

On-site Education of Practical Languages for Area Studies

Report in 2011

—Swahili, University of Nairobi, Kenya, 9 Oct 2011 - 13 March 2012 —

Year of Enrollment: 2011

Graduate School of Asian and African Areas Studies

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My research topic:

East coast of Tanzania, together with other coastal area of East Africa, has been in contact with the Arabs and the Far East Asian countries for over 2000 years. The area has had an active interaction of people, culture, trading goods, and religion, all of which has resulted in forming its very distinctive culture. Which is a combination of culture from the Africa hinterland and the culture from the outside world. Neither of the culture has taken over each other, but they have blended in so well making its very own culture like no other.

My research will be based in the area of this so-called East African coastal area. Based on its culture, I will be focusing on building, settlement and village structure, while keeping the effect and combination of African hinterland tradition and Islamic influence in mind. To do so, it is vital to look into the detail of each building's material, structure, and building method, along with their surrounding environment. Through this research, I am aiming in

About the language, Swahili:

Swahili is a language spoken in a very large area in East Africa. There are no boundary for who speak this language, people with different nationality and ethnic groups are all using it as common language in the area. The language Swahili is based on Bantu, a language type widely spoken in Africa, and Arabic, which came all the way from across the Indian Ocean. There are slight differences in the spoken Swahili depending on places, such as the one spoken in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam are different. In a place, especially like Africa, where most people consider themselves belonging to a certain ethnic group, with their own language and culture, the language Swahili has played an important role in bringing them all together by sharing one language.

Inside of the language training:

I have learned Swahili for a total of 2 months and half at an Anglican Church language school in Nairobi, Kenya. Here, there are people coming from around the world to learn English, Swahili, French, and many more, even those, which are spoken between very small groups of people. The style of this school is unique and has variety of teaching style. There are group lessons with 40 students, other with small group of 10 or less pupil, and another of one-to-one class. I have attended the one-to-one class due to my schedule of the stay in Nairobi made it difficult to attend the 3 or 6 months learning course.

The lesson was 3 hours per day, 3-5 days per week, a very intensive lesson mostly based on practicing speaking

skills based on the grammars learnt on the day. We spoke about variety of topics, daily news, family and friends, and about my research topic.

The school would have 30 minutes of tea break every time before lunch. This was the time when all the students would gather around and get to know each other with a cup of tea in each of their hands. I also got the opportunity to get in touch with students from other African countries, as well as those from Asia and South America. We would discuss about how our lessons are going and motivate each other by practicing speaking what we have just learnt back in the class.

One of experience I remember the most:

During my language-learning course at school, my teacher would always be on his phone. Whether it is outside or inside the classroom, he would be receiving calls and texts every now and then. Just by hearing these words, people especially from Japan would think of it as very unprofessional and something that should not be done by teachers and should be concentrating on teaching. Though, it is always not correct to judge on cases by not knowing the story behind it. My teacher was in fact a pastor, and the calls and texts he had been getting were from the people of his church. He had taught me many things through his actions and decisions he takes after receiving calls for help, something that would not be learnt if I had just been learning Swahili. Even if the lesson is interrupted for few minutes or sometimes more, my teacher would stay over after the original class times until I understand them. To do well on his or her job is vital, but he had taught me how relationship with one another is important in each of our life.

How I succeeded in my language learning:

When I received an opportunity to learn Swahili in Kenya, I could not be too optimistic about it. This is because, I had known that Swahili is a language spoken in a large part of East Africa, each place with slight differences. Especially, the one spoken in Nairobi is known for its change in language, especially among the youth, due to the rapid development of the country and use of mixing English and Swahili. Though, my teacher was aware of all this change and issue in language difference within Swahili. He had taught me thoroughly about terms and other differences, which eventually made me able to speak and understand the Swahili in both areas.

Photo 1: Together with my friends from class next door

Photo 2: My teacher teaching me during class

Photo 3: This is a tea we drink everyday

Photo 4: A food provided at a restaurant in the school. Each plate is about 2 US dollars.



Photo 1



Photo 2



Photo 3



Photo 4