

# THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL STUDIES

## The Linguistic Competence of a Trilingual at Age Five

Nancy W, Mbaka

Senior Lecturer, Department of Humanities,  
Chuka University, Kenya

### Abstract:

*Linguistic competence is an essential component of the overall competence in a language. It is indicated by the speaker's knowledge of vocabulary and knowledge of the morphological, syntactic, semantic, phonetic, and orthographic rules. This study aimed to determine the trilingual competence of a Kenyan child, at age five, raised in an urban multilingual setting. This was done by calculating the Mean Length of Sentences (MLU) in three languages the children spoke: English, Kiswahili, and Mother Tongue. The study employed Canale and Swain's communicative competence model as the theoretical framework. Purposive and Snowball sampling methods were used to get a sample of six children (three boys and three girls) for this Study. The results indicate that children have linguistic competence in the three languages by age five. The language with the highest MLU was Kiswahili, followed by Mother Tongue and English, respectively. The trilingual acquisition is enabled by the multilingual factor, while the variation in competence is explained by Language in Education Policy (LiEP) and language use at home.*

**Keywords:** Mean Length of sentence, Trilingualism, linguistic competence, multilingualism, age five

### 1. Introduction

Studies on language acquisition have dominated the field of Applied Linguistics since the nineteenth century. At first, scholars concentrated on first language acquisition. Ingram (1989) discusses three major periods of first language acquisition studies. These periods are identified by the dominant method used in each. They include the period of diary studies (1876 -1926), the period of large sample studies (1926-1957), and the period of longitudinal studies (1957-present). Diary studies appeared throughout the nineteenth century, but the active publication of baby biographies can be dated back to 1876 (Ingram, 1989). The most extensive general diary in Europe was by Preyer (1889). The method selected for the study of the children's language during this period was that of the parental diary. The linguist or psychologist parent would keep a diary of his or her child's learning over some period of time. These studies tended to be descriptive and have been very useful in producing a database for the field of child language research. Diary studies continued to appear even as late as 1965. However, the diary studies were unsystematic, focused on a single subject, and provided little measurement of a child's behaviour.

A major shift towards large sample studies occurred during the First World War. Examples of large sample studies are Smith (1926), McCarthy (1930), Fisher (1934), Davis (1937), Young (1941), and Tremplin (1957). Child language study at this time focused on behaviour and attempted to remedy the deficiencies in diary studies. The emphasis of the large sample studies on the method is important and valid. They have made an invaluable contribution with their emphasis on measurement. However, the studies have weaknesses that have led to their being rejected by modern linguistics. These are their lack of linguistic sophistication, focus on grouped data rather than on the patterns of individual children, and they were done without the aid of diary studies. They were also mainly descriptive. Large sample studies took language samples, but they were normally quite short and not longitudinal.

The longitudinal language samples differed from the diary studies in that the subjects were usually not the offspring of the investigators. The children were selected because they met predetermined criteria. They incorporated some of the experimental concerns of the large sample studies and used many large samples that were more representative of the child's general language ability. Examples of studies carried out during this period are Braine (1976), Brown (1973), and Bloom (1970). The studies during the third period wanted to look for the emergence of rules and describe the developing grammar of the child.

Research on first language acquisition has interested Kenyan researchers as well. Such studies include Blount (1969), Nyamasyo (1985), and Ndung'u (1995). Blount's study was on the acquisition of language by Luo children. Nyamasyo's study investigated the acquisition of syntax by a four-year-old from a multilingual background. Ndung'u's study was on the acquisition of syntax by Gikuyu children.

With the introduction of exoglossic languages in colonised territories, the linguistic landscape of these nations changed and ushered in the concepts of bilingualism and multilingualism on the African and Asian continents. Most of these studies are reviewed in Pearl and Lambert (1962). Unfortunately, the reviews reveal that these studies were undertaken to demonstrate the negative effects of bilingual development. This notion was later countered by numerous empirical studies which detailed various aspects of the advantages of bilingualism (Hamers & Blanc, 2000). The study of

second language acquisition was established as a field of enquiry in the 1960s (Ellis, 2015). Research in this field has brought to the fore empirical results pertaining to the issues of personal differences in acquisition and social factors' role in the acquisition and generated several theories and models (Ellis, 2015).

