of call-response interaction in schools.

As mentioned earlier, in a situation like this when a researcher studies a foreign setting with poor conditions, it is important that he or she recognises what is actually there, and identifies existing strengths and potentials, instead of focussing on what ought to be there, according to Western views. It took me many observations and much frustration and confusion before I could stop looking for what was not there and could start to question what Wright (2001: 62) calls “the gospel of ‘student centred’, ‘communicative’ methodology”. However, this does not mean that I allowed myself to give way to relativism and not to value the effects of what I observed.
The study did not set out to find ways to solve problems in education in Tanzania. It is my conviction that plans for educational development there should be made in Tanzania, by Tanzanians and that local plans should be made on a local level. However, what this study set out to do was to function as a catalyst and to present an analysis which may unveil phenomena that have not been apparent and have not been commonly known.

Although the study has been carried out in Karagwe, more precisely in five villages, my experience of life and education in other areas in Tanzania assure me that much of what I have found in Karagwe and some of the conclusions I draw are relevant for other areas too. Although the district of Karagwe constitutes a unique setting, the similarities with other districts in Tanzania are many, such as language ideologies and the authoritarian school system. However, any generalisations have to be made cautiously with different local factors being taken into account.

The official educational system we see in Karagwe today greatly resembles what was imposed by the colonialists and the missionaries. The Western powers were served by an educational system that produced a stable, obedient work force and humble masses. This may have been particularly important in Karagwe, where the Mukama actively fought the colonialists and the Christians with his forces, and were hung by the invaders. The sorting function and the fostering of unquestioning rote-learners served this purpose well. However, the independent Republic of Tanzania today, acting on a global arena, needs citizens that are creative, innovative and flexible. In multilingual Tanzania, multilingual competence both in global languages such as Swahili and English, and in local languages such as Runyambo, is an asset. In the present political situation Tanzania can not rely only on external aid but needs to use its own resources, among which the citizens and their linguistic competence are an important part. As long as literacy is intimately connected with dominant discourses and gate-keeping, it will not serve as the important tool for development that it has the potential to be. For this it is crucial that literacy is made a tool for the majority to use creatively and flexibly. This, however, does not mean that Tanzanian literacy education should once more parrot pedagogical patterns from the West. Educators in Tanzania should instead invent their own methods and make their own plans, based on informed conclusions and insightful research.

Contrary to what is usual when education in developing countries is discussed, I will first discuss some important potentials for literacy education in Karagwe, before I discuss the problems I have identified. Then I will suggest some ways that literacy education may be developed based on these findings.

10.1 Strengths and potentials in the situation for literacy in Karagwe

The most positive sign for literacy development for the future in Karagwe that I see is the positive attitude to education among the Banyambo. The fact that teachers, pupils and parents are willing to put so much effort into schooled
education is a strength that is of great value. Children particularly engage seriously and with enthusiasm in the task of learning schooled knowledge. Also the positive attitude to adult education and the tradition among people of forming groups is an asset. The frequency of groups on a grassroots level and of meetings and seminars of different types for rural people is a strength that proves the positive attitude for education among the Banyambo. However, there is at the same time a risk that the positive attitude will turn negative if the actual outcome of schooled education becomes more commonly known.

Also the high level of language knowledge is promising for the future. The strength of Runyambo, the local language, both the high number of speakers and their high command of it, is an asset, at the same time as there is a high level of Swahili competence. Although Runyambo is stigmatised, it is still used frequently and is important in central parts of life in Karagwe, such as the important social networks and in economic exchange. As most people also have a fairly high command of Swahili, the level of bilingualism is high. This gives the majority in Karagwe access to at least two languages for effective communication, both inside the area and all over the Swahili speaking part of Africa. However, the tendency among middle class parents to raise their children in Swahili is a sign of an emergent language shift to monolingualism.

In what remains of traditional language education there is also much that may have a positive effect on the development of literacy. The richness of tales, songs, dances, poems, self-praisings, ambiguous talk and other forms of elaborate language use and the strong place these language forms had in traditional life is an asset although stigmatisation has decreased its value. As we saw in chapter 1, these traditional speech acts exercise many language skills that are important for schooled education and the development of literacy skills and there is thus a potential in these traditions that may be developed for use in literacy education, both in schools and outside.

