FACTORS THAT AFFECT BILITERACY DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF SWAHILI IN BILINGUAL (SWAHILI-ENGLISH) SPEAKING CHILDREN

BY

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DISSERTATION

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Abstract

This qualitative study investigates the bilingual and biliteracy (Swahili-English) development of two elementary and three middle school Kenyan children across home and school contexts in the United States. Guided by sociocognitive and sociocultural theories of language and literacy, the study explores the factors at home and school that supported the Swahili speaking children’s bilingual and biliteracy development and how well the children comprehended and wrote narrative and expository texts in English and Swahili. The primary participants included the five children, all of whom received some instruction in all English classrooms, with two of them also receiving limited Swahili instruction, and three of them receiving part-time English-as-second-language (ESL) instruction. The data collected in the homes included observational field notes on language use, Swahili journals that students wrote in weekly, performance-based reading tasks in English and Swahili, and interview data from the parents and children on language use, and the children’s literacy histories, literacy identities, language preferences and attitudes. The data collected at school included observational field notes on the language and literacy instruction that the children received, English writing samples, school assessment data, and interviews with the teachers and multilingual, multicultural district coordinator. Data were analyzed using the constant comparative method (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

The findings indicated that the extent of Swahili used in the children’s homes differed considerably even though all of the families strongly maintained other aspects of their Kenyan cultural identities. Although the parents said that they wanted their children to become bilingual and biliterate in English and Swahili, they primarily supported
English literacy because their children’s homework was in English, and English was the school language. Only one parent consistently supported her child’s Swahili literacy development. Data from the classroom observations showed that the literacy instruction in ESL and mainstream classrooms effectively supported the children’s English literacy development. When three of the Kenyan parents volunteered to teach three days a week 45-minutes Swahili class, then the two younger students participated, but the school instruction they received was not sufficient to help them read and write grade level Swahili.

The data on student performance illustrated differences in the children’s strengths and weaknesses in both English and Swahili literacy. Prior to entering school in the United States, all of the children had received some literacy instruction in Swahili and English in Kenyan schools. Although the two elementary students’ age of arrival to the United States fell within the category of 5-7 year olds, immigrant children often take longer to attain academic English than children who arrive between ages 8-11; one of the children performed well and exited ESL within three years. Also, one of the older students, all of whom arrived in the United States when they were 8-12 years old, demonstrated much higher literacy performance in English than the other students. The students’ varied performance in English indicated that other factors besides age of arrival in relation to English academic achievement are important to consider. The findings revealed that English was the stronger language for four of the five children, and that the child who was the strongest English reader and writer also was becoming a balanced biliterate in English and Swahili.
Four of the five children were either losing or not increasing their oral and literate Swahili proficiency because the home and school contexts contributed to subtractive bilingualism and biliteracy. A major implication of the study is that immigrant parents need to be aware of the adverse effects of only emphasizing English literacy on their children’s bilingual and biliterate development and identities. The language loss findings illustrate the strong hegemonic influence of English in both the United States and in Kenya.
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Chapter 1
Introduction

Research Rationale

Many children all over the world are becoming bilingual and bi-literate due to education language policies implemented in their respective countries. In the US, for example, there are 14 million students who are non-native speakers of English in grades K-12 (August, 2008; US Census Bureau, October 2006). One quarter of these students are foreign born while three quarters are US born. Many of these students are becoming bilingual, that is, they are learning to speak more than one language. They are speaking their home language and English, because English is the language of the school.

Contemporary research on upper-elementary and middle school bilingual children’s literacy development has mostly investigated second language (L2) reading, with a focus on cognitive factors that affect academic development. Major findings from this research indicate that successful bilingual readers use many of the same metacognitive and cognitive strategies as successful monolingual native English speakers to read English except that the bilingual readers tend to know less of the English vocabulary and topics emphasized in English reading texts and assessment (García, 1991; García, 2000; Hardin, 2001; Jiménez, García & Pearson, 1995; 1996). Jiménez, et al (1996) also found advantages that a proficient bilingual reader had when she used Spanish and English cognates as a strategy when monitoring comprehension of text in either language, an advantage that the monolingual reader was lacking. Cognates are
words found in two languages with same the ancestral roots, and such words are similar in form and meaning (García, 2003).

