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**CROSSLINGUISTIC INFLUENCE IN THE ACQUISITION OF  
ENGLISH DEICTIC EXPRESSIONS: A CASE STUDY OF  
GIKUYU L<sub>1</sub> SPEAKERS**

BY

**LUCY NJERI JANE**



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SPEAKERS**

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**LUCY NJERI JANE**

A25/0114/94

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR  
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MAY, 1998

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## DECLARATION

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for the award of a degree in any other university. All the sources have been acknowledged.


Signed  .....

Date 7/5/1998 .....

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A25/0114/94

This thesis has been submitted for examination with my approval as the University Supervisor.

Signed  .....

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## **DEDICATION**

*To my three sisters, brother and niece,  
Nyambura, Wairimû, Wangûi, Mwangi and Wanjirû*

*With much much love.*

*To one special sister,  
Wanjikû,  
with love and immeasurable gratitude.*

*And with special love and thanks  
to Simon Wathîka.*

*And always,  
always,  
to the best mother ever,  
Jane Wambûi Karugarî  
source of my inspiration and encouragement,  
with all my heart and soul,  
I dedicate this work to you.*

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to identify some of the influences that could be attributed to the acquisition of eight English deictic expressions which are; *this, that, here, there, now, then, come* and *go*.

Data was collected from two administrative districts, Nyeri and Murang'a. Purposive sampling technique was used to select five primary schools four of which constituted the experimental group and one the control group. Simple random sampling technique was then employed to select five learners from each class, these classes are; three, four, five, six and seven.

In collecting data, two instruments were employed; (a) Interview to find out whether the learners use Gĩkũyũ or English as a first language. (b) Language tests to establish the influences of the first language, the effect of training and the order of acquisition of eight English deictic expressions.

It was found out that the first language of the learner influences the order of acquisition of both non segmented and segmented deictic expressions. The training that the learners receive was also seen to have an effect on the acquisition of both segmented and non segmented deictic expressions. The Gĩkũyũ L<sub>1</sub> speakers were found to follow a particular order of development in the acquisition of both segmented and non segmented deictic expressions.

This study is important particularly for pedagogic reasons because certain expressions tend to be learned before others and thus it is important for the language teachers to become familiar with the general learning order observed for expressions researched and presented here. Teachers should introduce the English expressions to L<sub>2</sub> learners in the order in which they are acquired so as to avoid confusing the learners.



## **DEFINITION OF THE KEY TERMS**

### **Acquisition And Learning**

The technical term language acquisition is used to refer to the way linguistic abilities are internalised without conscious focus on linguistic forms. It is said to require participation in natural communication situations and is the way children gain knowledge of first and second languages. Research in language acquisition has indicated that the acquired system may develop through a process of creative construction in a series of stages common to all acquirers of a given language resulting from the application of universal strategies ( Dulay and Burt 1974a 1974b). Each successive stage approximates more closely the adult native speaker's language.

Learning of L<sub>2</sub> on the other hand, is said to develop consciously and most often in formal situations. It is claimed by Chomsky in Ellis (1985) that after the 'critical age' which is around puberty, L<sub>2</sub> learners cease to acquire and can only learn language. However, studies on language acquisition have shown that even L<sub>2</sub> learners show evidence of acquisition. This therefore means that even adult L<sub>2</sub> learners learn or acquire language informally.

In this study, acquisition and learning will be used interchangeably since as we have already discussed above, there is no clear cut demarcation between when a learner stops acquiring and starts learning. Any reference to specific learning situations will be made explicit (e.g. second language acquisition (SLA) in natural setting).

### **Crosslinguistic Influence**

The term refers to the use of an already acquired linguistic and conceptual knowledge to facilitate or hinder a new language learning task. It may also be referred to as transfer. The L<sub>2</sub>

learner uses his mother-tongue experience as a means of organising the second language data (Odlin 1994).

### **Cross - Sectional Studies**

These are studies that rely on language data collected from subjects at one point in time. The subjects should be at different points of development and thus the language sample is assumed to reflect the characteristics of language systems developing over a period of time.

### **Deictic Expressions**

According to Lyons (1991) the name 'deictic' comes from the Greek word *deixis* which means pointing. As a linguistic term it means 'identification' by pointing. Deictic expressions are used to point at ourselves, to others, and to objects in our environment. They locate actions in a time frame relative to the present. The notion of deixis handles 'orientational' features of language which are relative to time and place of utterance.

These expressions are typically pronouns, demonstratives, adverbials of time and place, verbs of motion and tenses. All languages have expressions that link an utterance to a time and space context and that help to determine reference (Hatch 1992). As stated earlier, we will only consider two demonstrative pronouns (*this/that*), two adverbials of place (*here/there*), two adverbials of time (*now | then*) and two verbs of motion (*come/go*).

### **Segmented Deictic Expressions**

The term segmentation as used by Klein (1990) refers to division that exists in the deictic expressions. In Gíkúyû for example, the ‘deictic space’ not in the vicinity of the speaker is divided into two segments, *haaria* and *hau* while in English the ‘deictic space’ is not divided since it appears as *there*. (See page 3). Therefore, the expression *there* is a segmented deictic expression since it is divided into two segments in the first language of the learners.

### **Non Segmented Deictic Expressions**

The non segmented deictic expressions in this study are those expressions that have a one to one translation in English for example, the Gíkúyû deictic expression *thũ* is translated as ‘go’ in English and thus it is a non segmented deictic expression.

### **Development**

The term ‘Development’ has been used in this study as a synonym for ‘acquisition’ or ‘learning’

### **First Language Acquisition**

First language acquisition refers to the acquisition of a source language or mother-tongue (MT). This is the initial language that a child is introduced to . In this study the first languages include Gíkúyû and English. Thus for the experimental group the L<sub>1</sub> is Gíkúyû while English is the L<sub>1</sub> for the control group.



## **Second Language Acquisition**

Second language acquisition (SLA) refers to the acquisition of another language apart from the first. In this study, English is taken as the  $L_2$  for the experimental group and as  $L_1$  for the control group learners.

### **Interlanguage**

The term interlanguage was coined by Selinker (1972) to refer to the systematic knowledge of a second language which is neither the learner's  $L_1$  nor  $L_2$ . The term has come to be used with different but related meanings: (1) to refer to the series of interlocking systems which characterise acquisition, (2) to refer to the system that is observed at a single stage of development, and (3) to refer to particular mother tongue/ target language combinations. In this study it has been used to refer to the series of interlocking systems which characterise second language acquisition.

### **Language Transfer**

This is the process of using knowledge of the  $L_1$  in learning  $L_2$ . Transfer can be positive, when a first language pattern identical to TL is transferred, however it can be negative, when a first language pattern different from the TL pattern is transferred. In the latter case  $L_1$ -induced errors occur, overproduction, underproduction, miscomprehension, and other effects that constitute a divergence between the behaviour of native and non-native speakers of a language (Ellis 1985).

## **Obligatory Occasion**

When the linguistic context necessitates the use of a particular morpheme, it is said to constitute an obligatory occasion. For example the context created by "\_\_\_\_ is my cardigan" requires the use of a singular morpheme. The first step in establishing the accuracy level of individual morpheme is to identify all obligatory occasions for the morphemes in the data.

## **Order and Sequence Of Development**

In this study a distinction has been drawn between 'order' and 'sequence' of development. The term 'order of development' is used to refer to the order in which specific grammatical features are acquired in SLA these vary according to such factors as the learner's L<sub>1</sub> background and the learning context.

The term sequence of development is used to refer to the overall profile of development of SLA which is held to be universal and thus, not subject to variation as a result of L<sub>1</sub> background, or other factors ( Ellis 1985).

## **Parameters**

Within the UG, parameters are the options or possibilities that a language acquirer has for adoption in language acquisition. It can also be viewed broadly, especially within implicational Universals, where the adoption of certain broad principles implies the adoption of sub-set elements. A parameter is therefore a range of variability of a feature of universal grammar (White 1985).

## **Parameter Setting**

White (1985) says that in the acquisition of a language, the learner is involved in a process of determination or selection of options from the repertory of U.G. principles, guided by a tentative hypotheses on a certain structure (s) within the language of acquisition.

## **Universal Grammar (U.G)**

This is a theoretical construct of what constitutes the knowledge of language. Chomsky (1965) and others who follow generativism have defined U.G. as an individual person's innate ability to acquire any language spoken by human beings with the same amount of ease or difficulty. This ability has been characterised as constituting general principles on the organisation of language. The Greenbergian (1966) in Ellis (1985) approach to universals contends that if a structure of all natural languages were to be analysed, certain general principles and rules on the structure of language would emerge which is universal grammar.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

IL	Interlanguage
L <sub>1</sub>	First Language
L <sub>2</sub>	Second Language
MT	Mother Tongue
NL	Native Language
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
TL	Target Language
UG	Universal Grammar
DE	Deictic Expression (s)
CA	Contrastive Analysis



# CHAPTER ONE

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.0.1 Background To Gĩkũyũ Language.

The Gĩkũyũ make up the largest group of the Central Kenya Bantu group and inhabit the Central Province of Kenya. The Central Kenya Bantu languages comprise of the Gĩkũyũ, Kimeru, Kiambu, Kikamba and Kĩrĩnyaga. According to Njoroge (1994) the Gĩkũyũ who are mainly found in the three administrative districts: Murang'a, Nyeri and Kiambu number 1,993,841. There are however other Gĩkũyũ speakers who are distributed throughout the country but with a bigger concentration in Nyandarua and Nakuru districts. The total number of Gĩkũyũ speakers is 4,455,865 (Statistical Abstract 1995).

The three main dialects are: Murang'a, Nyeri and Kiambu, They derive their names from the geographical location thus emphasising the local territoriality. Although there are some differences which distinguish the three dialects, their linguistic relatedness enables speakers from each to understand those from the rest.

Sometimes, included in this cluster of dialects making up the Gĩkũyũ is the Kĩrĩnyaga sub-group with a population of 487,773. This sub-group is located to the East of Nyeri and North East of Murang'a. It has its own dialects which include Ndia, Gĩchũgũ and Mwea (cf Njoroge 1994).

In this study we investigated second language learners from Murang'a and Nyeri districts to find out the influences in the acquisition of English deictic expressions. Most children, especially from the rural areas of Murang'a where we carried out this study learn Gĩkũyũ as a first



language and learn English as a second language in a classroom situation. Gîkûyû is used as a medium of instruction from class one to class three and English is introduced as a subject at this stage in the schools studied. However, from class four onwards English language becomes the medium of instruction.

### 1.0.2 Background To The Study

The second language learner is an active participant in language learning. Like a first language (L<sub>1</sub>) learner, the L<sub>2</sub> learner will try to use the target language (TL) before he has mastered it, and his linguistic attempts will reflect his imperfect control of the language. In this study we found out that in the written response the learners in the initial stages mixed concepts due to spelling mistakes, others due to difficulties in identifying whether the expressions were in singular or plural. For example the word *here* regularly appeared in the following forms:-

*\*Heir, hare, hear*

while the words *this* and *there* appeared in many occasions as:-

*\*These, their*

The form of the TL which is used by non-native speakers is referred to by Selinker (1975) as an interlanguage (IL). He suggests that interlanguages can be accounted for by considering learning strategies (discussed in Chapter two). The acquisition of English deictic expressions can be discussed by looking at a learner's interlanguage and thus know the process involved in their acquisition.

Quoting Fillmore, Klein (1990) says that deixis seem to function in the same way in all languages. For example personal deixis or words like '*I*' will refer to the person who is just

speaking, 'we' to the person speaking and at least one other person. It has therefore been assumed that unlike a first language learner an L<sub>2</sub> learner can understand the basic ideas of deixis, which are more or less the same in his native language. Difficulties may arise where the two languages differ in the segmentation of the various deictic expressions or where one term is marked and the other unmarked as discussed in the theoretical framework.

## 1.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In learning a second language, the learner uses what he already knows about a language in order to understand the new one. This means that the learner uses both his native language and what he knows about the target language so as to understand the second language. Taylor (1975) found transfer errors to be more frequent with beginners than with advanced learners because the beginner has less knowledge of second language (L<sub>2</sub>) to draw from and is, therefore, expected to make correspondingly more use of his first language (L<sub>1</sub>).

It has been suggested by Klein (1990) that a L<sub>2</sub> learner is capable of understanding the basic principles of deixis, which are more or less the same in his native language. He, however, adds that difficulties may arise where the two languages differ in the segmentation of the various deictic expressions. This can be illustrated, with the difference that exists between English and Gíkûyû spatial deixis. In English, there are basically two local deictic terms *here* and *there*. The Gíkûyû spatial deictic expressions *haha* and *haaria* have similar meaning with *here* and *there* (*haha* = in the vicinity of the speaker, *haaria* = not in the vicinity of the speaker). However, there is a third term *hau* which means 'there' (not in the vicinity of the speaker) as well though there is a subtle difference between *haaria* and *hau*. In English therefore the 'deictic space' is divided



into two parts, and in Gîkûyû into three. Following White's (1986) application of Universal Grammar (UG) the Gîkûyû L<sub>1</sub> speaker then has a parameter activated, which is two segments for the distal *hau* and *haaria*. In learning English as a second language, the learner then has to drop this parameter in the L<sub>2</sub> where the distal only has *there*. This may lead to some difficulties as will be discussed in section 1.8. The problem that this study addresses is whether the L<sub>1</sub> segmentation leads to the learner showing the L<sub>1</sub> parameters in the initial stages of SLA before finally dropping them at an advanced stage. This will be achieved by looking at the acquisition of English deictic expressions by Gîkûyû L<sub>1</sub> speakers.