Recently, interest in trilingual first language acquisition has been on the rise (Chevalier, 2011; Wang, 2008). The concept of trilingualism is often characterised as a type of multilingualism. To make it worse, despite the very different sociolinguistic profiles in African countries as contrasted to those in European countries, all of them are labelled as multilingual! Multilingualism in African countries is a daily practice and reality even in the education system, unlike in most European countries where the child encounters the same language at school and at home. Laitin (1992) predicts that the African language scene may be the result of a particular historical context of state construction. With the implication that political development will not lead to one state, one language outcome typical of an idealised nation-state has indeed come true.

There has been a shift of interest in language acquisition towards rule-based descriptions of child language, which coincided with a paradigmatic change in linguistics. This change was stimulated by the publication of Noam Chomsky's *Syntactic Structures* (1957). Chomsky redefined the goal of linguistics from one of the descriptions to one of explanation. His theory of transformational grammar placed syntax at the centre. This stimulated a lot of research on syntax, where previous linguistics research had concentrated more on phonemics and morphology. Chomsky defined grammar as a set of rules that generates the language's grammatical sentences. In language acquisition, the goal became to establish how the child acquires rules of sentence formation.

According to Radford (1988), Chomsky's argument is that language acquisition is a creative activity. It involves acquiring a finite set of rules with infinite capacity. Later in 1965, Chomsky differentiated competence (the monolingual speaker-listener's knowledge of the language) from performance (the actual use of language in real situations). As noted by Robins (1997), this differentiation was not new. It had been documented earlier by the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1817-1913), who also distinguished between *langue* (the linguistic competence of the speaker as a member of the speech community) and *parole* (actual phenomena of data of linguistics).

Chomsky's distinction between competence and performance (Chomsky, 1965) aroused a robust linguistic debate around the two terms: competence and performance. Scholars in Applied Linguistics were dissatisfied with Chomsky's definition of competence which limited itself to only linguistic knowledge. Hymes (1972) reacted against this inadequate view of competence and coined the term communicative competence to describe the inherent grammatical competence and the ability to use grammatical competence in various communicative situations (Bagaric, 2007). Those opposed to Chomsky's view of language as a purely mental construct found Hymes's (1972) communicative competence term broader and more realistic. This led to the development of the communicative competence theory (Canale & Swain, 1980), which was later revised in 1984. Bachman's and Palmer's Model (1996) later followed. Today, second language teaching aims at instilling communicative competence, unlike earlier models, which focused exclusively on grammatical competence (Canale & Swain, 1980).

Generally, the consensus in the field is that language acquisition is complete by age 4 or 5. However, Chomsky (1969) demonstrated that several of the more complex aspects of English syntax may not be entirely acquired until the primary school years. According to Karmiloff – Smith (1986), children acquire 'utterance grammar' at age five. She notes that many studies concentrate on the period from two to five or from five to ten years. There is a focus before five years on morphosyntactic and lexical aspects of acquisition and a focus after 5 on the complex sentential ones. Age five represents the beginning of a new period in language acquisition.

Kenya is a multilingual country, and multilingualism is quickly becoming a way of life for many of its citizens. Most Kenyans speak three languages: English, Kiswahili, and Mother Tongue. English is the official language and the language of instruction from the upper primary. It is also taught as a subject in the lower primary. Kiswahili is the co-official and national language (Republic of Kenya, 2010) and is the country's *lingua franca*. It is also taught as a subject from the lower primary. It is examinable at all levels of education (Republic of Kenya 1981). According to Eberhard et al. (2022), Kenya has sixty-one indigenous languages. These languages are Mother Tongues to most Kenyans. Because of multilingualism, Trilingual first language acquisition is becoming a reality in many Kenyan urban homes. Many children are brought up in a linguistic environment where they get linguistic input from three languages: English, Kiswahili, and Mother Tongue. Though it is expected that eventually, they will turn out as trilinguals, it is not known at what age they become competent in the three languages. Therefore, this study sets out to determine the communicative competence of a trilingual at age five.