In addition, researchers interested in bilingual children’s reading have mainly studied Spanish-English children. One reason for this focus is that there are large numbers of Spanish speaking children in US schools (August, 2008). However, to further understand bilingual children’s reading, studies on students of different language backgrounds also are needed. Swahili-English speaking children, for example, are among the 3% of children labeled “Other” on data reflecting the origins and percentages of immigrant children in US schools (Fix and Passel, 2003). Moreover, Swahili and English are two linguistically unrelated languages, while Spanish and English are closely related languages. English is a Germanic language from the Indo-European group of languages while Swahili is a Bantu language in the Niger-Congo group of languages (Heine & Nurse, 2000). It is highly likely that the reading performance of bilingual students speaking unrelated languages will differ from that of bilingual students speaking related languages, especially in terms of bilingual issues, such as cross-linguistic transfer. Cross linguistic transfer occurs when bilingual children use reading skills and knowledge gained in one language to read in another.

Researchers have also observed that when immigrant children are immersed in the majority language, English, it is not uncommon for them to experience language shift from the home or primary language (L1) to the L2. They gradually lose their L1 and literacy abilities, particularly if they moved to a new country when their L1 was not yet fully developed. As a result of language shift and/or loss, often the children and extended family members may become disconnected socially and culturally (Wong-Fillmore,
1991). Family members who do not speak English, the children’s newly acquired language, can no longer communicate with the children.

Research is lacking on the factors that affect children’s L1 literacy development while learning their L2. Available research on younger children (e.g., Wong-Fillmore, 1991) suggests that school programs for preschool non-native English speakers together with parental attitudes toward English contribute to children’s loss of their L1. Therefore, researchers (e.g., Collier, 1995; Goldenberg, Rueda & August, 2006; Hornberger, 1992) have raised the need for additional research that will explore children’s biliteracy development in relation to various socio cultural influences that contribute to the underdevelopment of L1. In their recent analysis of studies related to socio cultural influences on the literacy attainment of language-minority students and youth, Goldenberg, Rueda & August (2006; 2008) note that most of the socio cultural studies reviewed do not include school achievement data. Therefore, the combination of home data and achievement data is a contribution that this study is making to the field. However, it is important to note that there is also a lot of individual variation among L2 learners. L2 learners vary in terms of age, attitudes, and home literacy experiences and expectations for literacy (Gregory, 1996; Schwarzer, 2001). For example, while some immigrant families are planning to live in the US indefinitely, others are planning to return to their home countries (Weisberg & Ortiz, 2000).

A number of researchers have studied bilingual children’s reading (e.g., García, 1998, 2000; Droop & Verhoeven, 1998) or writing (e.g., Moll, Sáez & Dworin, 2001; McCarthey, Garcia, Lopez-Velásquez, Lin & Guo, 2004; McCarthey & García, 2005) in school contexts. However, fewer researchers have investigated both writing and reading
in bilingual children. More research is needed to examine the bi-literate experiences of different language groups, such as Swahili and English speakers. Researchers interested in the biliteracy development and maintenance of L1 of language minority students also need to investigate students who do not receive L1 instruction in the school context but who had literacy in L1 before immigrating to the US. To further our understanding of biliteracy development in children acquiring bilingualism successively, that is, learning L2 after they have acquired the basic linguistic foundations in L1, more researchers need to explore bilingual children’s literacy development in their L1 and L2 (García, 2000). For example, “researchers need to study how bilingual children’s knowledge and use of L1 interact with their knowledge and use of L2 at school and in other environments; and to what extent children’s bilingualism and biliteracy abilities play a role in their academic development” (García, 2000, p. 830).

**Purpose of Study**

Moll, Saez and Dworin (2001) describe the intellectual advantages of being bi-literate, which range from “gaining access to valued cultural resources, to developing metalinguistic awareness, to deliberately exploiting literacy as a tool for thinking” (p.436). This study investigated Swahili-English bilingualism and biliteracy in children as part of the broader social contexts, including home and school. It investigated the influences in the home and school contexts in relation to facilitating or delaying the development of bilingualism and biliteracy in the children studied.
The study was guided by the following questions:

1. What are the factors at home and school that support Swahili speaking children’s bilingual and biliteracy development or contribute to their Swahili literacy attrition or loss?