The study attempts to find out whether there is crosslinguistic influence in the acquisition of English deictic expressions by Gîkûyû L<sub>1</sub> speakers. By looking at eight English deictic expressions the study also sought to establish whether there are deictic expressions whose acquisition is enhanced or hindered by the learner's L<sub>1</sub>.

By giving percentage scores on the use of eight deictic expressions this study aims at establishing the developmental order that a second language learner follows in acquiring the English deictic expressions.

The study also aimed to find out whether the training that the learners receive has an effect on the acquisition of English deictic expressions.||

## 1.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To determine the effect of L<sub>1</sub> on the acquisition order of L<sub>2</sub> deictic expressions.
2. To determine whether the training that the learners receive has any effect on the acquisition of English deictic expressions.

3. To identify the order of development of English deictic expressions by Gîkûyû L<sub>1</sub> speakers.

### 1.3. HYPOTHESES

1. H<sub>0</sub> The L<sub>1</sub> of a learner does not have any effect on the order of acquisition of L<sub>2</sub> deictic expressions.  
H<sub>1</sub> The L<sub>1</sub> of a learner has effect on the order of acquisition of L<sub>2</sub> deictic expressions.
2. H<sub>0</sub> The training that the learners receive does not have effect on the acquisition of English deictic expressions.  
H<sub>1</sub> The training that the learners receive has effect on the acquisition of English deictic expressions.
3. H<sub>0</sub> Gîkûyû L<sub>1</sub> speakers do not follow a specific order of development in the acquisition of English deictic expressions  
H<sub>1</sub> Gîkûyû L<sub>1</sub> speakers follow a specific order of development in the acquisition of English deictic expressions

### 1.4. JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

Though several studies have been carried out in the acquisition of morphemes, very little has been done on the acquisition of deictic expressions. Hatch (1992) quotes a study carried out in Europe on the acquisition of deictic expressions by English native speakers. In the local scene, there has not been any study carried out in the acquisition of English deictic expressions by non-native speakers of English. These studies will be discussed in greater details in chapter two.

There are many ways in which a learner's L<sub>1</sub> can enhance or hinder the acquisition of a new language. This study identifies and explains some of the problems that L<sub>2</sub> learners encounter in learning English deictic expressions. It also shows that there are deictic expressions that are acquired earlier than others, and attempts to give an explanation to this variation. To arrive at this, we studied learners from five primary schools, four from Murang'a District which formed the experimental group while one school from Nyeri District constituted the control group. This is because at Mt. Kenya Academy of Nyeri, it was possible to get learners who activated English as the first language.

This study will help educators to know the areas of emphasis in teaching English deictic expressions to non-native speakers. From the developmental order that we have established it is possible to know the deictic expressions to be introduced earlier than others for effective teaching.

It will expand the body of knowledge on second language acquisition (SLA) and especially on the area of learning strategies and language transfer.

## **1.5. SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS**

This study is concerned with issues in the area known as Second Language acquisition (SLA). It focuses on the acquisition of English deictic expressions by L<sub>2</sub> learners. Since English deictic expressions are very many to be studied within such a limited time as the one allocated to this study, we will only concentrate on randomly selected demonstrative pronouns, some adverbials of place and time, and two verbs of motion. Thus the selected expressions are: *this, that, here, there, now, then, come* and *go*.



Learners from five primary schools: St. Thomas Academy, Ikumbi, Mariira, Kigumo and Karega constituted the sample under study. Classroom language will be used as a source of data with the written response taken as the basic unit of study.

## 1.6 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework employed in this study is the universal Grammar theory. Universal Grammar (UG) is a biological inheritance which requires activation in child language acquisition (Chomsky in Odlin 1994). There seems to exist, according to Chomskyan views, a program that guides children in their effort to learn. The following explanation of the Chomskyan view of Universal Grammar is given in Ellis (1985 : 191)

The Language property inherent in the human mind makes up the Universal Grammar', which consists not of particular rules of a particular grammar, but of a set of general principles that apply to all grammars and that leave certain parameters open..

What this suggests is that without a set of innate principles it would not be possible for a child to learn the Grammar of his mother tongue. This is because the data available from the input are insufficient to enable the child discover all rules in a language, thus the innateness of UG. This quotation also suggests that a particular grammar amounts to a specification of the ways in which it selects from the different possibilities inherent in universal grammar.

In this theory, it is assumed that certain aspects of language structure must be innately present in the child, to account for problematical aspects of language acquisition (Chomsky 1965

in White 1985). This innate structure is the 'Universal Grammar' and it consists in the main, of principles limiting the ways in which the child can conceive language. The major arguments concern the fact that there are many subtle and complex things that native speakers unconsciously know about their language for which there is insufficient evidence in the input data, the language that they are exposed to as children. For example, first language learners have intricate knowledge of ambiguity, paraphrase relations, ungrammaticality, scope, etc. without being taught and despite the fact that these aspects of language are not explicit in the language that they hear. Felix (1984) gives three ways in which these data are inadequate. First, some structures are so rare and marginal that it would not be possible for the child to obtain sufficient exposure to them. Second, the only way in which the wrong hypothesis could be discarded would be if the input were to provide negative feedback, which it does not. Third, the rules of any grammar are highly abstract and so they do not reflect the surface properties of the language.

UG constrains the form which the grammars of individual languages can take. However, it does not do this directly by providing a first language learner with ready-made rules which he can incorporate into his grammar. Rather the learner sets parameters which must then be fixed according to the particular input data that the learner obtains. For example, by listening to the language around him, a language learner can decide whether to set the parameter of sentence order as SVO or SOV. These formal and substantive universals constitute constraints on the kind of grammar that the learner can develop. They delimit the number of options which the learner needs to explore. The UG therefore provides limitations on possible grammar or a series of grammars. The language learner constructs a particular grammar or a series of grammars on the basis of the input data, the language that he hears interacting with the UG (cf Cook 1985).



The rules that the learner discovers with the aid of Universal Grammar form the core grammar of the learner's language. However every language also contains elements that are not constrained by UG. Cook (1984) gives the following examples of peripheral rules: Those that are derived from the history of a language (e.g. structures like 'the more the merrier' which comes from old English), and there are also words that have been borrowed from other languages or those that have arisen accidentally. The learner's knowledge of his L<sub>1</sub> therefore, is made up of rules determined by universal grammar and those that have to be learnt without the help of Universal Grammar. This is the narrow view of the UG as explained by Chomsky in White (1985).

A number of scholars (Greenberg (1983) in Odlin (1994), White (1985) and O'Malley et al (1995) have carried out investigations in SLA that aim to determine the extent to which UG is still "available" to guide the progress of adults learning a second language. These scholars have pointed out that L<sub>2</sub> learners, like first language learners, acquire a complex system on the basis of inadequate data. Any learner who attains reasonable success in the L<sub>2</sub> will end up with very complex and subtle knowledge which is not determined by the input. This suggests that L<sub>2</sub> learners have at their disposal the kinds of universal principles which are found in UG and which are assumed to be available in L<sub>1</sub> acquisition. As White (1985) puts it, if UG is incorporated into a model of L<sub>2</sub> acquisition, we will be in a position to consider the question of how it is that many L<sub>2</sub> learners achieve quite considerable success in acquiring L<sub>2</sub>.

In SLA the learner has already activated UG by learning his first language and thus has already triggered some of the linguistic universals. Until recently it was assumed that linguistic universals would be invariant across languages, although not all languages would instantiate all



universals. However, there has been a growing realisation that universal principles vary in subtle ways from language to language, and hence the concept of parametric variation has been introduced (White 1985). The idea is that a specific universal principle may operate in a limited number of different ways along a number of parameters, and that the parameter setting to be adopted will be triggered by positive evidence from the language being learned. Many learners in  $L_2$  are faced with situations where some principles differ as to the value of the parameter in  $L_1$  and  $L_2$ , or one language may have some principles inactive or not in use. In such situations, the learner may be faced with conflicting positive evidence from  $L_1$  and  $L_2$ , motivating incompatible parameter settings. The learner may, therefore, need to change or drop parameters, and may as a result have difficulties which may be reflected in the transfer of the  $L_1$  parameter setting, and hence in the incidence of interference errors.

In an unpublished paper White (ibid.) states that taking parameterized Universal Grammar into account, the following situations may occur and the following predictions can be made:

- (a)  $L_1$  and  $L_2$  have the same principle, set in the same way: There should be no difficulty in acquiring the  $L_2$  parameter setting.
- (b)  $L_1$  does not have some principle activated which is required in  $L_2$ : there should be no difficulty in acquiring the  $L_2$  setting, since  $L_2$  data will motivate the principle in question and there will be no competition from an  $L_1$  setting.
- (c)  $L_1$  and  $L_2$  both instantiate some principle but in different ways: there will be difficulties until the learner realises that the  $L_1$  setting is not appropriate for  $L_2$ .

- (d)  $L_1$  has some parameter active but  $L_2$  does not: there will be difficulties until the learner realises that the  $L_1$  parameter is not operative at all in  $L_2$ .

Thus, where parameters do not differ as in (a) or where  $L_1$  has not had some principle activated at all as in (b),  $L_2$  acquisition should proceed along 'universal' lines only showing evidence of developmental errors. But where parameters differ as in (c) or have to be eliminated (d), the already acquired parameter setting may compete with the new one required from  $L_2$ , leading to transfer errors at least initially. In all cases the interlanguage grammar will be constrained by parameters of UG but differences in the evidence available to the learner will lead to differences in parameter setting adopted. This will be discussed in more detail in the literature review.

White (ibid.) concludes that where transfer occurs, it should be consistent with the situations described in (c) and (d), and where it does not occur, it should be consistent with (a) and (b) above. The claim that interlanguages are natural, amounts to the claim that variation in interlanguage grammars should be along lines predicted by the different parameter settings allowed by UG. The learner transfers from  $L_1$  in an attempt to come to terms with the  $L_2$  data. The  $L_1$  data therefore effectively serves as input to the interlanguage grammar, until  $L_2$  data forces the learner to reanalyse his IL in the relevant aspects. Where such  $L_2$  data is not forthcoming, the learner will continue to interpret the  $L_1$  data as relevant to  $L_2$ .

This study has employed a broad view of the UG which takes into account the existence of transfer errors, and that they are predictable on the basis of parametric variation between  $L_1$  and  $L_2$ .

## **1.7 METHODOLOGY**

### **1.7.1 The Location Of The Study**

The study was carried out in five primary schools, four of which comprised the experimental group and one the control group. The experimental group included pupils from, Ikumbi, Mariira, Kigumo and Karega primary schools in Muranga District. The control group constituted of pupils from Mt. Kenya Academy in Nyeri District.

### **1.7.2 Sampling Procedures**

The five primary schools as mentioned above formed the sampling frame. These five schools were selected because of the following reasons:-

- (a) The experimental group learners speak the  $L_1$  and learn English in a non-naturalistic situation, that is, the formal classroom.
- (b) In Mt. Kenya Academy, which consisted of the control group, it was possible to get learners who activate English as a first language.

In each primary school, learners in classes three, four, five, six, and seven were included in the sample. This is because in many primary schools in Kenya especially in the rural areas, English is introduced as a subject from class one, and becomes the medium of instruction from class four. We therefore sampled from class three which is one class before the  $L_2$  becomes the medium of instruction. A total of five subjects were drawn randomly from each of the five levels of education. In order to avoid bias, random numbers were used in the selection of the sample.



The experimental group therefore consisted of one hundred learners while the control group was made up of twenty five learners. The total number of learners was one hundred and twenty five as shown in table 1A.

Table. 1A: Learners in the Experimental and Control groups

	CLASS 3	CLASS 4	CLASS 5	CLASS 6	CLASS 7	TOTALS
IKUMBI	5	5	5	5	5	25
MARIIRA	5	5	5	5	5	25
KIGUMO	5	5	5	5	5	25
KAREGA	5	5	5	5	5	25
MT. KENYA	5	5	5	5	5	25
TOTALS	25	25	25	25	25	125

### 1.7.3 Data Collection Procedures

Data was collected through interviews and language tests.

Every learner in the sample was interviewed with a view of finding out whether he spoke

Gikuyu or English as the L<sub>1</sub> as shown below:

1. Where is your birth place?
2. When did you move to your present home?
3. Whom do you stay with at home?

4. If you were to write a letter to your parents, what language would you use?
5. Which language(s) do you use at home when:
  - (i) speaking to your parents?
  - (ii) speaking to your brothers and sisters?
  - (iii) speaking to the house girl?
  - (iv) speaking to your friends?

Language tests were used to collect data about the subject's ability to use English deictic expressions. The types of tests that were used to elicit data were multiple choice, pictures to form a text and cloze (see Appendix C.)

The language tests were presented to selected learners during the pilot study to ascertain their effectiveness in eliciting target data regarding the acquisition of English deictic expressions. After the pilot study had been carried out item analysis was done so as to improve the test items where necessary.

