

On-site Education of Practical Languages for Area Studies

Report in 2007

—Swahili, University of Nairobi, the Republic of Kenya (8 Feb. 2008– 31 Mar. 2008)—

Year of Enrollment: 2007

Graduate School of Asian and African Areas Studies

Year in Doctoral course: second grade

Naoaki Izumi

On My research theme and Language training

My research purpose is to clarify the social transformation process of pastoral societies in East Africa, with special reference to the reaction of the local people to the market economy and industrial development. It is one of the most important challenges of African area studies to clarify how the local economy based on subsistent pastoralism is articulated to the global market economy. I am planning to conduct intensive and extensive fieldwork in the Republic of Kenya or the United Republic of Tanzania, although I have not selected specific research field yet.

English is considerably widespread in these countries because they were colonized by British. But in the areas where pastoral societies are distributed, most of the people speak only their ethnic languages and Kiswahili, the common language in the region, especially this holds true for people. Therefore, it is necessary for me to acquire Kiswahili and their ethnic languages to the conduct field research.

This training's objective was to acquire basic ability of Kiswahili, namely to learn the grammar of Kiswahili, to read and write simple sentences, and to acquire the ability of simple daily conversation in Kiswahili. I learned Kiswahili at a school (called "the ACK language and orientation school") that the Institute of African Studies at the University of Nairobi recommended to me.

When I finished the training program, I effectively acquired the grammar of Kiswahili. I also improved the ability to read sentences in Kiswahili by consulting the dictionary. In addition, I communicated positively with the teacher at the school and local people, and I came to be able to talk with people in Kiswahili.

However, I was not able to enrich my vocabulary of Swahili, because the period I had stayed in Kenya was shortened greatly than as scheduled. Therefore, the problem remains in fluency and accuracy in reading, writing and conversation. Especially, it is an important challenge for me to acquire the vocabulary for fluent conversations. I should enrich the vocabulary of Swahili in Japan by the time of my next visit to East Africa.