2. How well do Swahili speaking students comprehend and write narrative and expository texts in English and Swahili?

Theoretical Perspectives

To investigate students’ bilingualism and biliteracy development I employed theoretical perspectives that combine cognitive and sociocultural aspects of literacy. The cognitive perspective guided the analysis of student successes and challenges in reading and comprehending texts, as well as writing, in English and Swahili. The sociocultural perspectives were important for understanding sociocultural contexts and influences that helped shape student’s bilingualism and biliteracy development. Such contexts included the school (e.g., teachers, instruction, materials), home (e.g., language use and language preferences, literacy practices, and children’s attitude toward the languages), and the larger community.

The cognitive perspective of this study is informed by theories of literacy development that acknowledge the importance of native language in the development of literacy in the L2 (Collier, 1995; Cummins, 1979; 1981). Cummins’ (1979) interdependence and threshold hypotheses suggest that there is an underlying cognitive or academic proficiency which is common across languages that makes it possible for the transfer of cognitive/academic or literacy related skills across languages. As a result, knowledge and skills acquired in L1 can be used to accomplish tasks in L2. Therefore, Cummins (1979) interdependence hypothesis suggests a reciprocal relationship between
L1 development and L2 development, that is, the languages of a bilingual are interdependent. If the L1 is well developed, it would be easier to develop the L2. By drawing from this theory we can understand how children in this study engaged in English and Swahili reading and writing.

The sociocultural perspectives on literacy are informed by theories that acknowledge the importance of socio cultural contexts and influences that affect literacy learning. Sociocultural theory underscores the importance and influence of the context and interaction on language development. Vygotsky’s socio cultural theory on human development suggests that human development cannot be viewed outside of its social context, and that it occurs as a result of meaningful interaction and relationships between novices (e.g. child) and experts (e.g. adult) (Vygotsky, 1978). Through culturally constructed tools, most importantly language, and active participation in daily activities, elementary processes, such as oral language, reading and writing, can be transformed into higher order thinking. Vygotsky (1978) described this process in his concept of zone of proximal development, which refers to what the learner or child can accomplish with the assistance of an expert or adult. In the process of learning, the child internalizes what she is learning with the assistance of an adult and makes that knowledge her own. In other words, what a child can accomplish with assistance today, she can do by herself later (Cole, John-Steiner, Scribner & Souberman, 1978). Therefore, according to this view, literacy learning is socially based, interactive and influenced by context.

Regarding bilingualism and biliteracy development of linguistically diverse students, Hornberger (2005) maintains that “biliteracy addresses the conjunction between bilingualism and literacy” (p.319). In her work, Hornberger (1989) proposed a
framework of *continua of biliteracy* that details the existence of multiple and complex relationships between bilingualism and literacy and the importance of the contexts, media and content through which biliteracy develops.

Hornberger (2005) maintains that the continua of biliteracy model hypothesizes that contexts influence biliteracy development and use at every level from two-person interaction (micro) to societal and global relations of power (macro) and that they comprise a mix of oral to literate, monolingual to multilingual varieties of language and literacy (p. 329). In addition, the development of biliteracy occurs along intersecting L1 to L2, oral to written, receptive (listening and reading) to productive (speaking and writing) language and literacy skills, and literacy practices. Literacy practices include uses of and attitudes toward language and literacy. She maintains that biliteracy learning may proceed in any direction along those intersecting continua (p. 331).

According to the continua of biliteracy, the content that bi-literate learners and users read and write is as important as how (development), where (context) or when and by what means (media) they do so. Hornberger argues that whereas schooling traditionally privileges majority, literary, and decontextualized content, the continua model argues for greater curricular attention to minority, vernacular, and contextualized whole language texts. Minority texts include those by minority authors, written from minority perspectives; vernacular ways of reading and writing include notes, poems, plays, and stories written at home or in other everyday non school contexts; contextualized whole language texts are those read and written in the context of biliteracy events, interactions, practices, and activities of bi-literate learners’ everyday lives (p.334).
The media in the continua of biliteracy model refers to language varieties and scripts through which multilingual literacies are expressed, and the sequences or configurations in which they are acquired and used. The model defines these in terms of the linguistic structures of the languages involved (on a continuum of similar-dissimilar), their orthographic scripts (from convergent to divergent), and the sequence of exposure to or acquisition of the language/literacies (ranging from simultaneous to successive) (p.337). Hornberger (1992) argues that “the implications of the model of biliteracy outlined by the continua framework are that the more the contexts of their learning allows bi-literate learners to draw on all points of all nine continua, the greater are the chances for their full bi-literate development” (p. 199).