#### **1.7.4 Data Analysis And Interpretation**

The data was initially converted into percentages. That is, the percentage score of each functor in every education level was calculated. The scoring and data analysis procedures were adopted from Brown (1973) and Dulay and Burt (1974). The two key notions are: Obligatory context and scoring each obligatory context as an item. The scoring procedure that was employed is shown below.

#### **1.7.4.1 Obligatory Context**

Brown in Njoroge (1987) said that each obligatory context can be regarded as a kind of test item which the child passes by supplying the required morpheme or fails by supplying none or one that is not correct. He also said that such a performance measure i.e., the percentage of morphemes supplied in obligatory contexts should not be dependent on the topic of conversation or the character of interaction.

The study focused on 40 obligatory contexts which are in the three elicitation instruments used.

Learners might supply the correct forms of the functors, or supply misformed ones or even fail to supply any.

#### **1.7.4.2 Scoring Obligatory Occasions**

As discussed by Brown in Njoroge (1987) each obligatory occasion is treated as a test item and this study adopted a ternary scoring system which was as follows.

- i. If a learner failed to supply a functor in its obligatory occasion, he scored zero.
- ii. If a learner supplied a misinformed form of a functor, he scored one.
- iii. If a learner supplied the correct form of a functor, he scored two.

In our tests we constrained learners in their production of specific functors. This method has the advantage that it enabled us to quantify the learner's output.

### 1.7.4.3 Group Score Method

A group of subjects for whom an acquisition order is to be determined received a single score for each functor which was under investigation (Njoroge 1987). The subjects were then arranged along two main dimensions, educational level and the source language.

A group score in each functor, is a ration whose numerator is the sum of all the scores for each obligatory occasion for the functor across all the numbers in the group. The denominator is the sum of all the obligatory occasions where each occasion is worth two points in the functor across all the members of the group. The resulting quotient is normally multiplied by 100. The formula which we employed is as follows:

Group functor score

S scores for each obligatory context

For functor x = ----- X 100

S in all obligatory contexts for functor x

The deictic expressions under investigations were arranged according to decreasing group scores. The sequence that was obtained was assumed to be an order of acquisition for the group for whom the scores were calculated. Since there are two groups, (control and the experimental groups), their respective orders of acquisition were then compared.



Group mean scores for the different levels of training were then compared to determine whether the level of training influences the acquisition of the expressions. Graphical representation of this information was also done for the purpose of showing the trend followed by the learners in the acquisition of deictic expressions.



## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.0 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the studies that have been carried out in the past with an attempt of establishing crosslinguistic influence in SLA are reviewed. This will be accomplished under the following subheadings:-

- (a) The role of  $L_1$  in SLA
- (b) Interlanguage
- (c) Cross sectional research on morpheme studies
- (d) The role of formal instruction
- (e) Application of Universal Grammar in specific studies
- (f) Previous studies in the local scene

#### 2.1 THE ROLE OF $L_1$ IN SLA

The widely held belief in the 1950s and 1960s was that the  $L_1$  played a negative role in SLA. This was termed as interference and it could be predicted by comparing and contrasting the learners  $L_1$  and  $L_2$ . Contrastive Analysis (CA) is one of the theories that shaped so much early

linguistic research and as a result underlie much of the current L<sub>2</sub> teaching methodology and materials.

CA explained that a learner's L<sub>1</sub> interferes with his acquisition of L<sub>2</sub> and it therefore comprises the major obstacles to successful mastery of the new language. The CA's theory hypothesis held that where the structures in the L<sub>1</sub> differed from those in the L<sub>2</sub>, errors that reflected the structure of the L<sub>1</sub> would be produced. Such errors were said to be due to the influence of the learners L<sub>1</sub> habits on L<sub>2</sub> production. For example, in Spanish the adjective is usually placed after the noun, according to the CA hypothesis, therefore, Spanish speaking learners should tend to say "the girl smart" instead of "the smart girl" when attempting to communicate in English (Dulay et al (1982). This process has been labelled negative transfer while positive transfer is the automatic use of the L<sub>1</sub> structure in L<sub>2</sub> performance when structures in both languages agree thus resulting in correct utterances. For example, the use of the Spanish plural markers *-s* and *-es* on English nouns should yield a correct English plural (noun for example *nina-s* and *majure-es* in Spanish ; *girl-s* and *dress-es* in English) if positive transfer were operating in L<sub>2</sub> production (Dulay et al 1982).

Following the reasoning above, linguists thought a comparison of a learner's L<sub>1</sub> and L<sub>2</sub> contrastive analysis should reveal areas of difficulty for L<sub>2</sub> students , thereby providing teachers and developers of L<sub>2</sub> materials with specific guidelines.

Support for CA in foreign language teaching can be traced to Fries (1945: 9) who wrote "The most effective materials are those that are based upon a scientific description of the native language of the learner". Fries (ibid.) also stated that learning a second language constituted a

different task from learning a first language. He adds that the basic problems do not arise out of any essential difficulty in the features of the new language but primarily out of the special 'set created by the first language habits'. A large part of the rationale for the CA hypothesis was drawn from principles of behaviourist psychology that were the accepted learning principles at the time, but which have since been shown inadequate to explain language learning.

Empirical research data that addressed the CA hypothesis has revealed that:

1. In neither child nor adult L<sub>2</sub> performance do the majority of the grammatical errors reflect the learner's L<sub>1</sub>
2. L<sub>2</sub> learners make many errors in areas of grammar that are comparable in both the L<sub>1</sub> and L<sub>2</sub>, errors that should not be made if 'positive transfer' were operating.
3. Phonological errors exhibit more L<sub>1</sub> influence than do grammatical errors, although a substantial number of the L<sub>2</sub> phonological errors children make are similar to those made by monolingual first language learners, and only a small portion of phonological errors in reading are traceable to the learner's L<sub>1</sub>.

The CA hypothesis thus emerged as a weak predictor of learner performance, accounting only for a small portion of L<sub>2</sub> performance data. The constructs of negative and positive transfer show these processes neither operate much of the time nor systematically.



The empirical research available on the role of the first language covers different aspects of L<sub>2</sub> learners verbal performance. These aspects include the following as discussed by Dulay et al (ibid.)

1. Grammatical errors
2. Non-use of L<sub>1</sub> rules similar in L<sub>2</sub> (Lack of positive transfer)
3. Judgements of grammatical correctness
4. Avoidance.

### **2.1.1 Grammatical Errors**

The change in the perceived role of the first language began with the observation that the number of errors in second language performance that could be attributed to first language influence was far smaller than had been imagined previously.

In the area of grammar, including syntax and morphology, the incidence of errors that are traceable to characteristics in the L<sub>1</sub> are relatively low. Krashen et al (1982) says it is around 4% to 12% for children, and from 8% to 23% for adults. Of these interlingual errors, most tend to be limited to word order and are not made in the morphology of the language.

In Dulay and Burt's (1974) initial study of the natural speech of children, an analysis of over 500 grammatical errors made by 179 children learning English in United States schools revealed that less than 5% of the errors observed reflected the children's L<sub>1</sub> Spanish. Since then other empirical studies have shown that children place limited reliance on the structure of the mother tongue when learning the L<sub>2</sub> in a host environment. Most of these researchers commented



on the very low incidence of interlingual errors. Instead, most of the errors observed appeared to be developmental, that is of the sort that might be made by children learning those languages as their L<sub>1</sub>.

Studies conducted on the speech and writing of adults learning English as a second language have reached similar conclusions namely, that the majority of non-phonological errors observed for adults do not reflect the L<sub>1</sub>. The proportion of errors that reflect the L<sub>1</sub>, however, is larger than that which has been observed for children. Approximately 8% to 23% of the adult errors may be classified as interlingual. Though this proportion is larger than it is for children, it still represents a smaller percentage of the total errors adult make.

### **2.1.2 Lack Of Positive Transfer**

Available data show that learners make a number of grammatical errors which they would not have if they had used the same rule they were already using in their L<sub>1</sub>.

According to a study by Lococo in Duly et al (1982), 5% to 18% of errors would not have been made had the learners resorted to rules they were already using in their native languages. This study included monolingual English Speaking University Students learning Spanish and German in the United States.

One example of the limited use of the L<sub>1</sub> is evidenced in the learning of plural allomorphs. The plural morpheme has three predictable allomorphs, it is pronounced /s/ after voiceless consonants, such as /p/, /t/ and /k/ (*cats*); /z/ after voiced consonants, such as /b/, /d/, /g/ (*bags*); and /ɪz/ after sibilants, such as the last sounds in the words fish /s/ and church /tʃ/. Using a

text Natalicio and Natalicio (1971) found that native Spanish Speakers aged six to sixteen acquired the /-s/ and /-z/ plural allomorphs before the /-iz/. If transfer from Spanish to English had been operating, the order of acquisition would have been /s/ first, then /z/ and /iz/ together, because Spanish plurals are all voiceless, and voicing is the new feature English requires. This factor will be discussed further in relation to our study to find out whether positive crosslinguistic influence is evidenced in this study.

The findings above provide additional evidence for L<sub>2</sub> learners' lack of reliance on the specific grammatical rules and structures of their mother tongues.

### **2.1.3 Judgements Of Grammatical Correctness**

Researchers in this case test whether judgements of grammatical correctness will be affected by the difference between learner's first and second languages.

Schachter, Tyson and Diffley (1976) conducted an investigation involving Arabic, Persian, Japanese, Chinese and Spanish students. The investigation elicited grammaticality judgements from fifty students on relative clause constructions in English. The researchers constructed a variety of misformed English sentences based on a one-to-one translation from the native languages of the students.

Mixed results were obtained. Only in the Persian group did a majority judge misformed relative clauses to be correct. No significant majorities in the other three language groups judged the misformed relative clauses based on their respective first languages to be correct. Thus, the students' first language could not consistently be inferred from the errors they made in

grammaticality judgements, this study then, does not lend much support to the notion of L<sub>1</sub> influence. Where judgements of grammatical correctness are concerned, factors other than the structures and rules of the L<sub>1</sub> seem to be operating.

#### 2.1.4 Avoidance

Another area of SLA research that may also bear on the question of L<sub>1</sub> influence pertains to the avoidance of certain structures by L<sub>2</sub> learners. Schachter (1974) analysed relative clauses production in university-level students of ESL and found that Persian and Arabic speakers produced about twice as many relative clauses in their compositions as did Japanese and Chinese students, but they made nearly twice as many errors in the relative clauses, as compared to Japanese and Chinese speaking Students Schachter (ibid.) believes that CA helps to explain these results. Persian and Arabic relative clauses are similar to English relative clauses, in that they are formed with the head noun phrase to the 'left' ("*... the boy who I saw ...*"). Japanese and Chinese relative clauses are quite different, however, in that the head noun phrase appears to the 'right' of the subordinate clause. Schachter (ibid.) concludes that the students may have had so much trouble with these constructions that they failed to produce them.

Kleinman (1978) presented results using Arabic, Spanish, Portuguese, and American Students that essentially supported Schachter's view, but also showed that CA alone cannot predict when structures will be circumvented or produced. Kleinman's (ibid.) research suggests that personality factors, such as anxiety, confidence and willingness to take risks, provides information on which students are likely to avoid various structures. Madden in Dulay et al



(1982), in a detailed investigation of the acquisition of four auxiliaries in forty six adults ESL students, distinguish “avoiders” and “guessers”. Avoiders “appeared to avoid responding to items they did not know well and were willing to imitate a sentence only when they felt the likelihood of making errors was small”. Guessers “were willing to try even when there was little likelihood of being correct”.

## **2.2 INTERLANGUAGE**

The term interlanguage (IL) was first used by Selinker (1972) to refer to the systematic knowledge of a second language which is independent of both the learner’s first language and the target language. The assumptions underlying interlanguage theory were stated clearly by Nemser (1971). They were; (1) at any given time the approximative system is distinct from the L<sub>1</sub> and L<sub>2</sub>; (2) the approximative system forms an evolving series; and (3) that in a given constant situation, the approximative systems of learners at the same stage of proficiency coincide.

The concept of ‘hypothesis - testing’ was used to explain how the L<sub>2</sub> learner progressed along the interlanguage continuum in much the same way as it was used to explain L<sub>1</sub> acquisition. Corder (1967) made this comparison explicit by proposing that at least some of the strategies used by the L<sub>2</sub> learner were the same as those by which L<sub>1</sub> acquisition takes place. In particular, Corder suggested that both L<sub>1</sub> and L<sub>2</sub> learners make errors in order to test out certain hypotheses about the nature of the language they are learning. He saw the making or errors as a strategy, evident of learner - internal processing. This was in opposition to the view of the SLA



presented in the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis, 'Hypothesis testing' was a mentalist notion and had no place in the behaviourists' account of learning.

However, the notion of  $L_1$  interference was not reflected as the only explanation for SLA, it was reconstituted as one factor among many of the Cognitive processes responsible for SLA.

Selinker (1972) suggested that five principle processes operated in Interlanguage, these were:

1. Interlanguage transfer
2. Overgeneralisation of TL rules
3. Transfer of training (that is rule enters the learner's system as a result of instruction).
4. Strategies of  $L_2$  learning (an identifiable approach by the learner to the material learned).
5. Strategies of  $L_2$  communication (an identifiable approach by the learner to communication with native speakers).