The continuity of use of the passive voice for children between homes and school is also positive. Children are socialised to learn by listening and observing attentively, a fact that helps both teachers and pupils in the tough situation in schools with low teacher-pupil ratio. The interaction patterns used in narrative interaction, such as call-response interaction including long turns on the part of the speaker and attentive listening on the part of the listener, socialise children in ways that help them learn in school and are particularly applicable in literacy acquisition, for example to practise monologues and distanced language. These patterns are also important for teachers to handle their difficult task with large classes and a lack of recourses.

Another promising feature are the libraries in Karagwe. The existence of a district library available for schools is positive although there are major transport problems. The number of school libraries with relatively high numbers of new books for children also has a potential as they may be used much more frequently in school than at present.
The high percentage of the population that have acquired basic, rudimentary literacy skills is also promising. This is one important result from the policy of *Education for All* and *Self-Reliance* and is a strong base to build the development of literacy on.

### 10.2 Problems that it is important to solve

The first problem that I want to mention and that I find constitutes the most important barrier for development of schooled knowledge and literacy is the discontinuity in language use. The fact that most pupils do not understand the language used in school during the important lower classes in primary school leads to low achievement and unequal educational chances. Also the fact that teachers are not given relevant tools to handle the task of teaching in a second language has severe effects both on what happens in school and on the outcome. It is also a problem that there is a low level of awareness of research on how children develop language, among those responsible for curricula and teacher training. This is, however, not a question that has to be a problem. Research has showed a multitude of ways that may be used in a setting like this to promote children’s bilingualism and minimise undemocratic language effects in schools. This can however only be done if policy makers and those responsible for curricula and teacher training face the actual language situation and make use of relevant research on multilingualism.

The next problem I want to bring out is the irrelevance of literacy practices in school. The fact that many important literacy practices in the community are not taught at all in school makes literacy education irrelevant for the majority that will return to the farm after school. Also the low level of (expected) literacy is a problem. Neither teachers nor curricula writers seem to be aware of the high level of literacy skills needed to be able to use literacy effectively for example in groups, adult education, economic enterprise and in reading texts such as newspapers and books, a fact that has a severe effect on the outcome of education.

Furthermore the high level of abstraction in literacy and language education and the discontinuity between language use and interaction in homes and in school constitute a problem in literacy education. If teachers and policy makers could be made aware of ways to link what happens in school with pupils’ pre-knowledge in literacy and language and use more holistic ways of teaching, literacy education in school would connect better to pupils’ life experiences. Connected to this is the problem with teachers’ low level of education. This is a problem for the outcome as much of what pupils are taught is inconsistent or not correct. It is also a problem when one wants to initiate a change in the ways teachers teach. For example the problems with the call-response type of interaction is a phenomenon that would not be easily understood by most teachers without extensive training.
A problem on the macro-level that I see is the highly centralised and hierarchical system. This leads to safety strategies such as resistance, avoidance and hiding a lack of skills on the micro-level, which has a negative effect on the educational outcome. Another effect of this is the lack of reflection and connection to research in teacher training and among teachers. Most teachers are not used to reflecting on their work and are not easily made aware of what happens in the classrooms. The high level of centralisation also leads to a low level of adaptation to the local situation. Connected to this is the mushrooming of private schools. As many people in the middle class, such as those in power in education at a district level and above and some younger teachers, put their own children in private schools with higher standards compared to governmental schools, the will to raise standards and create better conditions in governmental schools has decreased.

A problem that I have observed mainly on a micro level but that should be solved both on a macro and micro level is the abundance of punishment. Learning to read and write in Karagwe is a serious task and children engage seriously in it. However, for many children the frequency of punishment makes it a horrifying task, sometimes even dangerous as some pupils are actually injured by teachers in school.

10.3 Suggestions for the future development of literacy

The first suggestion I want to make is to put efforts to language planning. New language policies could be developed with these findings as a base. Recognising the value of local languages could have positive effects throughout education, not only on literacy but also on Swahili and other subjects. This could also help reawaken Tanzanian pride, combined with a local pride, instead of the increasing stigmatisation we see of all that is non-Western. The asset of local language education traditions and oral language use such as tales, poetry, songs, etc. could then be utilised in schools. The policy of “Swahili only” in primary school, and “English only” in secondary school, stands in the way of drawing on research and models for bilingual education relevant for this context, as well as for local adaptation. Questions of education and language planning should be solved on a local level instead of centrally. Then local factors such as language competence, local production and local traditions could be considered, which would make primary level education more relevant. This would then serve the country on a national level, as it would benefit for example the economy and democratic rights, such as equal access to education.