The continua of biliteracy framework is a relevant research tool for this study, which sought to investigate how Swahili-English speaking children’s bilingualism and biliteracy development are influenced and affected by the home and school contexts.

**Definition of Terms**

_Bilingualism_ is defined as possessing basic or minimal communicative skills in a second or foreign language (Hakuta, 1990; Hornberger, 1989). At the individual level, a distinction is made between simultaneous and sequential-successive bilingualism. _Simultaneous bilingualism_ begins from the onset of language acquisition; in other words, a child is exposed to two languages and acquires speaking skills in the languages at the same time. _Sequential or successive bilingualism_, on the other hand, begins after the basic components of first language knowledge have been established (McLaughlin, 1984), that is, some knowledge of L1 is acquired before L2 is introduced. In this study,
the children are referred to as bilingual because they spoke Swahili and English at varying levels of proficiency. All children experienced successive bilingualism.

In this study, the term *biliteracy* is used to describe children’s literate competences in the two languages, developed to varying degrees (Dworin, 2003; García, 2000). Similar to the concept of bilingualism, simultaneous biliteracy development means learning to read and write in both languages at the same time while successive biliteracy means acquiring the ability to read and write in the L2 after acquiring literacy in the L1. The terms *receptive* and *productive* have been used in the study regarding students’ language development and proficiency. Receptive proficiency refers to listening and reading competence while productive proficiency refers to speaking and writing competence (Hornberger, 1989).

Given that the children in this study are sequential bilinguals, the term *home language* is used to refer to the language that the child spoke before learning English. It is sometimes referred to as the *first* or *primary language* (L1) versus the *foreign* or the *second language* (L2). In East Africa, due to inter-ethnic marriages, some children are exposed to more than one home language, that is, the language of each of the parents. In this situation, the language used between parents, and between parents and their children, is the language of wider communication. In this study four children spoke Swahili as their home language before learning English, while the fifth child spoke both Swahili and an ethnic language but was literate only in Swahili.

The term *language loss* refers to lack of first language development, delayed first language, or progressive loss of previously acquired language ability (Verhoeven & Boeschoten (1986). In some occasions, the term *language attrition* is also used for the
same situation. In this study the terms language loss and language attrition are used to refer to progressive loss of the home language. Sometimes the term *subtractive bilingualism* is used when individuals lose their first language as they acquire the second language. *Additive bilingualism*, on the other hand, occurs when students continue to develop their first language as they acquire the second language (Lambert, 1975). Therefore, in an additive bilingualism situation, the first language is maintained. It has been observed that L1 maintenance in bilingual education contexts contributes to students’ self esteem (Lambert, 1975). Although the term *language maintenance* refers to the actual use of the L1, it relates also to a broader concept that relates to positive attitudes toward the language (Fishman, 1991).
Chapter 2

Literature Review

In this chapter I review four main areas that are important for informing the present study that explores factors affecting biliteracy development and language maintenance in Swahili-English bilingual speaking children. First, I review research related to L2 reading comprehension and L2 writing. Next, I discuss research on language loss which is relevant considering the participating children’s Swahili and English development. Also, I discuss research about supportive bilingual and biliteracy contexts in school and other contexts. To conclude, I discuss the sociolinguistic context of Swahili in Kenya to provide background information on language use in the home country of the case studies of the present study.

The focus of the research reviewed in this chapter is on upper elementary and middle school children because of the age group of the participating students in the study. However, research on younger children, high school students and adults is also reviewed when appropriate.

Factors That Affect Bilingual Children’s Reading Comprehension

Researchers have observed that both non native speakers of English and native speakers of English use similar reading processes to comprehend English texts (Bernhardt, 2000; Gregory, 1996). For example, both types of speakers make use of graphophonic knowledge, that is, they use clues concerning patterns of letters and the sounds they make. Secondly, they both make use of lexical knowledge, which is responsible for sending out clues about the word and the company it keeps. Third, they
make use of syntactic information, that is, the clues about the language structure; and they also make use of semantic knowledge, that is, the meaning of words within the culture or within the text they are reading. In addition both groups make use of their background knowledge when reading. However, there are also some differences between L1 and L2 readers. Bernhardt (1991; 2000; 2003) emphasizes that since there is a first and a second language, the second language reading process is different from the first language reading process due to the nature of information stored in the reader’s memory. L2 readers also encounter more unfamiliar L2 words, and in relation to semantics, they have fewer associative links between L2 words. They also lack background knowledge for some of the English topics and text structures.