(1972:37)

Selinker (ibid.) postulated that the five processes constitute the ways in which the learner attempts to internalise the  $L_2$  System. They are the means by which the learner tries to reduce the learning burden to manageable proportions.

$L_2$  learner's interlanguage is permeable, in the sense that rules that constitute the learner's knowledge at any one stage are not fixed, but are open to amendment. This is a general feature of natural language, thus all language systems are permeable.

The L<sub>2</sub> learner's Interlanguage is dynamic in that it is constantly changing. The learner slowly revises the interim systems to accommodate new hypotheses about the TL system. This takes place by the introduction of a new rule; first in one context and then in another. A new rule spreads in the sense that its coverage gradually extends over a range of linguistic contexts. For example, early WH questions are typically non-inverted (e.g. what you want?), but then the learner acquires the subject inversion rule, he does not apply it immediately to all WH questions. To begin with he restricts the rules to a limited number of verbs and to particular pronouns (e.g. 'who' and 'what'). Later he extends the rule by making it apply both to an increasing range of verbs and to other WH pronouns. This process of constant revision and extension of rules is a feature of the inherent instability of IL and its built-in propensity for change.

Despite the variability of interlanguage it is possible to detect the rule-based nature of the learner's use of the L<sub>2</sub>. A learner does not select haphazardly from his store of IL rules, but in predictable ways. He bases his performance plans on his existing rule system in much the same way as the native Speaker bases his plans on his internalised knowledge of the L<sub>1</sub> System.

IL theory was based on 'behavioural events'. As Selinker (ibid.) acknowledged, the behavioural events that have aroused the greatest interest in discussions of SLA have been 'errors'. However, whereas the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis was devised to justify procedures for predicting errors, IL theory constitutes an attempt to explain errors. This study therefore explains some of the errors or lack of them where they are expected in the acquisition of eight English Deictic Expressions by English L<sub>2</sub> learners.

Since the data was collected using cross-sectional research the following section discusses some of the Morpheme Studies carried out using this method.

### **2.3 CROSS-SECTIONAL RESEARCH ON MORPHEME STUDIES**

Morpheme Studies have been carried out to investigate the order of acquisition of a range of grammatical functors in the speech of L<sub>2</sub> learners. These studies were motivated by the hypothesis that there was an invariant order in SLA which was the result of Universal processing strategies similar to those observed in L<sub>1</sub> acquisition.

Oral and written data were elicited from a sample of L<sub>2</sub> learners, using elicitation devices such as the Bilingual Syntax Measure (Burt et al 1973). This consisted of a series of pictures which the learners were asked to describe. The authors claimed that the corpus they collected in this way reflected natural speech. The grammatical items which were the target of investigation were then identified. The procedure followed involved identifying the obligatory occasions for each item in the speech corpus. An 'obligatory occasion' was defined as a context in which use of the item under consideration was obligatory in correct native-speaker speech. Each item was scored according to whether it was correctly used in each context, and an accuracy score of its total use by all the learners in the study was calculated. It was then possible to rank all the items in order of the accuracy scores. This produced an accuracy order, which was equated with acquisition order on the grounds that the more accurately an item was used, the earlier it was acquired.



Two early studies (Dulay and Burt 1973, 1974 b) claimed that the vast majority of errors produced by child L<sub>2</sub> learners were developmental and that the acquisition orders of child learners remained the same, irrespective of their first languages or of the methods used to score the accuracy use of the morphemes. The studies by Dulay and Burt (ibid.) were replicated with adult Subjects by Bailey et al (1974), and similar results obtained. Larsen-Freeman in Freeman et al (1991), however, found that the accuracy orders of adult learners varied according to the elicitation instrument used. The orders on oral production tasks agreed with Burt and Dulay's (ibid.) order, but those on listening, reading and writing tasks produced different errors. Krashen et al (1978), however, calculated the acquisition order using written data collected under two different conditions. One set of data consisted of 'fast' writing (that is the adult subjects were given a fixed time) and another set consisted of 'careful' writing (the subjects were given as much time as they wanted). The results showed that these conditions did not affect the Morpheme Order.

The general picture that emerges is that the 'acquisition order' for various grammatical functors is more or less the same, irrespective of the source language, age, and medium. The only time that a different order occurs is when the elicitation instrument required the subjects to focus specifically on the form rather than the meaning of their utterances as in some of the tasks in Larsen - Freeman's (ibid.) study. But as Krashen (1977:148) puts it, where the data represented a focus on meaning there is 'an amazing amount of uniformity across all studies'. However, the standard order that was reported was different from the order of morpheme acquisition reported for L<sub>1</sub> acquisition.



The order was not entirely invariant across studies. Even in those studies that reported significant statistical correlations in the rank orders of the morphemes studied, there were some differences. Also the ranking procedure used, disguised the fact that some of the morpheme scores differed narrowly while others were far apart. For these reasons Dulay and Burt (1975) proposed that rather than list the morphemes in order of accuracy, it was better to group them together. Each group would then reflect a clear developmental stage with the morphemes within each group being 'acquired' at more or less the same time. These groupings were presented as a 'hierarchy'. Thus a number of morphemes were grouped together to show that they were acquired concurrently.

The morpheme studies provided strong evidence of a 'natural' sequence of development of SLA. Irrespective of learner differences, L<sub>2</sub> learners appear to progress along the IL continuum in a very similar way. However, the results of the cross-sectional studies were criticised. This is because these results differed with case studies of individual learners carried out in longitudinal studies.

## **2.4 THE ROLE OF FORMAL INSTRUCTION**

A formal language environment focuses on the conscious acquisition of rules and forms. It is severely limited in its potential to produce speakers who are able to communicate naturally and effectively.

Although research indicates that a formal language learning environment is not the most appropriate environment for fluent language learning, it has certain benefits. One of the benefits

is that first speakers may modify their use of the new language through some of the low level rules they know. Thus, when rules are learned correctly, conscious rule application may contribute to increasing accuracy in some situations.

In many instructional methods, an assumption is made that focusing on linguistic form aids the acquisition of grammatical knowledge or that raising the learner's consciousness about the nature of the TL rules helps the learner to internalise them. Another assumption of formal instruction is that the order in which grammatical features are taught will govern the order in which they are learnt. Language syllabuses are organised in such a way as to facilitate the correlation between the teaching order and the learning order.

In order to study the effects of instruction it is important to look at the different aspects of SLA. The role of instruction in SLA can be considered separately in terms of the effect instruction has on the route of development (that is, the general sequence or specific order of acquisition) and the effect instruction has on the rate of development (that is, the speed at which learning takes place) or the success of development (the proficiency level finally achieved). Instruction can take many different forms, but for the purposes of our study, the issue to be investigated is not which type of instruction is most effective, but whether formal instruction *per se* has any effect.

Two studies of L<sub>2</sub> learners found the same morpheme order in classroom SLA as in naturalistic SLA. Fathman (1975) used an oral production to assess the grammatical knowledge of two hundred children aged between six and fifteen years, from diverse backgrounds. Some of the children were receiving extra language instruction, while others were placed in normal



classrooms. Fathman (*ibid.*) found a highly significant correlation between the morpheme orders of the two groups of learners and concluded that the order of acquisition remained constant, irrespective of instruction. Perkins and Larsen-Freeman (1975) investigated the morpheme orders of twelve Venezuelan university students after they had undergone two months of language instruction upon arriving in the United States. They used two tasks to collect data; (1) a translation test, and (2) a description task based on a non-dialogue film. On (1), the morpheme orders before and after instruction differed significantly but on (2), there was no significant difference, the researchers concluded that where spontaneous speech is concerned, formal instruction does not influence development. These two studies suggest that formal instruction does not alter the order of acquisition of grammatical morphemes when the learner is engaged in language use and is focused on meaning.

Two other studies of second language learners suggest that instruction can have an effect on morpheme orders, although the effect is relatively minor and not long-lasting. Lightbown et al (1980) investigated the performance of 175 French speaking students of English on (1), a grammaticality judgement test, and (2) a communication task involving picture description. They found that the scores on the first test improved as a result of the instruction, but that the overall scores fell back later when the students were no longer receiving instruction on the grammatical features tested. On the second task, they found that the order of various noun and verb morphemes was different from the 'natural' order. This was because students did worse on the plural than the progressive morpheme, possibly because of the effects of their first language. However, when the verb and noun morphemes were considered separately, the orders conformed to these occurring naturally.

Lightbown (1983) found that a similar group of students to those in the first study had 'overlearnt' the progressive '-ing' at one stage of their development. Lightbown (*ibid.*) suggests that this may have been the result of intensive formal practice of this morpheme at an earlier stage and that highly concentrated practice may have a delayed effect. However the students did not use '-ing' appropriately, but overgeneralised its use to contexts requiring the third person '-s' morpheme. Later, the frequency of '-ing' declined as the learners began to sort out the respective uses of '-s' and '-ing'. Thus the disturbance in the natural order proved to be only temporary.

The morpheme studies mentioned above have one problem in common that the learners were receiving instruction in an environment where it was possible for them to have exposure to the L<sub>2</sub> outside classroom. Thus the studies may not have tapped the effects of exclusive classroom learning. Pica (1983) carried out a study on the effect of instruction on the morpheme order. She compared six learners of English as a foreign language receiving formal instruction in Mexico city with both a group of naturalistic learners and a mixed group (one receiving exposure and instruction) in Philadelphia. Pica (*ibid.*) looked at eight morphemes and found significant correlations among the three groups and the order correlated with that from Krashen (1977).

The studies above have led to the conclusion that formal instruction does not appear to have any marked effect on the morpheme order reported for naturalistic or mixed SLA. Only when the data used to compute the morpheme order are heavily monitored do differences emerge. When data that reflect the communicative uses of the L<sub>2</sub> are collected the morpheme order is either the same as the natural order or differs from it only in the short term and only in one or two features which may have been 'overlearnt'



Formal instruction in the cross-sectional studies appears to have only a negligible effect on the morpheme order manifest in spontaneous language use. In the following section studies that have applied to the Universal Grammar Theory are discussed.

## **2.5 APPLICATION OF UNIVERSAL GRAMMAR IN SPECIFIC STUDIES**

It is assumed that some language structures must be innately present in the child to account for certain aspects of  $L_1$  acquisition. This innate structure is referred to as "universal Grammar" and it consists of abstract principles limiting the ways in which the child can conceive of language. The input data to the child is insufficiently precise to characterise the kind of subtle knowledge about language that the child eventually attains, for example knowledge about ambiguity, paraphrase, ungrammaticality etc. (Chomsky 1981 as reported by White 1986). The UG mediates between the input and the grammar constructed by the child and that U.G forms part of the Language acquisition Device (LAD).

Baker (1979) in Cook (1985) states that an adult native speaker of a language knows things he could not have learnt from the samples of speech he has heard; since this knowledge is not based on his experience of the world it must come from some property inside his own mind. This theory is also applicable to SLA. The  $L_2$  learner also ends up with very complex knowledge which cannot be attributed to input data. White (1986) gives the explanation that if the  $L_1$  learner has at his disposal certain universal principles which help him to overcome deficiencies in the input, then such principles may also be available to the  $L_2$  learner. This lies on the assumption

that these principles are not made unavailable at the end of the neurological critical period for L<sub>2</sub> acquisition.

In L<sub>2</sub> acquisition the learner has already activated U.G in learning his MT. Though there are linguistic universals, not all languages would instantiate all of them. There has been a realisation that principles vary from language to language and this has led to the proposal that there are certain open parameters, associated with a number of principles of U.G (White 1985). These open parameters are fixed on the basis of positive evidence from the language being learned (Chomsky 1981 in Ellis 1985). Languages will differ in subtle ways depending on which parameter setting is adopted for some structure, and the choice of a particular parameter can have a range of consequences as illustrated in the following paragraph.

Many learners are faced with situations where the settings for a particular principle differ from L<sub>1</sub> to L<sub>2</sub> or where one language has some principle activated whilst the other does not. There will therefore be need to change or drop an L<sub>1</sub> parameter. This may lead to some difficulties for the L<sub>2</sub> learner leading to the transfer of the L<sub>1</sub> parameter to the L<sub>2</sub> and hence interference errors (White 1985)

A study was carried out by White (1986) to find out whether the explanation of parameter setting would operate. The subjects for the study consisted of 71 adults learning English as a second language at MC Gill University, in Montreal Canada. The experimental group consisted of 32 Spanish native speakers and 2 Italian speakers. These two languages are prop-drop languages (Languages that omit subject pronouns and have the free invasion of subject and verb in declarative sentences). These speakers of prop-drop languages were learning a non



prop-drop language, 37 were native speakers of French which like English is not a prop-drop language. The subjects were in levels 2, 3 and 4. The experimental group and control group were well matched, as to age, starting of English, and also teachers. The results from this study showed the influence of L<sub>1</sub> on L<sub>2</sub>. This led White (1986) to conclude that L<sub>1</sub> parameters influence the L<sub>2</sub> data especially in the initial stages leading to transfer errors. Thus showing that the effects of L1 are explicable within a U.G framework.

