

International Training Program (ITP)

On-site Education of Practical Languages for Area Studies Report in 2011

—Swahili, University of Nairobi, Kenya, 10 Aug. 2011 - 30 Jan. 2012—

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Graduate School of Asian and African Area Studies

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Research Background and Purpose

I am interested in ‘Self Reliance project of secondary school in Tanzania’. ‘Education for All’ was declared in 1990. Further, at ‘World Education Forum’, which was held in Dakar, Senegal in 2000, it was pledged to improve educational environment by 2015 in order to accomplish universal literacy. All the stakeholders, such as donor countries, NGOs and governments of African countries, agreed on this target and drew up the long-term educational development plans.

The Government of Tanzania launched new educational development policy along with this target. One of its aims was to increase the number of primary schools and secondary schools. The biggest change in this decade is the rapid increase in the number of secondary schools. In 2001, its number was 937, but it increased fourfold, 4367 in 2011.

Increase of the secondary schools has inevitably strained the national budget. Nevertheless, educational budget was not sufficient to meet all the needs of each school. In order to fill the gap between the budget and necessity, both community and schools did not just wait for the aid from government or NGOs, but they began to run Self Reliance activities, or self help schemes. My research purpose is to know the current situation and actual practices of Self Reliance activities in secondary schools.

Features of Swahili Language

Swahili language is mainly used in East African coast. It is official languages of Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda and also widely used in parts of Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Burundi.

Swahili language has the largest total number of speakers among Bantu languages. It is regarded as *lingua franca* of East Africa. It was formed under an influence of Arabic language during trade between Arabian merchants and Bantu-speaking people. It is the reason why 35% of Swahili vocabulary is brought from Arabic. Influences from Persian, German, Portuguese, English and Indian languages can also be seen.

Contents of the Language Training

I received my language training in the Anglican Church Language Center. There were three teachers of Swahili. My teacher was a man who teaches Kamba and Swahili language. I had learnt basic grammar of Swahili before attending this program. For the first 10 days, I looked for suitable dictionaries and training materials for my level. After that, I tried to use the practice language with combining my pre-research in Tanzania for one and a half month.

Coming back to Kenya, I restarted lecture-based language training. Lecture was given on weekday, usually 2 lessons a day, 90 minutes per lesson. There was 30-minute tea break between the lessons. Sometime I took supplementary classes as needed. In the lessons, I mainly learned grammar and composition, but we concentrated on conversation practice every Friday. The topics concerned were education system of Tanzania and cultures of Japan and Kenya.

The Anglican Church Language Center had 2 types of lessons: group lesson and private lesson. Because I had studied Swahili before, I set the goal of this language training to make up lack of my knowledge and to brush up my language skill further. In order to learn more effective, I chose one-on-one private lesson. It takes about 60 days to finish basic grammar, and the rest was used to brush up my reading skill.

We chose newspaper articles on education and a Swahili language book which I found during field practice as training materials. I prepared for the lesson and checked up new words in dictionary. In the lesson, the teacher explained grammatical construct of the sentence and a substance of the article of the day. The lessons helped me not only to collect technical terms on my research topic, but also to get useful information on educational situation in Tanzania.

Impressive experience during language training

My Swahili teacher was a talkative person. When we got tired of the lesson on difficult grammar, we sometimes stopped the lecture and began conversation. The topic of our conversation started from the food I ate yesterday, the place I have been to, and my friends. As the conversation went on, we talked about the culture and social problem of each country. The conversation with him was so exciting.

In the case that my teacher also could not find an expression in English, we tried to use other words in order to get the meaning and the nuance of the word. It was like playing riddles. Our

conversation seemed a mere chat, but we got able to know the culture of each other, and I gained ability and vocabularies which explain my country.

Achievement and Implications for Future Study

In my case, I had learnt Swahili before and had some basic speaking skills for conversation and negotiation. So that, my goal in this language training was to brush up my speaking skill to the level of conducting interviews in field research, and reading skill to understand references and policy papers written in Swahili. Through the language training, I came to understand the meanings of long articles which I could not read before. At the end of the training, I got to be able to read policy papers and politician's speeches in Swahili. It was a big progress for me. This rapid improvement could be attributed to the one-on-one private lesson which I could receive full instruction.

The one thing I regret is lack of my conversation skill in English. All of our lessons had been carried out in English. Because of lack of my English skill, I could not express what I wanted to say exactly. I felt that I needed to keep brushing up my language skill, not only that of Swahili, but also of English.