**Vocabulary knowledge.** For second-language English learners, vocabulary knowledge is a highly significant variable for effective text comprehension (Bernhardt, 2000; Fitzgerald 1995). Compared to monolingual English speakers, L2 speakers often encounter more unfamiliar words in English reading texts. García (1991; 2000) showed that unknown vocabulary items in test items negatively affected L2 students’ English reading test performance.

Savile-Troike (1984) studied 19 students from 7 different language groups who had very little prior knowledge of English to identify variables impacting the academic achievement of L2 children. The students were in grades 2nd through 6th and received English as second language instruction. Their family backgrounds were similar, and all of them had some literacy knowledge in their L1. The students were tested on aspects of competence in morphology, syntax and vocabulary, verbosity patterns of social interaction, first language performance and personality factors. Savile-Troike reported
that reading achievement, as measured by a Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills, correlated significantly with the number of words that each child used orally over a period of one year. She noted that students who were strong in oral English had corresponding high English reading achievement. She found vocabulary knowledge in the L2 to be the most important aspect of oral proficiency for school achievement.

García (1991) studied factors that influenced the English reading test performance of 51 Hispanic students as compared with the performance of 53 Anglo students enrolled in the same 5th and 6th grade classrooms. Factors that were studied included differential effects of time constraints during the reading test, students’ prior knowledge of the reading texts and information regarding test questions. García also asked students about vocabulary used in the test. García found that the Hispanic students’ unfamiliarity with vocabulary terms used in the test questions and answer choices was one of the factors that adversely affected their test performance. García also reported that some Spanish speaking children showed enhanced understanding of the texts and test questions when they heard the questions in Spanish.

**Background knowledge.** Researchers have found that often L2 readers do not have sufficient background knowledge to fully comprehend the topics they read in the L2 (Abu-Rabia 1996; Droop and Verhoeven, 1998; García 1991; Jiménez, García & Pearson, 1995; Jiménez, García & Pearson, 1996). García’s (1991) analysis of the standardized English reading test performance of Hispanic and monolingual Anglo 5th and 6th graders also found that the test performance of the Hispanic students was negatively affected by their limited prior knowledge of test topics and their poor performance on questions that required use of background knowledge. But when differences in prior knowledge were
statistically controlled, there was no difference between the monolingual and bilingual children on passage performance. This finding suggests that there were other factors than the prior knowledge that affected Hispanic students’ performance on the test.

Jiménez, García and Pearson (1995) used think alouds to compare the reading processes of three 6th grade students: a proficient bilingual (Spanish-English) Latina reader, a marginally proficient bilingual (Spanish-English) Latina reader and a proficient monolingual Anglo reader. A prior knowledge measure was also used to collect data. Based on this measure, the researchers found that, compared to the two bilingual readers, the familiarity of reading topics on the English passages was an advantage that benefited the monolingual English reader. In the same line of research, Jiménez, et al (1996) explored the reading performance of 8 successful bilingual Latina/o and 3 monolingual Anglo 6th and 7th grade students and 3 less successful bilingual Latina/o students. Among other findings, the results of this study showed that the successful bilingual and monolingual readers were able to discuss the reading texts during the think aloud procedures using prior knowledge of relevant topics. In a formative experiment on reading strategy instruction with five 7th grade Latina/o students who were low-level readers, Jiménez (1997) reported that when culturally familiar topics were used, students produced extended discourse about the texts.

Abu-Rabia (1996) also reported findings of a cultural familiarity effect from a sub-sample in a study that investigated the relationship between students’ attitudes toward second language and cultural background to reading comprehension. The participants were 8th grade students in three different social contexts. The first group was 74 Arab students in Israel who were learning Hebrew as their second language; the
second group was 83 Israeli Jewish students in Canada learning English as their second language. The third group was 52 Canadian Arab students learning English as their second language. Each group read and answered 10 multiple choice questions from six texts of culturally specific stories. Abu-Rabia found that the Arab students performed higher on test questions concerned with identifying information from Arab stories than those from Jewish stories, regardless of the text language. The Israeli Jewish students performed better in texts with Jewish content than those with Western content, regardless of the language of the story. In contrast, the results of the Canadian Arab group showed significantly higher performance on tests for identifying information when texts were presented in English, regardless of their cultural content. The researcher concluded that cultural familiarity with the text facilitated the students’ reading comprehension at a higher cognitive level.