Many of the studies carried out on language acquisition have been on monolingual and bilingual acquisition. Studies on trilingualism are few and have been carried out within the theoretical framework of bilingualism and multilingualism research. Trilingualism is assumed to be an extension of bilingualism and not a concept in its own right. The case studies available on trilingual children contribute to our understanding of certain aspects of multilingualism. However, there is currently a lack of a sufficient number and a greater variety of such studies. Many of the studies available are also Eurocentric (Hoffman, 2001). This study aims to fill this gap.

## 2. Linguistic Input and Language Acquisition

In order for language acquisition to occur, some factors play a role either positively or negatively. The factor of linguistic input is discussed here. In order to appreciate the language acquisition process, it is also necessary to look at the infant's interactions with the linguistic environment. There is a need to examine the nature of the language presented to the infant (linguistic input) and the characteristics of adult–infant interaction because language is not acquired in a

vacuum. Language addressed to infants may be greatly influenced by the culture in which the infant lives. Western culture sees the infant as a potential conversational partner, and its blurbs and smiles are accepted as a turn in the conversation. Further, as Snow and Ferguson (1977) and Kaye (1980) found, this language to the child does not change abruptly once the child begins to produce words. Adults continue to use a simplified form of English that contains certain features.

Child-directed speech (CDS) varies from culture to culture. Some cultures (and sub-cultures) address very little speech to babies. Parents of the Kaluli children do not regard their babies as conversational partners and do little more than greet their infants (Schiefflin, 1985)

Pye (1983) found a later onset of language among the Quiche because Quiche mothers are not as verbal with their children as English ones. Quiche is a Mayan language spoken by half a million people in the western highland region of Guatemala. The Quiche infant is seen as being born with a soul that must be protected from being lost. Therefore, the infant is treated with great care so that the soul does not leave the body. Two possible ways to lose one's soul are excessive crying and falling down. Such views then lead to what constitutes appropriate infant behaviour.

Among the language groups found to use a special baby talk register are Arabic, Cocopa, Comanche, English, French, Galyak, Dutch, Greek, Hidatsa, Planarian, Spanish, Serbo-Croatian, Japanese, Kannada, Kipsigis, Latuian, Luo, Maltese, and Marathi. This register consists of many exclamations, high pitch, special voice qualities such as whispering, slower speech, frequent repetition, special baby talk words, use of names instead of pronouns, frequent use of questions and elaborations on what the child says (Garnica, 1977; Snow & Ferguson, 1977).

Chomsky (1968) claims throughout his writing that the influence of the linguistic environment is inadequate for language acquisition. He refers to the language that the child hears as degenerate. This term has been used to mean two things. First, it means that the language the child hears is full of errors and false starts. Therefore, this language could not possibly be an adequate model for acquisition. This assertion has been proven false. Secondly, it suggests that the linguistic input does not provide sufficient information to allow the child to induce the rich structural properties of human language. For example, a well-formed, clearly spoken simple sentence is still nothing more than a string of words, with no information in the signal about phrase boundaries, the sites of moved NPs, or the existence of empty categories. This claims that the child's linguistic input is degenerate. This viewpoint is still valid (Ingram, 1989).

In recent years, Chomsky's supporters have returned to the issue of the child's linguistic environment. Chomsky's Parameter setting model claims that the child establishes certain key features of the language being acquired, enabling a whole other series of assumptions about the language. These parameters will be triggered by specific linguistic events in the child's environment.

An important aspect of the linguistic input that is inadequately understood is the effect of frequency of exposure. This is the issue of readiness on the part of the child. The issue of number and rate of exposure was researched by Schwartz & Terrell (1983). They made a preliminary attempt to examine the effects of frequency and rate of exposure on early lexical development using an experimental approach. They found out that the presentation rate appeared to be nearly as important as the frequency.