This relates to the question of language use that could become more relevant and efficient. Teachers could be encouraged to use both Swahili and Runyambo to help pupils understand. The teaching of Swahili as a second language should be based on research on how children develop a second language, to make it more efficient. In this context, with a high level of bilingualism in Runyambo and Swahili, both languages could be effectively used in classrooms. If
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authorities face the situation with a high level of bilingualism and make use of the abundance of research showing that bilingualism is not a threat either to Swahili nor English but an asset with a great potential, they could, together with teachers, develop ways to make use of results from the extensive research on different bilingual educational models, and create a relevant model for the present situation in Karagwe. Such a model could provide additive language acquisition, where pupils would learn Swahili as an additive language, instead of subtractive, where the learning of Swahili is supposed to gain if Runyambo is diminished, and fair chances for pupils from different language backgrounds. It should also consider local factors such as language competence and language ideologies. This would enable pupils to develop a bilingual base that could benefit education in other subjects, such as English, Mathematics and Science. More relevant teacher training would indirectly raise teachers’ status by raising the educational attainment. If teachers were to be given relevant in-service training and more responsibility, their status could become higher.

Literacy education could be better connected to pupils’ earlier socialisation in homes. Children’s active voice could, for example, be promoted in school. The high number of pupils in the classrooms could be turned into an asset instead of a problem by using the pupils’ activity for example in peer reading, writing in groups, peer response, having elder pupils reading for younger ones, telling them tales and so on. As children in Karagwe are socialised to be responsible for example for the care-taking and socialisation of their younger siblings, they could also be given greater responsibility for peer-teaching in schools.

Early literacy education could be made more efficient by making it less abstract, by including authentic reading and writing and by increasing time for pupils’ practising. The link to local literacies and oral traditions has the greatest potential in early literacy education. Teachers could be helped to find ways to use local narratives, poetry and songs in literacy and language education. The rich resource in oral traditions could be used in school, and pupils could be active in this process of gathering and reducing oral language to literacy. Also literacy practises that are important in rural life, such as simple book-keeping, keeping diaries and writing letters, could be included in schooled literacies. By making teachers aware of the amount of practises needed for pupils to acquire high literacy skills and by including exercises on a higher level, where pupils actually read and write instead of only repeating and copying, the level of literacy skills acquired could become higher. Also an awareness of how to teach higher level literacy skills, such as literacy strategies and critical and creative literacy, is necessary to raise standards.

Literacy learning would be much more effective if it were to be made joyful. Although there have been some campaigns in Tanzania against repressing and beating children, much more has to be done at all levels to turn learning to read

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1 In the schools I visited there were books, posters and pamphlets sent out by *Tuleane*, 'Let’s take care of each other', *Sauti Elimu*, 'Voice of Education', *Hakielimu*, 'Educational rights'
and write into an activity of joy, excitement and pride. This is particularly important for vulnerable children, such as the many orphans and abandoned children, not to mention all the children in broken families.

10.4 Concluding remarks

The study of literacy as a social and cultural phenomenon and the ethnographic perspective of the study has made a range of literacy practices in Karagwe visible. The links between literacy practices and power, referred to by among others Wagner (1990), Isling (1991), Gee (1996), Street (2001) and Barton (2001) are obvious also in Karagwe. However, while Barton identified two types of literacy practices in the context of Lancaster (Barton, 2001) dominating and vernacular, I have identified three groups which I call dominant, semi-dominant and dominated literacy practices. Both the dominant and the dominated literacy practices in Karagwe have similar characteristics to the ones described by Barton, prescribed and standardised versus devalued and non-formal. However, in the case of Tanzania there have also been developed forms which give people tools to challenge existing authorities and search for new futures, the semi-dominant literacies used in local groups, in adult education and in development programmes.