Yet, other researchers have demonstrated that providing second language readers with familiar reading topics does not necessarily result in good reading comprehension. Droop and Verhoeven’s (1998) study, for example, examined the role of background knowledge in first and second language reading comprehension. They compared the reading performance of 3rd grade Turkish and Moroccan students who were learning Dutch as their L2 in the Netherlands to that of monolingual Dutch students. Students read three types of texts in Dutch: texts referring to Dutch culture, texts referring to the cultures of Morocco and Turkey, and neutral texts. In addition, the texts represented two linguistic levels, simple and complex. Students read each story aloud, retold it in Dutch and responded to comprehension questions in Dutch. The researchers reported that the Turkish students performed significantly poorer than the Dutch students on the texts that
emphasized Dutch culture or were neutral. But when the texts reflected the Turkish and Moroccan culture and were linguistically simple, the former students performed significantly better than the L1 Dutch speakers. However, regardless of the culture of the text, the Turkish and Moroccan students did not perform well when the texts were linguistically complex even when the topic was familiar. The findings indicate that the cultural familiarity facilitating effect was, therefore, restricted to linguistically simple texts. These findings demonstrate that linguistic complexity negatively affected Dutch reading performance since the children had low proficiency in Dutch.

However, there are some methodological problems that need to be noted. Although Dutch had been the children’s language of literacy instruction since kindergarten, the study did not measure students’ Dutch language proficiency at the time of the study. This could be a factor contributing to students’ performance on the tasks. The study also does not consider the fact that ethnically Turkish and Moroccan students are two different groups, and they originate from two different geographical regions hence, they do not necessarily share common cultural knowledge. What may be considered culturally familiar texts may not be familiar for both groups. In addition, Turkish and Moroccan students’ lower performance of the retellings could have been due to their limited proficiency in Dutch. The results might have been different if the Turkish and Moroccan students had been allowed to retell and answer the questions in their L1 (Garcia, 1991). Regarding linguistic complexity, researchers have noted that syntactic complexity does not always predict L2 readers’ reading comprehension (Bernhardt, 2000) since syntactic complexity connects with other knowledge necessary for
comprehension such as vocabulary, background knowledge and the reader’s L2 proficiency (García, 2003).

In a recent review of studies on culturally relevant reading and curriculum materials for language minority students, Goldenberg, Rueda and August (2006, 2008) reported that while the studies reviewed support the proposition that such materials promote literacy development, they concluded that “the language of the text appears to be a stronger influence on reading performance: Students perform better when they read or use material in the language they know better, the influence of cultural content is not as robust” (2006:256).

**Cross-linguistic transfer in reading.** Cognitive and academic development in L1 has been found to have positive effects on the development of L2 (Collier, 1989, 1992; 1995; García, 2000, 2003; Thomas and Collier, 1995), that is, L1 academic proficiency is a powerful predictor of L2 development rate and assists the learning of L2 (Cummins, Swain, Nakajima, Handscombe, Green & Tran, 1984). This relationship implies that in the event of learning, knowledge and skills learned in L1, such as concepts and content knowledge, can be easily learned or transferred in the L2 (Cummins, 1979). Cummins refers to this relationship as the *common underlying proficiency* (CUP) and *linguistic interdependency*.

Studies on bilingual children have shown the use of cross-linguistic skills that at times occur without children having received any instruction. In addition, children could also start at a very early age. Bauer (2000) reported on a case study of her preschool daughter, age 2 to 2:8, who was becoming a bilingual in English and German. She collected data from reading interactions in English and German at home with an adult.
Among the books the child read, two were highly predictable structured texts, one a modern fantasy picture storybook, and the other, a realistic fiction picture storybook that contained elements of a predictable text. Bauer found that the child used the bilingual strategy of code switching between German and English when reading with her parents. However her choice of language depended on the structure of the book being read and the parent she was reading with, that is, whether she was reading with her English speaking mother or with her German speaking father. In addition, the study found that the child code switched less during shared readings of the texts that were structurally predictable and had strong rhythmic pattern. In contrast, code switching occurred more when she attempted to discuss texts that had more content. According to these findings, the researcher concluded that there are different benefits resulting from the use of highly predictable and literary texts for the literacy and language development of bilinguals.