In our study we will apply this principle of parametric variation in the acquisition of deictic expressions by Gîkûyû speakers. For example, Gîkûyû has three segments of spatial deictic '*haha*, *hau*, *haaria*' while English has two '*here*' (proximal) and '*there*' (distal). Following White's (1986) interpretation, the Gîkûyû L<sub>1</sub> speakers have a certain parameter activated, which is two segments for distal '*hau*' and '*haaria*'. The problem this study seeks to solve is, whether this leads to the learner showing this parameter in the initial stages of SLA before finally dropping it at an advanced stage, so far this notion has not been applied in the acquisition of deictic expressions as explained in section 2.2.5.

## **2.6 PREVIOUS STUDIES IN THE LOCAL SCENE**

Scholars such as Klein (1990) make the assumption that since the L<sub>2</sub> learner has already acquired the deictic concepts in the L<sub>1</sub>, he will have little difficulty acquiring the expressions in L<sub>2</sub>. Weissenborn (in Hatch, 1992) conducted a study on the acquisition of deictic expressions by four, six and eight - year olds. This led to the conclusion that, although young children have a "cognitive map" of an area, they have not yet developed a template for descriptions that takes into



account listener or reader's needs. However it has been explained by Lyons (1990:650) that whether there is any fixed sequence in the acquisition of English deictic expressions, it is still uncertain.

There are very few studies that we have access to which have investigated language acquisition against the background of Kenyan first languages. Only two studies we have had occasion to read concern themselves with second language acquisition, Njoroge (1987) and Onditi (1994). Njoroge (1987) studied the acquisition of morpho-syntactic categories e.g. tense, plurality and negation in English by Kenyan pupils speaking three 'unrelated' first languages i.e. Gĩkũyũ, Dholuo and Kalenjin. He established 'inter alia' variability in language use among learners: Learners using target forms at one time and non-target forms at another. He found no phenomenon which he attributed to interference. This work had a keen concern for English language pedagogy: Seeking 'remedial' measures for learner errors. Onditi (1994) on the other hand did a study on the acquisition of English WH-interrogatives by Dholuo L1 speakers by secondary school pupils. The data for this study was collected from rural parts of Kenya; where it was thought that only English and Dholuo would be in contact and the learners were exposed to English in school and classrooms. His study however observed minimal statistical evidence of transfer in the interlanguage of the Dholuo L1 speakers.

Our study differs from Njoroge (1987) and Onditi (1994) in as far as our concern is with the acquisition of deictic expressions.

This study looked at the ways L<sub>2</sub> learners acquire English deictic expressions: L<sub>1</sub> interference, the developmental order and influence of training.. An experimental group (Gĩkũyũ

L<sub>1</sub> speakers) and a control group (English L<sub>1</sub> speakers) were used to elicit the data as discussed in the methodology section.

## CHAPTER 3

### ACQUISITION OF NON SEGMENTED DEICTIC EXPRESSIONS

#### 3.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with the ways in which five non segmented deictic expressions are acquired by English L<sub>2</sub> learners whose first language is Gîkûyû. The acquisition is discussed under the following sub topics (a) influence of the learners' L<sub>1</sub>, on the order of acquisition, (b) the effect of training on the acquisition of the deictic expressions and, (c) the developmental order followed by English L<sub>2</sub> speakers. As explained in the literature review Klein (1990) postulates that the second language learner can understand the basic principles of deixis which are more or less the same in his native language. However, difficulties may arise where the two languages differ in the segmentation of the various DE. The non segmented DE shown in table 3A are discussed in this chapter.

Table 3A: Non Segmented Deictic Expressions

GIKUYU	GLOSS
<i>thîî</i>	go
<i>haha</i>	here
<i>ûka</i>	come
<i>rîu</i>	now
<i>rîo</i>	then



### 3.1 INFLUENCE OF L<sub>1</sub> IN THE ACQUISITION OF L<sub>2</sub> DE

This refers to the influence of the first language in the learning of a second language. Influence of the first language as discussed in the review of literature manifests itself in various ways. For example, influence can be positive when a first language pattern identical with a target language pattern is used, or it can be negative, when a first language pattern different from the target language pattern is used.

Using the group mean scores obtained from the tests, the deictic expressions are ranked according to decreasing group mean scores, from which their acquisition sequence is inferred. From table (3B) the expression *go* is interpreted as the easiest thus it is ranked first, while *here* is ranked second, *come* is the third expression to be acquired, *now* is ranked fourth while *then* is interpreted as the most difficult expression to be acquired in the two groups.

Table 3B contains the percentage group mean scores for the non segmented DE in the control and experimental groups. The percentage scores shown in the table are arrived at through calculation of mean scores from Appendix A (the mean scores in Appendix A were arrived at by the use of the group score method).

Table 3B: Spearman Rank Correlation for Non Segmented DE

	CONTROL x SCORES	EXPERIMENTAL x SCORES	RANK	RANK	DIFF	DIFF <sup>2</sup>
DE	S1	S2	S1	S2	d	d <sup>2</sup>
GO	90.4	62.2	1	1	0	0
HERE	90	55	2	2	0	0
COME	81.6	52.9	3	3	0	0
NOW	75.6	50.9	4	4	0	0
THEN	59.2	21.8	5	5	0	0
						$\Sigma d^2 = 0$

$$\rho = 1 - 6 (\Sigma d^2) / N(N^2 - 1)$$

$$= 1 - 6 (0) / 5(5^2 - 1)$$

$$\rho = \underline{+1}$$

The Spearman rank correlation as calculated from table 3B is +1. This means that the ranking of the scores on the variables of, L<sub>1</sub> and L<sub>2</sub>, are strongly related in a positive way. The implication of this analysis is that the first language of the learner has positive influence on the order of acquisition of of the non segmented DE. Thus since Gîkûyû L<sub>1</sub> speakers have set non segmentation parameter in the acquisition of the five DE in L<sub>1</sub> similar to the L<sub>2</sub> parameter, there

are no difficulties unique to the L<sub>2</sub> learners in the acquisition of the DE. English L<sub>2</sub> learners therefore follow the same order of acquisition as English L<sub>1</sub> speakers in the acquisition of the non segmented DE. This finding is in agreement with the prediction made by White (1985) that if the L<sub>1</sub> and L<sub>2</sub> have the same principle, set in the same way, there should be no difficulty in acquiring the L<sub>2</sub> parameter setting.

The above finding supports the first hypothesis in this study which states that the learner's L<sub>1</sub> influences the order of development of L<sub>2</sub> deictic expressions.

### **3.2 EFFECT OF TRAINING IN THE ACQUISITION OF DE**

Although researchers like Fathman (1975) indicated that a formal language learning environment is not the best environment for fluent language learning, it may modify the speakers' use of the second language through some of the low level rules they know. Thus when rules are learned correctly, conscious rule application may contribute to increasing accuracy in some situations. The study of the effects of instruction on SLA distinguishes three major aspects:

- (a) the effect of instruction on the route of development (sequence or specific order of acquisition)
- (b) the effect of instruction on the rate of development (the speed with which learning takes place)
- (c) the success of development (the proficiency level finally reached)



For the purposes of our study the issue to be addressed in this section is whether the training that the learner receives has any effect on the acquisition of non segmented DE in as far as the proficiency levels are concerned.

The following Table 3D shows the group mean scores in every class of the experimental and control groups.

Table 3D: Control And Experimental Group Mean Scores.

<b>CLASS</b>	<b>CONTROL GROUP MEAN SCORES</b>	<b>EXPERIMENTAL GROUP MEAN SCORES</b>	<b>RANK</b>
3	60.8	31	5
4	73.6	36.5	4
5	77.2	41	3
6	89.6	61.3	2
7	95.6	73	1

The scores in table 3D are arranged in an ascending order such that class three has the lowest group mean score in both the control and experimental groups. The highest group mean score is in class seven which is 95.6% and 73% for the control and experimental groups respectively

This information is graphically presented in Fig. 1

Fig. 1 Group Mean Scores For The Two Groups Of Learners

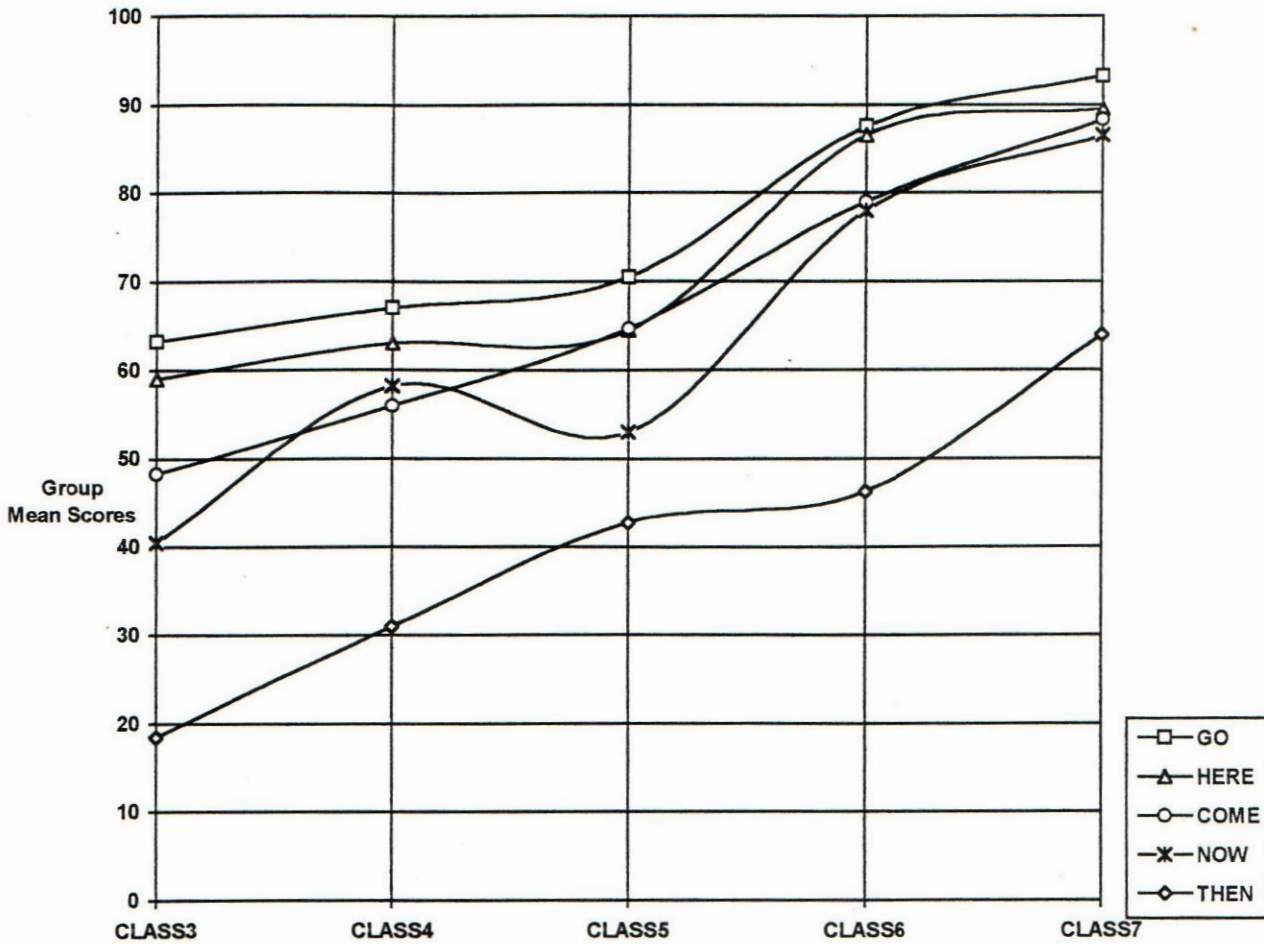


Fig. 1 shows that the group mean scores are lowest in class three and highest in class seven. Thus the scores increase from one lower level of education to a higher level of education. This implies that the learners in higher levels of training, performed better than learners in the lower levels of training in the tests given.

It is therefore observed from the graph that the accuracy scores of the learners improve from the lower classes to the higher classes. Thus it was found that students in the higher levels

of training performed better than those in the lower levels of training. This finding agrees with the findings by Lightbown's (1980), Krashen and Seliger (1976) and Krashen, Seliger and Hartrett (1974) as already discussed in the review of literature. In Lightbown's (1980) study on grammaticality judgement test it was found that the scores on the tests improved as a result of instruction. Krashen and Seliger (1976) and Krashen, Seliger and Hartrett (1974) matched students that had received the same amount of exposure but different periods of formal instruction, both groups of studies found that those students with more instruction scored higher on proficiency tests than those with less.

It can therefore be concluded that the training that the learner receives has positive effect on the acquisition of non segmented DE as inferred from the increases of group mean scores from low levels of training to higher levels of training. Thus the proficiency level improves with training. This finding is in support of the second hypothesis which states that the training the learners receive affects the acquisition of English deictic expressions, this is because the proficiency level of the learners improves with the increase on the amount of training received.

### **3.3 THE ORDER OF DEVELOPMENT OF DE**

Morpheme studies such as the one conducted by Dulay and Burt (1973) were carried out to investigate the order of acquisition of a range of grammatical functors in the speech of L<sub>2</sub> learners. The items under consideration in these studies were scored according to whether they were correctly used in each context, and an accuracy score of its total use by all the learners in



the study was calculated. It was then possible to rank all the items in order of the accuracy scores.