The lack of continuity between literacy practices and interaction in homes and in school in Karagwe does not apply as much to interactional patterns, as in the cases referred to by Heath (1983), Watson-Gegeo (1992) and Philips (2001). There is a continuity in the interactional patterns between homes and school in that children are expected to watch, listen and imitate as well as to obey adults, although the active child-child discourse in homes where children actively socialise and educate each other and which gives children great responsibility is absent in the official discourse in school. In Karagwe the lack of continuity is rather on language choice, as in the cases of Peru and South-Africa (Hornberger and Chick, 2001), in Burundi (Ndayipfukamiye, 2001) and Botswana (Fafunwa, 1990) but also on literacy practices. In Karagwe the absence of most semi-dominant literacies in school, the types of literacies that may have positive economic impact in many families, and of dominated literacies that are frequent in many homes, make literacy practices in school mainly relevant for those who will get access to higher education and jobs in the official sector. Following Edelsky (1991) and Verhoeven & Snow (2001) we can also state that the emphasis on using literacy mainly for testing in schools in Karagwe and the lack of opportunities for learners’ practice in school make literacy education in Karagwe’s schools less relevant.

The ethnographic perspective, which has included the historiography of language ideologies in Karagwe, has enabled an analysis of the development of language and literacy over time. This has made the impact of power more visible. The conflict between on the one side national policies, such as the policies of Self-Relience and Education for All, which were mainly formed during the time of independence, and on the other side demands for “modernisation”, is one important factor behind the discrepancy between explicitly stated policies and their implementation. The pressure from the global market, through donors, the World Bank and the IMF, but also the cultural influence, for example through the mass media and an increase in mobility among the elites, has had a great impact on language ideologies in Tanzania. This is obvious in the implicit language ideologies which put English in a unique position while stigmatising all that is perceived as non-Western and traditional. I find the conflict perspective of diglossia, as described by among others Martin-Jones (1988) and Rubagumya (1991), a relevant tool for describing this process.

The importance of schooling as a base for producing and reproducing authority described by among others Cazden (2001) and Heller & Martin-Jones (2001) becomes evident in this study. Teachers’ language ideologies that reflect the dominant discourse and different interactional patterns in school, such as the call-response interaction, form a system that cements existing ideologies, even at the cost of pupils’ learning. However, that teachers and pupils do not passively adapt to their prescribed roles becomes obvious when we observe the creativity used in their resistance to the power and their strategies to avoid obedience and escape punishment. That people also outside the school context do not just passively adapt, but create their own ways to get access to economic and status benefits, is shown by the complicated interactional patterns in different networks. In these interactions literacy has become an important and integrated part.

Hence literacy has become an integrated part in people’s lives in Karagwe, to a greater or lesser extent, and as such also integrated in their interactions and in their struggle for life.
Chapter Eleven

Summary

As has been shown in this study, language and education are intimately related both to each other and to power. The study has been carried out in a linguistical anthropological framework and its micro perspective has revealed phenomena that may inform decisions on macro level, such as language policy for educational purposes and policies for literacy education. The multifaceted phenomenon of literacy has been analysed from different perspectives and through different lenses which has provided an image of a complex web of interacting factors. From this I argue that both educational policies and practices and language policies and practices are influenced by social and political factors. The analysis has shown that different language practices, as well as literacy practices, are involved in the process of establishing authority and legitimacy. Interactional patterns have been made visible by the analysis of how interactants in different discourses and networks draw on language resources. These resources are used both to collaborate with, and to contest different interactional and institutional orders. The relation between what happens in educational contexts and in other arenas have uncovered interactional patterns that influence both education and communicative interaction between school and the society. This has exposed different processes involved in social and cultural production and reproduction.

Language ideologies as a process must be understood from a historical perspective, which in the case of Karagwe includes struggles between nomadic pastoralists and settled agriculturalists and involves factors such as trade, colonialism and post-colonialism with structural adaptation plans and globalisation. The study indicates that literacy, language and education have constituted key sites of these struggles as well as of the production and reproduction of the social order since the arrival of Westerners.

I argue that literacy, as one aspect of language, has been used, and is still used, both to create new élites and to reproduce the existing ones. At the same time as members of the élites have used literacy as one tool to dominate, some individuals from non-élite groups have been able to use literacy to contest the social order and acquire access to power. Young, educated people, for example, could, during the first part of the 20th century, use their education to get access to
jobs and status which traditionally had been reserved for elders and the ruling class. Some individual women have been able to acquire power that traditionally would only have been given to men. After independence literacy has offered some poor peasants and some of the many single mothers ways to improve their own standards of living.