A correlational study by Della Corta, Benedict & Klein (1983) looked for environmental effects on English vocabulary acquisition. Due to the nature of the study, a causal inference could not be made. However, the findings lent some support to the notion that the mother's speech has some influence on that of the child. Gleitman et al. (1984) have summarised where the controversy does and does not occur on the issue. They point out that there is not much disagreement that the way caretakers talk and the circumstances under which they talk affects learning. The controversy resides in the extent to which the child's internal state intervenes and influences the issue. In this sense, the positions tend to fall upon some point of graded view of the influence of the linguistic environment.

The theoretical inclinations of linguists have influenced the role they assign to linguistic input in language acquisition. Behaviourist and interaction theorists assign the linguistic environment a major role in language acquisition, while cognitive and innate theorists assign the linguistic environment an insignificant role. To capture linguistic competence, data was collected to enable the researchers to calculate the mean length of utterances (MLU) of the subjects. The MLU captures all the components of linguistic competence.

### 3. Demographic Information on the Subjects

In line with expected Ethical guidelines, pseudonyms were used to identify the subjects who were six children, all of them in Pre-Primary 2 (PP2). In addition, to cater to gender, there were three females and three males. Their demographic information is presented in Table 1.

Name	Age	Gender
Brian	5;5	Male
Mercy	5;2	Female
Faith	5;4	Female
Kelvin	5;5	Male
Hope	5;2	Female
Tony	5;3	Male

Table 1: Demographic Information on the Subjects

#### 4. Mean Length of Utterance

The procedure of measuring the MLU was used to measure linguistic competence. It was proposed by Brown (1973). This is a measure that takes into account the child's developing morphological as well as syntactic skills. It is based on the assumption that it is possible to determine whether or not the child's utterance is in keeping with what would be expected at their age since language acquisition follows a sequential order. The more the utterances can be analysed, the more accurate the results. One hundred utterances are recommended (Miller & Chapman, 1981). The tabulated MLU at various ages is provided in Table 2.

MLU	Age Equivalent (Months)
1.31	18
1.62	21
1.92	24
2.54	30
2.85	33
3.16	36
3.47	39
3.78	42
4.40	48
4.71	51
5.02	54
5.32	57
5.63	60

*Table 2: Specified Mean Length of Utterance  
Source: Adapted from Brown (1973)*

One of the shortcomings of this method is that it is difficult to determine what an utterance in the child's speech is. The researcher used pauses in a normal conversation to determine an utterance. Also, the guidelines on what to count as a morpheme and what not to count were followed to determine a morpheme (Johnson, 2005). Though the researcher aimed to collect one hundred utterances from each subject, it was not possible, as indicated in Table 2, because the linguistic competence in the English language for four subjects and in Mother Tongue for one subject could not produce the number of utterances required and communication failed. However, the subject could still use another language if allowed. In this case, the researcher used what was collected.

#### 5. Methodology

The study adopted a qualitative approach. Utterances were collected in three languages from six children by engaging them in a conversation. The MLU in each language was calculated. Purposive and snowball sampling techniques were used to get the sample. In this study, the morpheme was used as the basis of measurement. To calculate the MLU:

- The morphemes in each utterance were counted, and
- The number of morphemes for all the one hundred utterances was added
- The total number of morphemes used was given
- The total number of morphemes used were divided by the total number of utterances to get the MLU

#### 6. Theoretical Framework

This study was informed by Canale and Swain's (1984) communicative competence model. According to the theoretical approach, communicative competence comprises four competencies:

- Grammatical,
- Sociolinguistic,
- Strategic, and
- Discourse competence.

Grammatical competence is concerned with the mastery of the linguistic code. It includes knowledge of vocabulary and the knowledge of morphological, syntactic, semantic, phonetic, and orthographic rules. This competence enables the speaker to use the knowledge and skills needed for understanding and expressing the literal meaning of utterances.

#### 7. Results

The summary of the utterances collected is given in Table 3.

Name	Kiswahili	English	Mother Tongue
Brian	100	100	100
Mercy	100	086	100
Faith	100	051	015
Kelvin	100	015	100
Hope	100	017	100
Tony	100	100	100

Table 3: Summary of Utterances Collected

In summary, the researcher was able to collect data on the three languages for two subjects. Four subjects could not give enough data in English, and one subject could not give enough utterances in Mother Tongue. All subjects provided enough utterances in Kiswahili. The MLU was calculated using the no. of utterances collected. The subjects' MLU is given in Table 4.

