

International Training Program (ITP)

## **On-site Education of Practical languages for Area Studies Report in 2011**

—Kiswahili, University of Nairobi, Kenya,

11 Oct. 2011 – 7 Dec. 2011—

Year of Enrollment: 2011

Graduate School of Asian and African Area Studies

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### **Overview of my research**

In Northern Tanzania, banana is cultivated not only as subsistence crop but also as cash crop. Banana can be harvested in any season and because of this biological feature, banana is traded all year around. It means that selling banana is a source of cash income available all year round and is contributed to the stabilization of livelihood of farmers in Northern Tanzania. Moreover, in recent years, it is reported that not a few farmers have left coffee production and put more importance on other cash crops, because international coffee price has highly fluctuated. In such a circumstance, banana has become one of important alternative cash crop and it is suggested that the supply of banana in Northern Tanzania has increased. Although it is anticipated that the amount of banana in market has increased, there are still few studies on the nation-wide distribution and marketing of banana in Tanzania.

Therefore, this study will deal with the production and marketing system of banana, which serves as both subsistence crop and cash crop, from socio-economic perspective.

As for production, this study clarifies the economic impact of banana cultivation on livelihood by examining cost and amount of agricultural input and labor input.

In terms of marketing system, this study focuses on middlemen who buy banana from farmers and transport it to wholesale market at large cities. By physically following them, the marketing route of banana from villages to the final consumption area, and the actors who are engaged in the marketing of banana will be clarified.

### **Overview of the language training**

Kiswahili is one of the Bantu Languages spoken most widely in

Sub-Saharan, especially Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda. There are more than 70 million speakers in these countries. So many Kiswahili words are borrowed from English and Arabic. For example, “posta”(post), “wiki (week)”, “hospitali (hospital)” are borrowed from English and “kitabu (book)”, “safari (trip)” are borrowed from Arabic.

### **On My Language Training**

I studied Kiswahili language at a language school (Anglican Church of Kenya: ACK) in Nairobi. In that school, many kinds of language besides Kiswahili are taught such as English, Spanish, French, Chinese and Japanese. Koreans, Sudanese, Somalis and other people from all over the world come to this school.

When I joined the school, the semester of the Kiswahili group lesson had already started. I decided to apply to a private lesson. Actually, it turned out well to attend to private lessons because the group lessons were carried out in English and my English was not good enough to keep up with the others. Therefore I was able to ask questions when I didn't understand and learn the grammar rules. My classes were held from Monday to Friday, three hours a day. At first I learned the greetings and how to count. Then I learned the present tense and other tenses systematically.

Since the teachers who teach Kiswahili in ACK have important knowledge to their credit in this field, they know the point which students have difficulties on. They explain the difficult points patiently. It was a principal of my teacher, Ruth, that students should acquire the speaking skills more than the grammatical knowledge. So during our classes, we not only practiced answering the workbook but we also went through practical work like translating English sentences into Kiswahili by mouth frequently.

Thanks to these practices, I can explain what I want to do in Kiswahili outside the school, and also obtain more vocabulary faster than before.

### **Memorable experience during training**

At the beginning of my training, I was filled with anxiety if I would be able to speak well.

One day my teacher said to me, “No one can speak new languages soon. You know that Japanese teacher. You are very friendly with him and I know you often correct his Japanese pronunciation. But I'm wondering why you don't speak to him in Kiswahili. You are scared of speaking Kiswahili. I suggest that it is better for each other to speak in the language which you are learning. It is more important to

try to know the others even though you don't speak well than to be afraid of making mistakes in conversations.”

This episode gave me a hint that if the learner cherished more to communicate face to face than just acquiring grammatical skills, one could naturally become a good speaker of any language.

### **Reflections and achievements**

Supposedly the school is aiming to teach many students systematically, lessons were carried out under the curriculum similar to the cram schools in Japan. So I always had to think and ask questions during the classes otherwise the lessons would have been too passive.

One time, I was in a slump learning Kiswahili language, and I attended the classes passively because I didn't have any motivation to acquire new knowledge. Looking over my notebook when I was in a slump, I could see that my knowledge wasn't fixed. Therefore, I felt it is important to work keenly and actively as researcher of area studies as well as learning the language.