This shows us that the relationship between literacy and power is complex. Both to argue that authorities have used literacy to oppress people, and to argue the opposite, that oppressed people have been able to use literacy to contest oppressors, is to simplify the course of events too much. Likewise, to argue that the Banyambo only received literacy as a device imposed on them is too narrow-minded, but also to argue that the Banyambo has actively taken hold of literacy and made use of it the way they have perceived most useful.

It is clear that in the case of Karagwe, a combination of language ideologies and an authoritarian school system have resulted in a situation where a minority of the children, in urban, Swahili-speaking environments, are privileged in schooled education, while the majority are disadvantaged. We have also seen that this has resulted in interactional patterns that constitute an important obstacle to pupils’ learning. Although the official policy of Tanzania has been equal educational rights and development in rural areas, we see that what has explicitly been decided, in many cases, has come out otherwise. This shows us that implicit language ideologies may work contrary to explicitly stated policies. In Tanzania, official policies are implemented mainly by an élite of civil servants. As selected parts of the traditional élites were the ones that formed the élite of the new state, one may conclude that this has offered individuals from traditional élites ways to make use of official policies to keep their position. However, at the same times individuals from other groups have made their way to the élites, while some members of traditional élites did not gain from this process.

That language and power are related becomes even more obvious when we consider the case of Tanzania on a global level. For Tanzania, as a country at the periphery of the global market, the situation is that important political and economic decisions are in fact taken elsewhere, in parts of the world where the influence of Tanzanian policy-makers is small. In a situation where the country and its formal education relies on donors and aid, most influential decision makers are actually not inside but outside the country. As much of what is revealed in this study may seem to blame certain actions taken by the élite in Tanzania, such as the stigmatisation of local languages and the economic investment in private education, it is important to remember that much of what members of the élite strive for, or manage to achieve, is far below what most Westerners see as their fundamental right, such as access to relevant basic education for their children. Thus it is important not to forget the role of the global economy for the educational outcome in Tanzania.
This study has emphasised the importance of a connection between what happens in school and outside. I argue that schooling will become more efficient if what happens in school, such as language use and interactional patterns, builds on what pupils bring to school, that is their pre-knowledge and the experiences they bring from homes and other discourses they have been involved in. Schooled education will also be more relevant if what pupils learn in school agrees with what they will need to know in their lives. The analysis of discourses in and outside school in Karagwe has revealed discrepancies in many fields where the high status given to all that is perceived as “modern”, that is Western, and the stigmatisation of what is perceived as not “modern”, such as what is local and traditional, are important. In the case of Karagwe it is understandable that people wanted to get rid of some features from the past, such as the capricious and violent rule of the Bakama and the superstition that ruled much of people’s lives. However, language traditions in the form of for example poetry, tales and elaborate language use, deserves a better fate than stigmatisation and repression. I argue that linguistic and educational traditions and the high level of bilingualism could become an important asset for schooled education in Karagwe.

In this context I also find it relevant to argue that linguistic anthropology and ethnography offers a perspective and a tool for researching questions of efficiency and relevance for schooled education. That implicit language ideologies influence not only what pupils learn but also who succeeds and who fails is not only the case in Tanzania and other postcolonial states, but also in Western countries. By using ethnography to reveal relations between explicit and implicit policies, the impact of language ideologies in educational settings may be highlighted. Through linguistic anthropology, hidden phenomena may be revealed and the results of official policies may be analysed. In educational research, linguistic anthropology may make connections between what happens in school and what happens outside explicit and more visible. Too many educational programmes and literacy projects in countries such as Tanzania have been constructed with a Western oriented perspective. Linguistic anthropology is one way to study and analyse the context to make future plans more relevant and efficient.
Literacy Practices in and out of School in Karagwe
Svensk sammanfattning


Genom användandet av etnografi, med deltagande observation som bas, har olika diskurser som t.ex religiösa arenor, officiella arenor och diskurser inom den informella ekonomiska sektorn analyserats. Även nätverk av betydelse för människors interaktion har studerats, som t.ex. familjer och klaner, religiösa samfund, kvinnogrupper och olika typer av organisationer på bynivå. Speciellt intresse har riktats mot barns socialisation i relation till litteracitet. Diskurser i primärskolan har studerats genom tekniker som klassrumsobservationer, intervjuer, retrospektion, fokusgrupper och analys av skriftligt material som elevtexter, övningsböcker och lärarplaneringar.