In table 3A the expressions have been ranked in decreasing group mean scores. The ranking of the expressions permits us to identify the expression that is acquired earlier than others, these expressions are discussed according to the order in which they are ranked.

### 3.1.1 Go

The deictic expression *go* glossed in Gikûyû as *thû* is a verb of motion and it implies movement away from the speaker. It has a one to one translation in Gikûyû and thus it is not segmented in either language.

From table 3B it has the highest group mean score of 90.4 and 62.2 for the control and experimental groups respectively it is therefore ranked first in both groups. This implies that it is the easiest expression for both groups in comparison to the other non segmented deictic expressions. It is therefore inferred that *go* is the first expression to be acquired in both groups.

### 3.1.2 Here

This is a spatial deictic expression that refers to proximal distance between the participants in discourse. It is glossed as *haha* in Gikûyû.

The expression *here* is ranked second in both groups which implies that it comes second in the acquisition continuum.

### 3.1.3 Come

This is a verb of motion and it is glossed as *ûka* in Gîkûyû. It signals movement towards the speaker.

It has a group mean score of 81.6% and 55% for the control and experimental groups respectively and it is ranked third in both groups. It is therefore the third expression to be acquired as inferred from the ranking of the scores for both English L<sub>1</sub> and L<sub>2</sub> learners.

### 3.1.4 Now

The expression *now*, which is a deictic expression indicates time present relative to the time of speaking. It is glossed as *rîu* in Gîkûyû.

From table 3B the learners had group mean score of 75.6% and 50.9% for the control and experimental groups respectively. It is ranked fourth in both groups from the tests given. The position of the expression on the acquisition continuum of non segmented DE can therefore be inferred as fourth in both groups of learners.

### 3.1.5 Then

This is a time deictic expression which refers to time past in relation to the time of speaking. It is glossed as *rîo* in Gîkûyû.

It has a group mean score of 59.2% and 21.8% in control and experimental groups. This expression is ranked fifth in the two groups. The implication of this is that *then*, is the last DE to

be acquired by the learners of the two groups after all the other non segmented DE have been acquired.

Gîkûyû L<sub>1</sub> speakers therefore follow a specific order of development in the acquisition of the five non segmented DE. This is in support of the third hypothesis which states Gîkûyû L<sub>1</sub> speakers follow a specific order of development in the acquisition of English DE.

### **3.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

In this chapter, the influences of the first language, the transitional competence reflected by levels of training and the developmental order followed by Gîkûyû L<sub>1</sub> speakers in the acquisition of the five non segmented DE have been dealt with within the parametric framework. The influence of the first language of the learners has not been seen to influence the order of acquisition of the DE but the training received by the learners was seen to have positive effect on the acquisition of English deictic expressions. Gîkûyû L<sub>1</sub> speakers have also been found to follow a specific developmental order in the acquisition of the non segmented DE.



## CHAPTER 4

### ACQUISITION OF SEGMENTED DEICTIC EXPRESSIONS

#### 4.0 INTRODUCTION

Chapter three dealt with the ways in which five non segmented DE are acquired. In this chapter, the acquisition of three segmented DE by Gikûyû L<sub>1</sub> speakers is discussed under the following sub topics; (a) influence of the L<sub>1</sub> on the order of acquisition of L<sub>2</sub> DE, (b) the effect of training on the acquisition of English deictic expressions and (c) the developmental order followed by Gikûyû L<sub>1</sub> speakers. The segmented DE are shown in table 4A below:

Table 4A: Segmented Deictic Expressions

GIKUYU	GLOSS
<i>hau, haarîa</i>	there
<i>ûrîa, úcio, îyo, kîu, rîu,</i> <i>kaú, kîîrîa, îîrîa</i>	that
<i>ûyû, gîîkî, îno, gaaka, rîrî</i>	this

Gikûyû speakers use *haarîa* and *hau* glossed as *there* in English to refer to space away from the speaker. DE *haarîa* is used when the addressee is not within the space of reference while *hau* is used when the addressee is within the space of reference. There is therefore a subtle difference in Gikûyû between distal space which is not apparent in the English DE, *there*.

The demonstratives *ûrîa*, *ûcio*, *îyo*, *ûrîa / kûrîa*, *kaarîa / kau* and *kûu* glossed as *that* in English are used to point at a referent away from the addresser. The choice of *ûrîa* or *ûcio* depends on the first morpheme of the referent noun and on the distance of the referent from the addressee. DE *ûrîa* is used when the addressee is not near the referent, while *ûcio* is used when the addressee is near the referent.

The Gîkûyû deictic expressions *ûyû*, *gûkî*, *îno*, *gaaka*, glossed in English as *this* are demonstratives used to point at referents near the speaker. The choice of *ûyû*, *gûkî*, *îno*, or *gaaka* in Gîkûyû is determined by the use of a particular noun phrase or subject in co-referentiality with the demonstrative. This is because noun phrases in Gîkûyû are strictly sub-categorised in relation to the concordial morphemes with which they can be in construction in a clause. Table 4B exemplifies this concord.

**Table 4B: Examples of How DE ‘this’ is Used in Gîkûyû.**

GIKUYU	GLOSS
<i>mûndû ûyû</i>	person <u>this</u>
<i>mûtumia ûyû</i>	woman <u>this</u>
<i>gîti gûkî</i>	chair <u>this</u>
<i>kîoro gûkî</i>	toilet <u>this</u>
<i>ng’ombe îno</i>	cow <u>this</u>
<i>mbûri îno</i>	goat <u>this</u>
<i>kabuku gaaka</i>	small book <u>this</u>
<i>karamu gaaka</i>	pen <u>this</u>

The section that follows deals with how the first language may be regarded as an influence on the acquisition order of deictic expressions in the experimental group.

#### 4.1 INFLUENCE OF L<sub>1</sub> IN THE ACQUISITION OF L<sub>2</sub> DE

The Tables in Appendix B give the percentage scores of the segmented DE in the control and experimental groups. From the percentage scores group mean scores for the expressions were calculated. It was then possible to rank the DE in order of decreasing group mean scores and therefore infer the order of acquisition of the segmented DE for the two groups.

Table 4C: Order of the Segmented DE

<b>EXPRESSIONS</b>	<b>S1</b>	<b>S2</b>
THERE	84	50.4
THAT	82.4	51.7
THIS	76	51.3

Key

S1 control group

S2 experimental group



The group mean scores for the non segmented DE, *there*, *that* and *this* in the experimental group are 50.4, 51.7, 51.3, while the scores for the control group are 84, 82.4, and 76 respectively. The group mean scores show the subjects' competence in the use of the DE *there*, *that* and *this*. Given that competence in language is a function of acquisition, it may be assumed that the group mean scores also reflect the order of acquisition of the DE. Basing our argument on this premise, the order of acquisition of the segmented DE by English L<sub>2</sub> speakers differs from the order in which the same expressions are acquired by English L<sub>1</sub> speakers. Thus from the ranking of the expressions according to the group mean scores (see Appendix B), Gikûyû L<sub>1</sub> speakers follow an acquisition order different from English L<sub>1</sub> speakers.

The data collected revealed that the expressions are acquired in different orders by the two groups of learners since English L<sub>1</sub> speakers' order starts with the place adverbial *there* which is followed by the demonstratives *that* and *this* while Gikûyû L<sub>1</sub> speakers' order starts with the demonstratives *that*, *this* and the place adverbial *there* is ranked last. This finding therefore suggests that the L<sub>1</sub> influences the order of acquisition of English DE. The first hypothesis that the first language of the learner influences the order of acquisition of L<sub>2</sub> DE, is supported by the finding.

White (1985) postulates that in some situations, the learner may be faced with a parameter in L<sub>2</sub> which conflicts with another parameter in L<sub>1</sub> and thus motivating incompatible parameter settings. Thus the question as to whether the learner is able to focus on the L<sub>2</sub> data alone becomes crucial. One can ask whether the L<sub>2</sub> learner, on exposure to L<sub>2</sub> data, establishes the appropriate parameter- setting for the L<sub>2</sub> without any effects from L<sub>1</sub> or whether, at least initially, he carries over the setting he has already established for his mother tongue. In other

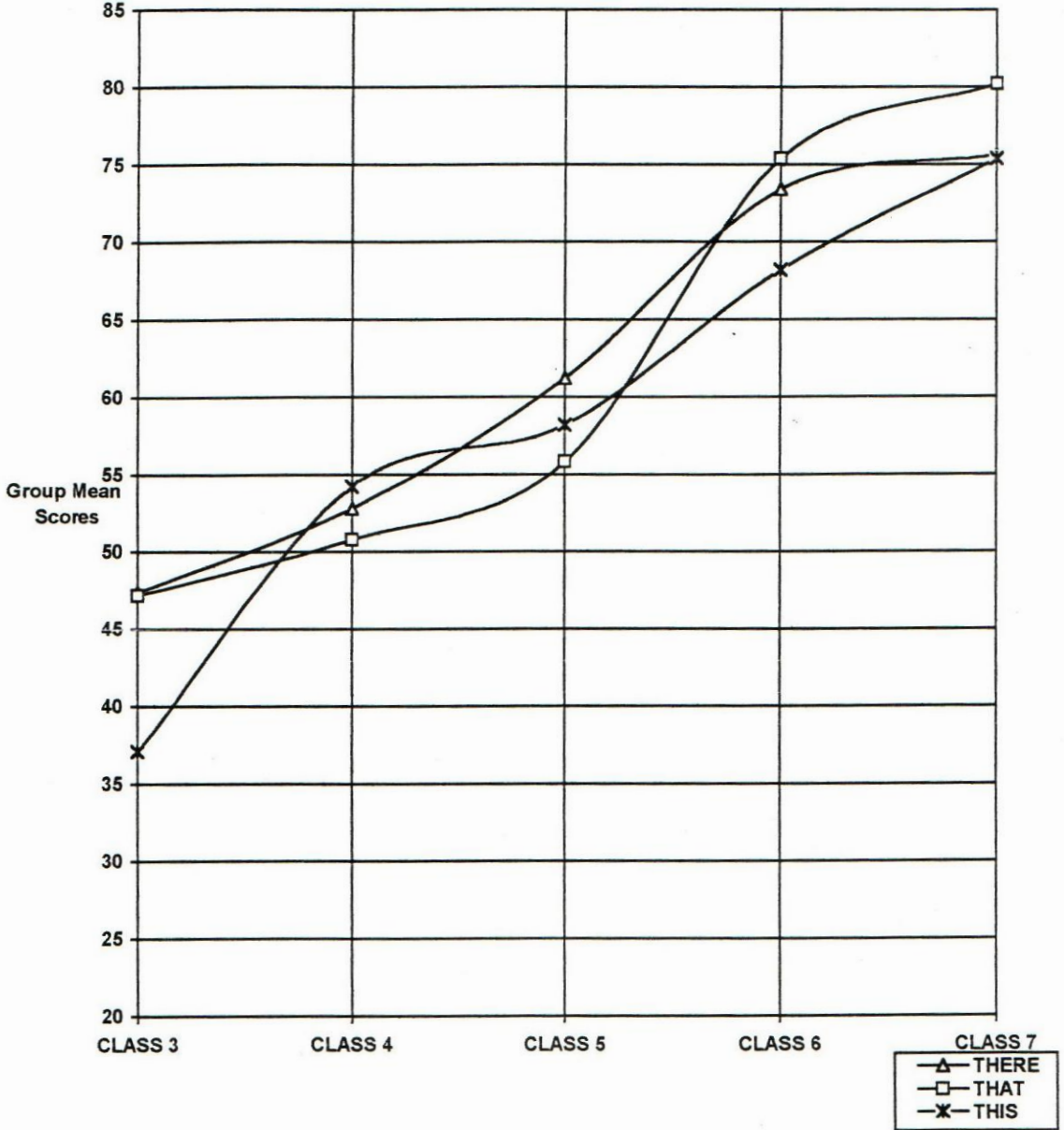
words, the fact that positive evidence in  $L_1$  has caused a parameter to be set in a particular way may obscure the fact that positive evidence in  $L_2$  motivates a different setting. In such situations, where it is necessary to change or drop parameters, the learner may have particular difficulties, reflected in the transfer of the  $L_1$  parameter setting, hence in the incidence of interference errors. White (*ibid.*) suggests that when the  $L_1$  of the speaker has some parameter active but  $L_2$  does not have, there will be difficulties until the learner realises that the  $L_1$  parameter is not operative at all in the  $L_2$ , by encountering evidence of the  $L_2$  parameter. The Gîkûyû  $L_1$  speakers have set segmentation parameter in the  $L_1$ , a parameter that is not found in the second language of the learner which indicates that the three DE are segmented in the  $L_1$ . White (*ibid.*) observes that the learners who have developed a parameter in the  $L_1$  which is not operative at all in the  $L_2$  need to drop this parameter which they had acquired in the  $L_1$  for successful learning of  $L_2$ . The parameter setting theory thus explains the reason as to why the English  $L_2$  learners studied were found to achieve lower scores and also follow a different order in the acquisition of the three segmented DE in comparison to English  $L_1$  learners. This can be explained by the fact that Gîkûyû speakers have already set the segmentation parameter in their  $L_1$  which they would need to drop for the successful learning of the  $L_2$ . In this way, the knowledge of the Gîkûyû DE seems to constrain the order of acquisition of English deictic expressions; and, as a result, the order of acquisition for the English  $L_2$  learners and  $L_1$  speakers is different.