Subject	Kiswahili	English	Mother Tongue
Brian	6.86	6.67	6.37
Mercy	6.15	3.97	5.48
Faith	6.86	3.64	3.00
Kevin	5.81	3.60	4.90
Hope	6.32	2.33	5.52
Tony	6.46	5.56	5.89
Mean MLU	6.41	4.30	5.19

Table 4: Summary of MLU

The results of the study, as shown in Table 4, indicate that the language with the highest MLU is Kiswahili at 6.41. Mother Tongue has the second highest MLU at 5.19. This is below the MLU expected at age five. This indicates that the Mother Tongue is still used in the home domain, and children acquire it along with Kiswahili. However, the children are more proficient in Kiswahili than in their Mother Tongue. English has the lowest MLU at 4.30, which is the MLU equivalent of close to 4yrs. This acquisition is attributed to the school domain and partly to the home domain for children whose parents speak English at home.

This ranking is also factual for individual students. For the six subjects, Kiswahili is the language that each subject scored the highest MLU. There is a difference in MLU ranking in Mother Tongue and English. This indicates that using MT in the home domain is a necessary contextual factor in acquiring MT. To determine whether there was any significant difference in the MLU, the results were further subjected to Descriptive statistics and a t-test using SPSS Version 23. The results are provided in Tables 5-10.

Subject	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Kiswahili (Kisw)	6	6.4100	.41066	.16765
English (Engl)	6	4.2950	1.55690	.63560

Table 5: Kisw/Engl Group Descriptive Statistics

	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						Lower	Upper
Equal Variances Assumed	3.218	10	.009	2.11500	.65734	.65035	3.57965
Equal Variances Not Assumed	3.218	5.692	.020	2.11500	.65734	.48523	3.74477

Table 6: t-test for Equality of Means of Kiswahili and English

From Tables 5 and 6, the difference in means between Kiswahili and English is 2.11. The results are statistically significant at .009.

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Kiswahili	6	6.4100	.41066	.16765
Mother Tongue	6	5.0767	1.13036	.46147

Table 7: Kiswahili/MT Group Descriptive Statistics

	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						Lower	Upper
Equal Variances Assumed	2.716	10	.022	1.33333	.49098	.23937	2.42730
Equal Variances Not Assumed	2.716	6.297	.033	1.33333	.49098	.14557	2.52110

Table 8: t-test for Equality of Means of Kiswahili and MT

From the output of tables 7 and 8, the difference in means between Kiswahili and Mother Tongue is 1,333, and the results are statistically significant at 0.022.

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
English	6	4.2950	1.55690	.63560
Mother Tongue	6	5.0767	1.13036	.46147

Table 9: English/Mother Tongue Group Descriptive Statistics

	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						Lower	Upper
Equal Variances Assumed	-.995	10	.343	-.78167	.78546	-2.53177	.96844
Equal Variances Not Assumed	-.995	9.125	.345	-.78167	.78546	-2.55479	.99146

Table 10: t-test for Equality of Means of England MT

The results from the output in Table 9 and 10 indicate that the difference in mean between English and MT values is -.7816. It is significant at .343, and the t-value is -.995.

## 8. Discussion

Three contextual factors explain the findings of this research. They are:

- First, being raised in a semi-urban multilingual community, the children naturally adopt trilingualism (section 4.1).
- The second factor is the Language policy in school (Section 4.2).
- The third factor is language use at home (Section 4.3).

The difference in competencies in trilingual first language acquisition can be explained by the contextual factors that directly affect acquisition.

### 8.1. Trilingualism in a Multilingual Community

According to Eberhard et al. (2022), the languages listed for Kenya are 69. Of these, 68 are living, and one is extinct. 61 of the living languages are indigenous, and 7 are non-indigenous. English, which is widely spoken as a second language and sometimes used as a lingua Franca, is exoglossic. English and Kiswahili are listed as principal languages in Kenya. Kenya is, therefore, a multilingual country. To give a clearer picture of the linguistic profile, Eberhard et al. describe 13 of these indigenous languages as institutional, 35 as developing, 13 as vigorous, 2 as in trouble, and 5 are dying.