Litteracitet, som en aspekt av språk, har använts, och används fortfarande, i Karagwe både för att skapa nya eliter och för att reproduera de existerande. Samtidigt som medlemmar i eliten har använt litteracitet som ett medel för att utöva sin dominans, har vissa individer från grupper utanför eliten kunnat använda litteracitet för att utmana den sociala ordningen och skaffa sig tillgång till makt. Unga personer har t.ex. kunnat skaffa sig makt som traditionellt var
Literacy Practices in and out of School in Karagwe

reserverad för äldre och kvinnor har genom litteracitet kunnat erhålla makt som traditionellt har tillskrivits män. Efter självständigheten har litteracitet kunnat erbjuda vissa fattiga bönder och några av de ensamstående kvinnorna sätt att förbättra sina levnadsvillkor.

Analysen visar sålunda att relationen mellan litteracitet och makt är komplex. Å ena sidan kan auktoriteter kunnat använda litteracitet för att hävda sin auktoritet men å andra sidan kan människor kunnat använda litteracitet för att utmana auktoriteten. Det vore därför lika mycket att förenkla frågan att påstå att Banyambo bara tog emot litteracitet som en företeelse påförd utifrån som att påstå att de aktivt tog tag i litteracitet och använde den som de själva ansåg meningsfullt.

Analysen har även visat att en kombination av språkideologier och ett auktoritärt skolsystem har resulterat i en situation där en minoritet av barnen, de som växer upp i ett urban, swahilitalande miljö, gynnas i skolutbildningen medan majoriteten missgynnas. Analysen har också visat på interaktionsmönster som utgör ett viktigt hinder för elevernas lärande. Trots att Tanzanias officiella politik har betonat allas rätt till utbildning och utveckling på landsbygden, visar analysen att vad som har beslutats ibland har genomförts på ett annat sätt.

Att språk och makt är sammankopplade blir ännu mer tydligt när det som händer i Tanzania relateras till den globala världordningen. För Tanzania, som ett land i periferin av den globala marknaden, är situationen den att många politiska och ekonomiska beslut som rör landet i själva verket fattas någon annanstans, i delar av världen där tanzaniska beslutsfattares inflytande är litet. Eftersom den formella utbildningen i Tanzania i hög grad är beroende av bistånd utifrån, finns många inflytelserika personer i själva verket inte i utanför landet.

Eftersom mycket av det som framgår i denna studie kan förefalla som anklagelser mot vissa förhållningssätt bland eliten i Tanzania, som t.ex. stigmatiseringen av lokala språk och satsningen på privat skolutbildning för de välbärgade barnen, är det viktigt att komma ihåg att det som medlemmar i eliten strävar efter att, eller lyckas, uppnå, ligger långt under det som de flesta västerlänningar ser som sin fundamentala rätt, som t.ex. tillgång till relevant grundutbildning för sina barn. Det är alltså viktigt att inte glömma den globala ekonomins roll för utbildningsresultat i Tanzania.

Analysen av diskurser i och utanför skolan i Karagwe har visat bristande kontinuitet på flera områden, där stigmatiseringen av det som upp fattats som omodern och den höga status som tillskrivs allt som upp fattats som västerländskt är en viktig del. I fallet Karagwe är det förståeligt att människorna har velat göra sig av med vissa företeelser från det förflutna, som t.ex. kungarnas rykte och våldsamma styre och den vidskepelse som styrde mycket av människornas liv, men språkliga traditioner som sagor, poesi och användning av utvecklat språk, förtjänar ett bättre öde än stigmatisering och undertryckande. Jag argumenterar för att traditioner inom språk och utbildning tillsammans med den höga nivån av
tvåspråkighet bland invånarna utgör viktiga tillgångar med potential för skolundervisningen i Karagwe.