## **4.2 EFFECT OF TRAINING IN THE ACQUISITION OF DE**

The issue to be addressed in this section is whether the levels of training reflect the learners' transitional or changing competence in the acquisition of segmented DE. Figure 2 displays the trend of group mean scores for the three segmented expressions in five classes that reflect the levels of training for combined data.



Fig. 2 Group Mean Scores For The Two Goups Of Learners



From figure 2 above, class three learners had the lowest scores, while class seven learners had the highest scores in comparison to the other four classes. The improvements of the scores in the use of the DE from the lower levels of training to the higher levels of training imply that the learners proficiency improves from lower levels of training to higher levels of training. This finding

agrees with two studies on the effects of formal instructions by Krashen and Seliger (1976), and Krashen, Seliger and Hartnett (1974) where it was found that those students who had more instruction scored higher on proficiency tests than those with less.

Since the accuracy scores show the subjects' competence in the use of the expressions, the improvement of the accuracy scores from one level of training to the other mirrors the changes in the learners' competence. It can therefore be concluded that the levels of training reflect the transitional or the changing competence of the learners. The second hypothesis which states that the training levels reflect the learners' transitional competence is supported by the above finding.

### **4.3 THE ORDER OF DEVELOPMENT OF THE DE**

Language acquisition is a gradual process that can take anywhere from several months to several years. During this time, the learner acquires the different structures that make up a language. Learners acquire some of these structures almost immediately while other structures are acquired later, and still others only after much natural exposure to the language. This section on developmental order in the acquisition of segmented DE seeks to determine the order in which English L<sub>2</sub> learners acquire DE that are segmented in their L<sub>1</sub>, Gîkûyû.

Table 4C shows group mean scores calculated from table three in Appendix B. The segmented DE are ranked in the order of accuracy scores calculated for both control and experimental groups(see Appendix B). From the data collected, it was observed that the ranking of the segmented deictic expressions in the two groups differed.

From the information contained in Table 4C it can be interpreted that English L<sub>2</sub> speakers follow a developmental order different from the one followed by English L<sub>1</sub> speakers. Thus though the expression *there* is the first expression to be acquired in the control group, it is the last to be acquired in the experimental group, since it has the lowest score in comparison to the other expressions. DE *that* which is ranked second in the control group, is the first expression to be acquired in the experimental group. The expression *this* has the lowest score in the control group while it is acquired second in the experimental group. The deictic expressions can, however, be sub-categorised into two groups where the place adverbial *there* is the first expression to be acquired in the control group and the demonstratives *this* and *that* are acquired second

In classes three, four and five of the experimental group there is variation in orders of development in the acquisition of the three DE followed by the learners. Thus the developmental order depicted in class three is *there, this, that* and in class four the order is *this, that, there* while in class five the following order is observed *there, that, this*. Thus the developmental orders depicted by scores calculated for the various classes of the experimental group are not the same since in the three classes, three, four, and five, there are different orders of development in the acquisition for the three expressions. However, classes six and seven have a similar order since the demonstratives *that* and *this* are the first expressions to be acquired while the place adverbial *there* is last expression to be acquired and thus the order of development is *that, this, and there*. Therefore in the experimental group the learners acquire the demonstratives *that* and *this* earlier than the place adverbial *there*. This finding suggests that English L<sub>2</sub> learners acquire the demonstratives first while the place adverbials are acquired second.



It would however appear from the data collected that in early interlanguage the order of development is unclear in that it is riddled with unsystematic variability, but systematic variability is observed in later interlanguage on the order of development of segmented DE. The variability observed here, however, is not peculiar to this study since Ellis (1985) reported that each stage of development consists of the re-arrangements of a previous variable system into a new variable system. This takes place in two ways. First, forms that were initially available only in one style move along the continuum so that they can be used in another style. Second, there is a constant reshuffling of form- function relationships in order to maximise the communicative effectiveness of the interlanguage system; non- systematic variability slowly becomes systematic. In this sense then, SLA involves a gradual reduction in the degree of variability as non- target language variants are eliminated in a steadily growing range of environments. This reduction represents a shift to the norms of the careful style. This finding, therefore, reveals that learners in classes six and seven though with varying degrees of formal exposure to English have similar developmental orders while the orders in classes three, four and five are different with respect to segmented DE.

In an earlier work Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982) had also reported that although L<sub>2</sub> development is characterised by the orderly acquisition of structures, variability is a factor in the L<sub>2</sub> acquisition process. Njoroge (1987) in a study on the acquisition of morpho-syntactic categories also established 'inter alia' variability in language use among learners: Learners using target forms at one time and non-target forms at another.

Thus the third hypothesis which states that Gikûyû L<sub>1</sub> speakers follow a specific developmental order in the acquisition of English DE is upheld in this study. This is because although there is unsystematic variability on the acquisition orders for the learners in classes

three, four and five which constitute early interlanguage, classes six and seven were found to follow a systematic developmental order where the place adverbial, '*there*', is acquired first while the demonstratives '*that*' and '*this*' are acquired second.

#### 4.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter the influence of the learners' L<sub>1</sub> on the order of acquisition, effect of training on the acquisition of English deictic expressions, and the order of development followed by Gîkûyû L<sub>1</sub> speakers in the acquisition of three segmented DE have been dealt with. The first language was seen to influence the acquisition of the three segmented DE in that Gîkûyû L<sub>1</sub> speakers followed an acquisition order different from that of English L<sub>1</sub> speakers. The training was found to have positive effect in the acquisition of English deictic expressions. English L<sub>2</sub> speakers were also found to follow a specific order of development in the acquisition of segmented deictic expressions.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.0 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter observations, implications and a summary of the research findings for this study are made on the basis of the research objectives and hypotheses. The major problems that were encountered during the research are also highlighted and solutions suggested. Finally, recommendations for further research are also made.

#### 5.1 ACQUISITION OF NON SEGMENTED DE

The research shows that English L<sub>2</sub> learners whose first language is Gikûyû followed the same order of development in the acquisition of the five non segmented English deictic expressions as English L<sub>1</sub> speakers. It was, therefore, concluded that the first language of the learner has positive influence on the acquisition order of the five non segmented deictic expressions.

The study on whether the training received by the learner has any effect in the acquisition of English deictic expressions revealed that the proficiency level of the learners improved from lower levels of training to higher levels of training. This led to the conclusion that the training received by the learner has positive effect in the acquisition of non segmented English deictic expressions.



It was also revealed that in the acquisition of non segmented deictic expressions, English L<sub>2</sub> speakers follow a specific order of development similar to the one followed by English L<sub>1</sub> speakers. This led to the conclusion that Gîkûyû L<sub>1</sub> speakers follow a natural order of acquisition inferred from the English L<sub>1</sub> speakers order of development in the acquisition of the non segmented DE. In this connection, the first non segmented DE to be acquired is the verb of motion *go* which signals movement away from the speaker, while the spatial DE *here* is the second expression to be acquired. The third expression that the learners acquire is the verb of motion signalling movement towards the speaker, *come* and DE *now* is the fourth expression to be acquired while the time deictic expression referring to past time in relation to the time of speaking, *then* is the last expression to be acquired. This order of acquisition is followed by both groups of learners, English L<sub>1</sub> and L<sub>2</sub> speakers.

Hence the three hypotheses formulated in this study are upheld; the first language of the learner influences the order of acquisition of English deictic expressions, the training that the learner receives has effect on the acquisition of deictic expressions and, that Gîkûyû L<sub>1</sub> speakers follow a particular order of development in the acquisition of the expressions. This is in relation to the acquisition of non segmented deictic expressions.

## 5.2 ACQUISITION OF SEGMENTED DE

This study revealed that the learners' L<sub>1</sub> influences the acquisition order of English deictic expressions. This is in support of the theory of parameter setting whereby when the learner has set a segmentation parameter in the acquisition of the DE in the L<sub>1</sub> then the learner

will have difficulties until he positively realises and sets the parameter applicable in the L<sub>2</sub>. Owing to this, the Gikũyũ L<sub>1</sub> speakers adopt a different order in the acquisition of the DE. This finding supports the first hypothesis which states that the L<sub>1</sub> of the learner influences acquisition order of English deictic expressions. This is because the L<sub>1</sub> was found to influence the acquisition order of the segmented DE.

It was also found out that the levels of training reflected the transitional or changing competence of the learners in the acquisition of the segmented deictic expressions in that the learners who are at higher levels of training performed better in the tests administered than those at lower levels of training.

Gikũyũ L<sub>1</sub> speakers were also found to follow a particular order of development in the acquisition of the segmented DE in this connection the demonstratives *that* and *this* are the first expressions to be acquired while the place adverbial *there* is acquired last. This is in support of the third hypothesis which states that Gikũyũ L<sub>1</sub> speakers follow a specific order of development in the acquisition of English DE.

Thus the three hypothesis formulated in this study ; influence of the first language on the acquisition order, the effect of training and, the order of development are upheld in relation to the acquisition of the segmented deictic expressions.

### **5.3 PROBLEMS IN THE RESEARCH**

One of the major problems encountered in this study was the lack of research work on crosslinguistic influence in the acquisition of English deictic expressions from the local scene. As

a result most of the literature reviewed in this study is mainly derived from English. More research in the African languages, it is hoped would alleviate this problem and lead to the production of more studies in the crosslinguistic influence in the acquisition of English as a second language.

Another problem that was encountered was in relation to the data collection where the researcher found it difficult to administer the tests randomly to selected pupils without making them nervous. This was partially solved by seeking the help of the heads of the schools visited to explain the aims of administering the test to randomly selected learners and not to all of them.

In summary the best way to solve these problems is to have more research into crosslinguistic influences with focus on the English deictic expressions.

#### **5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

From the observations made the researcher makes the following recommendations for further research:

First, it may be lucrative to examine the use of deictic expressions using a greater corpus of data than what has been used in the present study. Such a study may focus on more deictic expressions as the present study concentrated on only eight expressions.

Secondly morpheme orders as reported by Dulay Burt and Krashen (1982) mainly measure the accuracy rather than acquisition; in order to obtain a more reliable picture of the effects of L<sub>1</sub>, the reflection of the transitional competence by the learners' levels of training and



the order of development followed by the learners in  $L_2$  acquisition, it is necessary to use longitudinal studies instead of cross sectional research as the one employed in this study.

Thirdly, the study of crosslinguistic influence in the acquisition of English deictic expressions may be extended to other languages as the present study only concentrated on the influence of one language which is Gikûyû. Such studies would help to answer the question that still remains unanswered in this study; whether there is a sequence in which second language learners acquire deictic expressions irrespective of their first language and whether the order is different from the one followed by first language speakers of English.

Fourthly, since our data was heavily monitored, i.e. use of written response, we would recommend that more data be collected that reflect the communicative uses of English deictic expressions.

We would also recommend that more studies be carried out on parametric variations and especially on the acquisition of segmented and non segmented structures. Such studies would also compare structures that are segmented in both the  $L_1$  and the  $L_2$  since the present study only concentrated on the structures that are non segmented and segmented in the  $L_1$  but are non segmented in the  $L_2$ .

The results of the present study add to the growing body of research findings that should serve as resources for language pedagogy which now recognises the need for knowledge on the orders in which morphemes are acquired by English  $L_2$  learners, the influences of the first language and training. In current practice, major aspects of language teaching often involve the ordering of structures, sequencing lessons, organising language text books, developing reading

material, and selecting items for language tests. The teachers' reaction to students' errors are also influenced by what they think a student should know at a certain point in the learning process. If teachers knew the order in which students naturally tend to learn language structures, they could work with the process rather than against it. This study may therefore assist trainers in the area of English as a second language to identify the order in which they may introduce English deictic expressions to L<sub>2</sub> learners for effective learning.

In general, more research into the study of second language acquisition may lead us to important insights into aspects such as the influences that may hinder successful second language acquisition and ways in which a language teacher may overcome them. In this connection Felix in Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982) conclude that in a classroom where instruction is very formal, learners are constantly being forced to produce structures that they are not ready for.

Thus if the language teachers had knowledge of the orders in which the expressions are acquired then they would be able to introduce the expressions in an order compatible with the natural acquisition order for better teaching.

It is also necessary for trainers to become familiar with the general learning order observed for structures researched and presented here certain structures tend to be learned before others. The teachers should not therefore expect students to learn "late structures" early.

However, one may not need to teach to the learning order presented here, but familiarity with it will help explain student learning patterns and give the trainer you an accurate sense of what to expect from them in so far as the learning of English deictic expressions is concerned.