Institutional means that the language has been developed to such a point that it is used and sustained by institutions beyond the home and community.

Developing means that the language is in vigorous use, with literature in a standardized form being used by some though this is not yet widespread or sustainable.

The word vigorous describes a language(s) that is unstandardized and in vigorous use among all generations. If a language is in trouble, it means that intergenerational transmission is in the process of being broken. However, the child-bearing generation can still use the language. So revitalisation efforts could restore the transmission of the language in the home. A language is in trouble if the only fluent users (if any) are older than child-bearing age, so it is too late to restore natural intergenerational transmission through the home; a mechanism outside the home would need to be developed. An extinct language has entirely fallen out of use, and no one retains a sense of ethnic identity associated with the language. With only 2 languages in trouble and 5 on the verge of dying, most Kenyans still use their indigenous languages both at home and some even outside the home.

As noted by Zelleweger in the Standard Newspaper (March, 2021), it is astonishing to outsiders how Kenyans switch from one language to another fluently. Most urban dwellers are trilingual, and Kenyans use at least two languages, if not three. In addition, the national administration is fully trilingual. Such multilingual settings are common in African countries, included Kenya (Hoffman & Ytsma, 2003).

A child born in such a multilingual community naturally and normally acquires the languages in the environment that they are growing up. Moreover, the children encounter this multilingualism on a daily basis as they interact with their neighbours in the urban areas where they live. The other two factors explain the lack of balanced acquisition, as is indicated in the t-test and MLU results.

### 8.2. Language-in-Education Policy (LiEP) and Trilingualism

Though a Kenyan child may pick a few English words from the home environment, in most cases, the children learn English as a subject in pre-school and lower Primary. The LiEP stipulates that Mother Tongue is to be used as LiEP in rural areas and Kiswahili in Urban Areas. English is taught as a subject from pre-school (the Republic of Kenya, 1981). Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (2017) acknowledges that Kenya is a multilingual country, and languages specific to regions should be used in the instruction of learners. Indigenous languages are also emphasised in the new CBC (Competence Based Curriculum).

Though the LiEP is not followed to the letter, the researcher, through participant observation, noted that the children talked to one another in Kiswahili, and the teachers used Kiswahili as LiEP most of the time. This explains why Kiswahili had the highest MLU for all the children. These findings agree with the findings of Wangia (1991), who sought to find out how the three languages: English, Kiswahili, and Mother Tongue, were used by children aged between four and nine in different domains in a multilingual urban setting. Kiswahili was the one used by the children in different domains. This is also attributed to the fact that Kiswahili is the lingua franca in urban areas in Kenya.

The general pattern of trilingual acquisition in Kenya is recurrent other than transient. This differentiation is made by Hoffman (2001).

Transient trilingualism refers to the acquisition where one language dominates, and the individual ends up as monolingual or bilingual with an exposure to trilingualism in childhood. In Kenya, recurrent trilingualism is the norm. Each of the three languages that the child is exposed to retains its place and is functional in society. This is one of the routes of trilingual acquisition identified by Hoffman (2001).

### 8.3. Family Language Use and Trilingualism

The profile provided by Eberhard *et al.* (2022) on the status of languages in Kenya indicates that Kenya's indigenous languages, on the whole, are institutional, developing, or vigorous. These languages are, therefore, used in the home and the community. While this may be true for rural areas where saturation of different ethnic groups in specific regions ensures the vitality of indigenous languages, it may not be true for urban areas where Kiswahili is the Lingua Franca. Using the Mother Tongue at home is, therefore, key in acquiring the language. This explains the differences among the children. The MLU for the Mother Tongue was the second highest showing that apart from the individual differences, Mother Tongue is still used in the home domain, just as the Ethnologue Status (Eberhard *et al.*, 2022) profile indicates. Faith has the lowest MLU in Mother Tongue. In her case, MT is not used in the home domain, and her parents communicate with her in Kiswahili.