Avslutningsvis argumenterar jag också för att etnografi kan erbjuda möjlighet att blottlägga dolda fenomen och analysera resultat av officiella beslut. Alltför många utbildningsprogram och litteracitetsprojekt i länder som Tanzania har konstruerats utifrån ett västerländskt perspektiv. Att implicita språkideologier påverkar både vem som lyckas och vem som misslyckas, är fallet inte bara i fattiga, postkoloniala stater som Tanzania, utan också i västerländska länder. Genom användande av etnografi för att avslöja relationer mellan explikita och implicita språkideologier, kan deras inverkan i utbildningssammanhang belysas. Lingvistisk antropologi erbjuder ett sätt att studera och analysera kontexten som möjliggör framtida planer med större relevans och effektivitet.
Muhtasari wa Kiswahili

Utafiti huu utetekelezwa kwa mtazamo wa anthropolojia ya lugha, kwa kutumia mbinu za ethnografia. Fokasi imekuwa kwene 'literacy practices', yaani utendaji wa ujuzi wa kusoma na kuandika, mitazamo ya watu na uhusiano zao za usomaji na uandikaji. Utafiti wenyeu ulitekelezwa hasa miaka ya 2000-2003 kwa kuufanya uchungu uwanadani Wilaya ya Karagwe, Tanzania kaskazini na magharibi. Lengo la utafiti huo limekuwa kutafuta mahusiano baina ya 'literacy practices' shuleni, nyumbani na kijiji yatakayotumika kwa kuendeleza elimu ya kusoma na kuandika ili iwe imara na ya kufaa zaidi.

Kwa kutumia mtazamo wa kiethnografia, wenye njia ya kuangalia kwa kushiriki kama msingi wake, semi mbalimbali kama semi za kidini, semi za kirasmi na semi za sekta ya uchumi wa kieneji, zimechumbuliwa. Hata mifumo ya ushirikiano wa watu iliyo muhimu kwa kuathiriana, kama ushirikiano wa ukoo, ushirikiano wa vikundi vya akina mama na wa vyama mbalimbali kwenyewe daraja la kijiji na chini yake imechambuliwa. Hususan ulelezi wa watoto kijamii umetaka elimu na kuendeleza elimu ya kusoma na kuandika ili iwe imara na ya kufaa zaidi.

ambayo kimapokeo yalichukuliwa na wazee, kwa kutumia literacy, tena baadhi ya akina mama wameshinda kuchukua mamlaka ambayo zamani yalikuwa ya akina baba tu. Baada ya Uhuru, *literacy* imeweza kuwapa baadhi ya wakulima wafukara na baadhi ya akina mama wajane njia za kuboresha hali ya maisha yao.

Hivyo, uchambuzi umeweke wazi kwamba uhusiano baina ya *literacy* na mamlaka hauelezeki kwa uralishi. Kwa upande mmoja, wenye mamlaka wameweza kutumia *literacy* kwa kuimarisha mamlaka yao, lakini kwa upande mwingine, watu fulani wameweza kutumia *literacy* kwa kushindana na wenye mamlaka. Hivyo, kutoa hoja kwamba Banyambo wamepokea *literacy* tu kama jambo la kutokea nje ni kurahisisha mambo mno, vile vile kujadili kwamba Banyambo wenye waliwache *literacy* kwa kuanza kutokea nje njia walizodhani zilikuwa na maana kwao, ni kuangalia upande mmoja tu.

Tena uchunguzi umeonyesha kwamba muungano wa lugha na mamlaka unaonekana wazi zaidi tunasababishwa kwa kufaresha hali ya maisha ya watoto wakiwa na mamlaka na kufaresha maisha ya watoto wake. Vilevile uchambuzi umeonyesha kuwa uhusiano utokeza kuwa binafsi katika kawaida. Uchambuzi umeonyesha vilevile vya kutendana vinavyozuitwa kuwa wana uhusiano baina ya lugha na mamlaka unaonekana kwamba halisi ni kwa kufaresha hali ya maisha ya watoto wake. Vilevile uchambuzi umeonyesha kuwa halisi ni kwa kufaresha umuhimu kwa waumini wa kuchumi wa dunia. Uhusiano baina ya lugha na mamlaka unaonekana wazi zaidi zitoma kutumia *literacy* kwa kuimarisha mamlaka yao, lakini kwa upande mwingine, watu fulani wameweza kutumia *literacy* kwa kushindana na wenye mamlaka. Hivyo, kutoa hoja kwamba Banyambo wamepokea *literacy* tu kama jambo la kutokea nje ni kurahisisha mambo mno, vile vile kujadili kwamba Banyambo wenye waliwache *literacy* kwa kuanza kutokea nje njia walizodhani zilikuwa na maana kwao, ni kuangalia upande mmoja tu.