## 5.5 CONCLUSION

This research has dealt (a) with the influence of the  $L_1$  on the order of acquisition of  $L_2$  DE, (b) the effect of training on the acquisition of English deictic expressions and (c) the order of development of English deictic expressions by Gikûyû  $L_1$  speakers. The research has revealed that the first language of a learner influences the acquisition order of both the non segmented and the segmented deictic expressions. The theoretical explanation for this case is that when the  $L_1$  of the speaker has some parameter active but  $L_2$  does not have, there will be difficulties until the learner realises that the  $L_1$  parameter is not operative at all in the  $L_2$ , by encountering evidence of the  $L_2$  parameter. The Gikûyû  $L_1$  speakers have set segmentation parameter in the  $L_1$ , a parameter that is not found in the second language of the learner which indicates that the three DE *there*, *this*, and *that* are segmented in the  $L_1$ . White (1985) observes that the learners who have developed a parameter in the  $L_1$  which is not operative at all in the  $L_2$  need to drop this parameter which they had acquired in the  $L_1$  for successful learning of  $L_2$ . The parameter setting theory thus explains the reason as to why the English  $L_2$  learners studied were found to achieve not only lower scores but also follow a different order in the acquisition of the three segmented DE in comparison to English  $L_1$  learners. This can be explained by the fact that Gikûyû speakers have already set the segmentation parameter in their  $L_1$  which they would need to drop for the successful learning of the  $L_2$ . In this way, the knowledge of the Gikûyû DE seems to constrain the order of acquisition of English deictic expressions; and, as a result, the order of acquisition for the English  $L_2$  learners and  $L_1$  speakers is different.

In the acquisition of the non segmented deictic expressions Gikûyû  $L_1$  speakers have set non segmentation parameter in the acquisition of the five DE in  $L_1$  similar to the  $L_2$  parameter,



there are therefore no difficulties unique to the L<sub>2</sub> learners in the acquisition of the DE. English L<sub>2</sub> learners as a result follow the same order of acquisition as English L<sub>1</sub> speakers in the acquisition of the non segmented DE. The first language of the learner can, therefore, be said to positively influence or facilitate the acquisition of English DE

The training received by the learner was also seen to have effect on the acquisition of both non segmented and segmented deictic expressions since the learners who had more exposure to formal instruction performed better in the proficiency tests given.

It was also found out that Gĩkũyũ L<sub>1</sub> speakers followed a particular order of development in the acquisition of both segmented and non segmented deictic expressions.

The three hypotheses formulated: the L<sub>1</sub> influences the order of acquisition of the L<sub>2</sub> deictic expressions, the training received by the learner has effect on the acquisition of English deictic expressions and, that Gĩkũyũ L<sub>1</sub> speakers follow a specific order of development in the acquisition of English deictic expressions, are upheld in the present study in relation to the acquisition of both segmented and non segmented deictic expressions.

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## APPENDIX A

**Table 1: Control Group Mean scores For Non Segmented DE**

CLASSES								
	CLASS 3	CLASS 4	CLASS 5	CLASS 6	CLASS 7	$\Sigma x$	x (%)	RANK
GO	88	80	84	100	100	452	90.4	1
HERE	82	82	88	100	98	450	90	2
COME	62	76	80	90	100	408	81.6	3
NOW	54	80	64	88	92	378	75.6	4
THEN	18	50	70	70	88	296	59.2	5

**Table 2: Experimental Group Mean Scores For Non Segmented DE**

CLASSES								
DEICTIC EXPRESSIONS	CLASS 3	CLASS 4	CLASS 5	CLASS 6	CLASS 7	$\Sigma x$	x (%)	RANK
GO	38.5	54	57	75	86.5	311	62.2	1
HERE	36	44	41	73	81	275	55	2
COME	34.5	36	49.5	68	76.5	264.5	52.9	3
NOW	27	36.5	42	68	81	254.5	50.9	4
THEN	19	12	15.5	22.5	40	109	21.8	5



## APPENDIX B

**Table 4: Control Group Mean Scores For Segmented DE.**

CLASSES						$\Sigma x$	x	RANK
	3	4	5	6	7			
THERE	66	78	84	96	96	420	84	1
THAT	72	74	78	92	96	412	82.4	2
THIS	48	76	84	80	92	380	76	3

**Table 5: Experimental Group Mean Scores For Segmented DE**

CLASSES						$\Sigma x$	x	RANK
	3	4	5	6	7			
THERE	28.8	27.6	39.2	50.8	55.2	1008	50.4	3
THAT	22.4	27.6	33.6	58.8	64.4	1034	51.7	1
THIS	26.2	32.4	32.4	56.4	58.8	1026	51.3	2

## APPENDIX C

Fill the following blank spaces with the correct form of word from the choices given after every sentence.

1. Please open this door, it is very hot in \_\_\_\_\_

- (a) here
- (b) hear
- (c) their
- (d) heir

2. Mary went to Mombasa. She went \_\_\_\_\_ yesterday.

- (a) their
- (b) they
- (c) there
- (d) here

3. Let us clap all together \_\_\_\_\_!

- (a) there
- (b) now
- (c) then
- (d) naw

4. Last week, our maths teacher was away, we had less home work \_\_\_\_\_

- (a) now
- (b) yesterday
- (c) then
- (d) tomorrow

5. Holding her cardigan Mary tells Jane, " \_\_\_\_\_ is the cardigan Mother bought me yesterday".

- (a) those
- (b) that
- (c) these

(d) this

6. Pointing at a tree that is very far Kamau tells his friend John, " \_\_\_\_\_ is the tree that My father wants to cut down".

(a) those

(b) that

(c) these

(d) this

7. Pulling Jane her friend to the bench where she is seated Mary tells her, "please \_\_\_\_\_ and sit on this bench".

(a) go

(b) come

(c) came

(d) gone

8. Daniel and Mary are walking together along the road and suddenly Mary sees a ball that is five metres from where they are standing and she tells Daniel "please \_\_\_\_\_ and pick that ball, I think it belongs to my brother".

(a) go

(b) come

(c) came

(d) gone



## APPENDIX D

Please read the following conversation between Kamau, Wanjiru and their Mother and fill each blank space with one word from the following choices. This, these, go, gu, that, come, those, now, came, naw, them, then, hear, here, than, their, they, gone and there.

**Mother:** (Standing in the Kitchen) Wanjiru, come \_\_\_\_\_ and help me peel these potatoes. (Pointing at two chairs in another room) Sit on the chair over \_\_\_\_\_ and give me \_\_\_\_\_ other one. And please \_\_\_\_\_ to the bedroom and remove your school uniform before you make it dirty.

**Wanjiru:** Oh, I don't want to work today, while my brother Kamau is playing. Look, he is right there \_\_\_\_\_ climbing the tree. Mother please let me \_\_\_\_\_ there also and play.

**Mother:** well, I had to send him to \_\_\_\_\_ tree to pick some mangoes since we have visitors tonight. (Holding a bleeding finger near her face) Oh my God ! I have hurt my finger. \_\_\_\_\_ with some salt and sprinkle some on \_\_\_\_\_ finger.

**Wanjiru:** (As She sprinkles the salt) Kamau is lucky, he is always out \_\_\_\_\_ doing something interesting while I am always \_\_\_\_\_ in the house working. Our Teacher told us yesterday that boys and girls are equal, I thought She meant it \_\_\_\_\_.

**Mother:** (Angry) No daughter of mine is going to talk like that in \_\_\_\_\_ house ! \_\_\_\_\_ do as I had told you before I decide to use this cane on you.

**Wanjiru:** I am sorry Mother, where are the potatoes ? Let me peel them now and then later we will play hide and seek with Wanja.

**Mother:** Good girl I can see that you are \_\_\_\_\_ becoming a real woman. A few minutes ago, you were about to refuse. I thought you would never make a good mother \_\_\_\_\_. (Pointing at a far corner) Please go to \_\_\_\_\_ corner and bring that bucket here.

**Wanjiru:** Thank you mother, but does it mean that girls like me have to be always in \_\_\_\_\_ and boys out \_\_\_\_\_ so as to make good mothers and fathers ?

**Mother:** (Passing a knife to Wanjiru) Here, take \_\_\_\_\_ knife and start peeling the potatoes before I can answer your question. You see my daughter, that is how it has always been. Many years ago, our rulers divided the roles, some for women and some for men. Long time ago the Gikûyû King, Waiyaki told the woman, "the kitchen is for you, the garden and the child", I don't know whether he was right to say that \_\_\_\_\_, but you can ask your teacher tomorrow. (She notices Kamau standing at the door and tells him) \_\_\_\_\_ and help your sister peel the potatoes. She has been complaining.

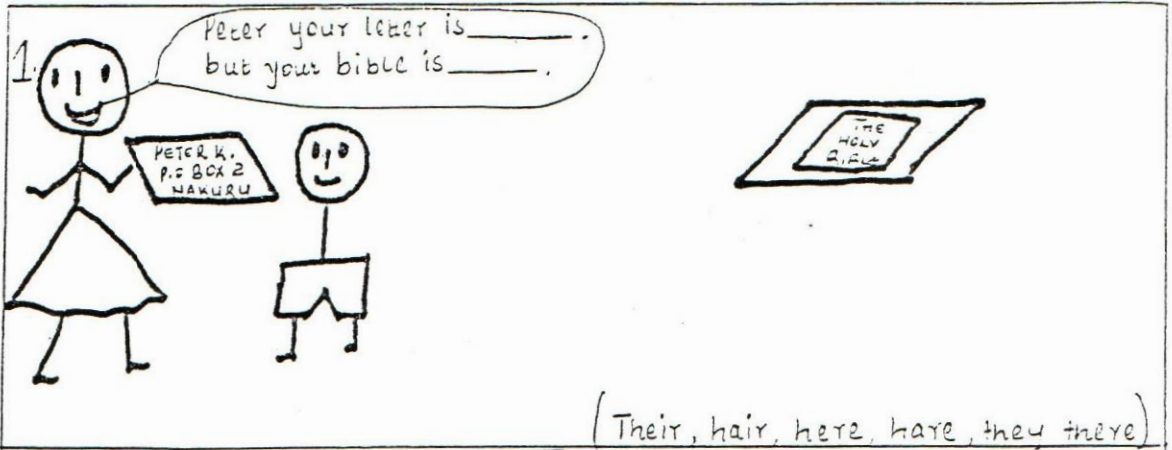
**Kamau:** (Pointing at a man who is walking towards the house at a distance) My uncle has come let me \_\_\_\_\_ and help him carry the bag.

**Mother:** It is good your uncle has \_\_\_\_\_ I really wanted to see him today.

## APPENDIX E

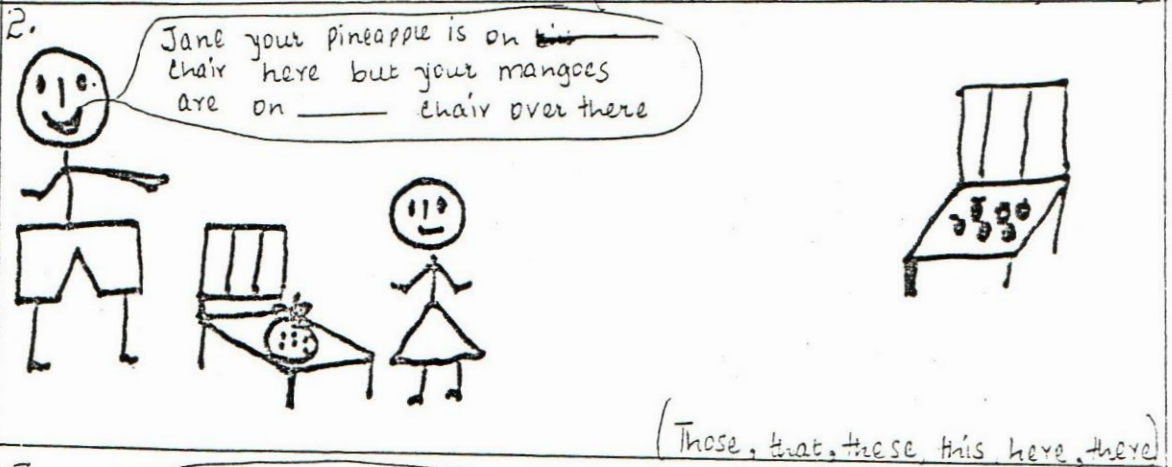
Study the following pictures and fill each blank space with the most appropriate word from the choices given.

1. Peter your letter is \_\_\_\_\_ but your bible is \_\_\_\_\_.




(Their, hair, here, here, they there)

2. Jane your pineapple is on \_\_\_\_\_ chair here but your mangoes are on \_\_\_\_\_ chair over there



(Those, that, these, this, here, there)

3. Mary where are you going at this time? I am going to school \_\_\_\_\_.



(Now, then, tomorrow, then yesterday)



4.



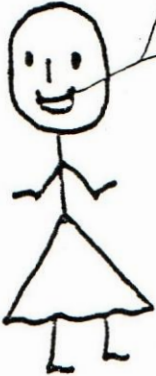
Yesterday I saw you early in the morning were you going to school \_\_\_\_\_



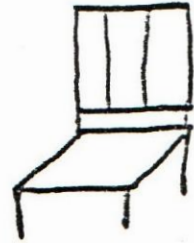
Yes, I was going to school that time

now, then, tomorrow, here, now.

5.



Tom please \_\_\_\_\_ and sit on that chair.



Here, there, come, go, come, gone

6.



Jane please \_\_\_\_\_ and take this book.

there, here, come, go, come, gone