## 9. Conclusion

The findings of this research indicate that a trilingual child has varied linguistic competence in the three languages at age five. Just as it is difficult to find balanced bilingualism (Hamers & Blanc, 1989), it is also the case for trilinguals. Children living in urban areas in Kenya are on the path to being trilingual at age five.

## 10. References

- i. Bachman, L. F & Palmer, A. S (1996). *Language Testing in Practice: Designing and Developing Useful Language Tests*, Oxford: OUP.
- ii. Bagarić, V., & Djigunović, J.M. (2007). *Defining Communicative Competence. Metodika, Vol 8, br.1pp94-103*. <https://hrcak.srce.hr/file/42651> Accessed 05/14/2020
- iii. Bloom, L. (1970). *Language Development: Form and Function in Emerging Grammars*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.
- iv. Blount, B. (1969). *Acquisition of Language by Luo Children*. Doctoral Dissertation, University of California: Berkeley.
- v. Braine, M.D.S. (1976). Children's First Word Combinations. *Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development* 41 (1, serial no. 164).
- vi. Brown, R. (1973). *A First language: the Early Stages*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- vii. Canale, M. & Swain, M. (1980). Theoretical Basis of Communicative Approaches to Second Language Teaching and Testing. *Applied Linguistics* 1, 1-47.
- viii. Canale, M. (1984). A Communicative Approach to Language Proficiency Assessment in a Minority Setting. In Rivera, C. (Ed.), *Communicative Language Approach to Language Proficiency Assessment: Research and Application*, 107-122. Cleverdon: Multilingual Matters.
- ix. Chavalier, S. (2011). *Trilingual Language Acquisition: Contextual factors Affecting Active Trilingualism*. Unpublished MA Thesis. The University of Zurich, Faculty of Arts.
- x. Chomsky, N. (1957). *Syntactic Structure*. The Hague: Mouton.
- xi. Chomsky, N. (1965.) *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax*. Cambridge: Mass.: MIT Press.
- xii. Chomsky, C. (1969). *The Acquisition of Syntax in Children from 5 to 10*. Cambridge: Mass.: IT Press.