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Mwishoni ninatoa dhana vilevile kwamba ethnografia inaweza kuahidi uwezo wa kufichua mambo yanayofichwa na kuchambua matoleo halisi ya maamuzi rasmi. Mipango mingi mno ya elimu, pamoja na miradi ya kusoma na kuandika kwenye nchi nyingi kama Tanzania, imepangwa kutoka kwa taswira ya kizungu. Anthropolojia ya lugha na ethnografia zinatoa taswira na vifaa vya kuweza kuchambuza ufanisi na uhusiano wa elimu rasmi, siyo tu kwenye nchi maskini zenye ukoloni mamboleo kama Tanzania, lakini vilevile kwenye nchi nyingine kama za Ulaya.
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Madhumuni ya hojaji hii ni kuelewa zaidi hali ya lugha shuleni na maoni ya lugha ya walimu.
Ninakuomba uandike majibu yako kwenye mistari. Ukihitaji kuandika zaidi, tafadhali tumia
pande ya nyuma ya karatasi. Ninakushukuru sana kwa msaada wako!
Bi Åsa Wedin

1.
a) Jina lako: _________________________________________________________________

b) Shule: _________________________________________________________________

c) Wewe ni walimu wa darasa la: _____________

d) Idadi ya wanafunzi wa darasa lako: _____________

e) Shughuli zako nyingine muhimu shuleni ni zifuatazo: _____________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

2.
Unaonaje wanafunzi wa shule yako mwaka huu, hali yao kwa ujumla? __________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

3.
Ukijaribu kukisia maisha ya mbeleni ya wanafunzi kwenye darasa lako unaonaje?

a) Wangapi watapasi Kiswahili darasa la saba? _________________________________

b) Wangapi wataingia sekondari? _________________________________

c) Wangapi watasoma masomo mengine baada ya darasa la saba (yasiyo ya sekondari)? ____

b) Wangapi watakuwa wakulima? _________________________________

e) Wangapi hawatamaliza darasa la saba? _________________________________
4. Huwa kwenye darasa kuna wanafunzi wanaojifunza na kuelewa haraka na wengine ambao ni wazito. Kwa njia gani unakabiliana na hali hiyo? ____________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

5. Wewe mwenyewe huwa unatumia lugha gani:

   a) darasani _____________________
   b) ofisini shuleni _____________________
   c) uani shuleni _____________________
   d) nyumbani kwa watoto _____________________
   e) nyumbani kwa majirani _____________________
   f) nyumbani kwa wazee _____________________
   g) dukani na sokoni _____________________

6. Unapendelea kutumia lugha gani hasa? Kwa nini? __________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

7. Tafadhali nieleze wewe mwenyewe, nje ya kazi yako

   a) unapenda kusoma nini? _____________________
      _______________________________________________________________________
      _______________________________________________________________________

   b) unapenda kuandika nini?__________________________
      _______________________________________________________________________
      _______________________________________________________________________

8. Ukikadiria, wewe mwenyewe:

   a) unaandika ama kupokea barua mara ngapi kwa mwaka? _________
   b) unasoma gazeti mara ngapi kwa mwezi? _________
   c) unasoma kitabu kisicho cha shule mara ngapi kwa mwezi? _________
   d) unaandika kumbukumbu (zisizo za shule) mara ngapi kwa mwezi? _________
9. Kwa maoni yako, kukuza uwezo wa Watanzania wa kusoma na kuandika kutaweza kuleta faida gani? Kutaweza kuleta na hasara?
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

10. Unaonaje, ni lugha gani itakowesha faida zaidi kwa taifa? Kwa sababu gani? _______
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

11. Kwenye darasa lako, jaribu kukisia uwezo wa wanafunzi wa kuelewa na kutumia Kiswahili.
   a) Wangapi wanaelewa Kiswahili bila matatizo? _____________
   b) Wangapi wanaweza kujieleza kwa Kiswahili? _____________
   c) Wangapi wanaweza kuelewa habari za redio? _____________
   d) Wangapi wanaweza kusoma gazeti kama Uhuru ama Maendeleo? _____________
   e) Wangapi wanaweza kusoma riwaya ya watoto? _____________
   f) Wangapi wanaweza kujieleza kwa kuandika Kiswahili? _____________

12. Wewe, kama mwalimu, unataka kukuza na kuendeleza Kiswahili (kuongea, kusikia, kusoma na kuandika) cha wanafunzi kwa njia gani? ________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

Ahsante sana kwa ushirikiano wako!