- xiii. Davis, E. (1937). The Development of Linguistic Skills in Twins, Singletons with Siblings and only Children from age Five to Ten Years. University of Minnesota Institute of Child Welfare, Monograph Series 14.
- xiv. Della Corta, M. Benedict, R & Klein, D. (1983). The relationship of Pragmatic dimensions of development of mother's speech to the Referential-Expressive Distinction. *Journal of Child Language* 10:35-43.
- xv. Eberhard, David M., Gary F. Simons, and Charles D. Fennig (eds.). (2022). *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*. Twenty-fifth edition. Dallas, Texas: SIL International. Online version: <http://www.ethnologue.com>.
- xvi. Ellis, R. (2015). Understanding second Language Acquisition. 2nd Ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- xvii. Fishman, J. A., Cooper, R. L. & R. Ma., et al. (1971). Bilingualism in the Barrio. Bloomington: Language Science Monographs, Indiana University.
- xix. Fisher, M. (1934). *Language Patterns of Pre-school Children*. Child Development Monographs 15. New York: Teachers College, Columbia University and Production. *Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behaviour* 2: 121 – 35.
- xx. Garnica, O.K. (1977). Some Prosodic and Paralinguistic Features of Speech to Young Children. In Snow, C. E. & Ferguson, C. A. (Eds.), *Talking to Children: Language Input and Acquisition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- xxi. Gleitman, L. Newport, M. & Gletman, H. (1984). The Current Status of Motherese Hypothesis. *Journal of Child Language* 11: 43-79.
- xxii. Harmers, J.F. & Blanc, M.H.A. (2000). *Bilinguality and Bilingualism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- xxiii. Hoffmann, C. (2001). Towards a Description of Trilingual Competence. *International Journal of Bilingualism*, Vol. 5. No. 1 (March) 2001, pp.1-17
- xxiv. Hoffmann, C. & Ytsma, J. (2003). *Trilingualism in Family, School, and Community*. Bristol, Blue Ridge Summit: Multilingual Matters. <https://doi.org/10.21832/9781853596940>
- xxv. Hymes, D.H. (1972) 'On Communicative Competence' In: J.B. Pride and J. Holmes (eds)
- xxvi. Sociolinguistics. Selected Readings. Harmondsworth: Penguin, pp. 269-293. (Part 2)
- xxvii. Ingram, D. (1989). *First Language Acquisition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- xxviii. Johnson, B.W. (2005) Mean Length of Utterance (MLU) [WWW]
- xxix. <http://www.clas.ufl.edu/users/bwjohn/4004/Materials/MLU.htm> Accessed 02/01.2022
- xxx. Karmiloff-Smith, A. (1986). Some Fundamental Aspects of Language Development after Age 5. In P. Fletcher & M. Garman (Eds.), *Language Acquisition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (pp.455-456).
- xxxi. Kaye, K. (1980a). Why don't we Talk 'Baby Talk' to Babies? *Journal of child language*. 7:489 –507.
- xxxii. Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development(2017).CBC Curriculum.<https://kicd.ac.ke/curriculum-reform/national-curriculum-policy/>Accessed 09/05/2022
- xxxiii. Laitin, D. D. (1992). *Language Repertoires and State Construction in Africa*. Cambridge University Press.
- xxxiv. Mc Carthy, D. (1930). The Language Development of the Preschool Child. *Institute of child Welfare Monograph series 4. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press*.
- xxxv. Ndungu, R. (1995). The Acquisition of Gikuyu Language by Children aged between 3 and 5 years. Unpublished MA Thesis: Kenyatta University.
- xxxvii. Nyamasyo, E. (1985). *Acquisition of Syntax by a Four-Year-Old Child*. Unpublished MA Thesis: Nairobi University.
- xxxviii. Pearl, E., & Lambert, W. E. (1962). The Relation of Bilingualism to Intelligence. *Psychological Monographs: General and applied*, 76, 1-23. <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0093840>.accessed 04/ 04/2022
- xxxix. Preyer, W. (1989). The Mind of the Child. New York: Appleton.
- xl. Pye, C. (1983). Mayan Telegraphese: International Determinants of Inflectional Development in Quiche Mayan. *Language* 59: 583- 604.
- xli. Radford, A. (1988). *Transformational Grammar*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- xlii. The Republic of Kenya. (1981). *Second University in Kenya: Report of Presidential Working Party*, (Mackay Report). Nairobi: Government Printer.
- xliii. Schiefflin, B. (1979). Getting it together: An ethnographic Approach to the Study of the
- xliv. Development of Communicative Competence. In E. Ochs & B. Schiefflin (Eds.), *Developmental Pragmatics*. New York: Academic Press (pp. 73-108).
- xlvi. Shwatz, R. & Terrell, B. (1983). The role of Input Frequency in Lexical acquisition. *Journal of Child Language* 10:57-64.
- xlvi. Smith, M. (1926). *An Investigation of the Development of the Sentence and the Extent of Vocabulary in Young Children*. University of Iowa Studies in Child Welfare Vol 3: No. 5
- xlvi. Snow, C.E. & Ferguson, C.A. (1977). Talking to children: Language Input and Acquisition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- l. Tremplin, M. (1957). Specific Language Skills in Children. University of Minnesota Institute of Child Welfare Monograph Series 26. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- li. Wang, X. (2008). Growing up with Three Languages, Birth to Eleven, Parents' and Teachers' Guides. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- lii. Wangia, J. (1991). Language Choice and Use by Lower Primary School Children in a Multilingual Urban Setting. Unpublished MA Thesis: Kenyatta University



- liii. Young, F. (1941). *An Analysis of Certain Variables in a Developmental Study of Language*. Genetic Psychology Monographs 23: 3 – 141.
- liv. Zellweger, V. (2021, March 30<sup>th</sup>). Multilingualism has many advantages, the standard  
<https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/opinion/article/2001407917/multilingualism-has-many-advantages>.