Langer, Bartolomé, Vásquez, & Lucas (1990) examined the ways in which Mexican-American students construct meaning when reading school material. Their sample consisted of 12 fifth grade students who were tested on reading Spanish and English stories and informational texts. Students performed oral and written recalls for each of the texts. Students were interviewed about their reading and writing experiences, language use and perceptions of literacy in their lives and responded to envisionment questions that helped provide as much access as possible to the unfolding of meaning as the student read the text. They found that students used their knowledge of Spanish while responding to English comprehension questions, by switching between Spanish and English or by providing translations or paraphrasing. When they read Spanish texts they did not rely on English to the same extent.
The study also found that students who did well in meaning-making performance in one language tended to do well in the other language; and students who had developed good meaning strategies in one language used those strategies in their second language even though they were not fluent in it. The researchers also found that familiarity with a genre affected students’ ability to build appropriate text meanings. They found that reports were consistently more difficult for students to recall than were stories. Students performed best on the Spanish stories, followed by the English story, the Spanish report and then the English report.

In other studies, García (1998) and Jiménez et al (1996) also report on bilingual students’ use of cross-linguistic transfer. Jiménez et al (1996) studied the reading strategy use of fourteen 6th and 7th grade students. Among them 8 were Latina/Latino students who were successful English readers, 3 Latina/Latino students who were marginally successful English readers and 3 monolingual Anglo students who were successful English readers. Data were collected using prior knowledge assessment; think aloud protocols, text recall and interviews. The researchers identified 22 reading strategies and grouped them as text- initiated, for example, using the text structure; interactive, for example, predicting; and reader- initiated strategies, for example, visualizing.

The study also found that successful bilingual readers used translating, code switching, and transferring information between Spanish and English. The successful readers also used the strategy of searching for cognates to determine the meaning of unknown words while reading and be able to comprehend texts. Cognates are words with common etymological roots and similar forms and meaning. The study also shows that
students used the bilingual strategies more when they were reading in Spanish which is their weaker language, when they were navigating unknown vocabulary. The less successful readers used fewer strategies to solve comprehension problem while the monolingual students used their background knowledge to comprehend texts.

García’s (1998) study investigated reading strategies of four Mexican-American students who were strong Spanish readers and were developing readers in English. Students were tested on Spanish and English narrative and expository texts. García used think aloud protocol, retelling of the texts, interviews and classroom observations. The study reported that much of the students’ strategy use across languages seemed to depend on the genre of the text rather than on the language, suggesting the importance of considering genre type in bilingual students reading comprehension. Similar to the Jiménez et al (1996) study, the students used bilingual strategies of code-switching, code mixing and translation.

Besides, García (2003) has warned that cross-linguistic transfer is not automatic with all bilingual children. Students, who have knowledge and strategies in L1, together with positive attitude toward their L1, have a greater potential to transfer knowledge and strategies across languages.

**Role of L2 oral language proficiency.** One of the differences between monolingual English speaking children and second language learners of English is that monolingual children start reading already equipped with English oral language skills including vocabulary, syntax and semantic relationships (Gregory 1996). Although the amount of L2 oral language proficiency needed for reading in English is still debatable (García, 2000; Klingner and Vaughn, 2004), in terms of bilingual children reading, some
researchers have indicated that English oral proficiency plays a role in the development of English language learners (García, 2003; García & Bauer, 2004; Klingner and Vaughn, 2004).

In their study, Tregar and Wong (1984) studied the relationship between native and second language reading comprehension and second language oral proficiency. The study involved 200 Cantonese and 200 Hispanic children from 3rd to 8th grade who had been in bilingual education programs. The study found that there was no relationship between English oral proficiency and English reading proficiency at 3rd through 5th grade for either language group. But there was a positive relationship from the Hispanic 6th to 8th graders, indicating that oral English predicted English reading better in the middle grades.

Similar findings were observed in Carlisle and Beeman’s (2000) study. They investigated the reading and writing performance in English and Spanish of two classes of 1st graders of Hispanic background, one taught in English 80% of the day and the other taught in Spanish 80% of the day. Children’s text comprehension was assessed by measures of listening and reading comprehension, whereas, writing was assessed from writing samples. The authors found that the children’s English reading comprehension at the end of first grade and the beginning of second grade was affected by their language proficiency in English but was not additionally affected by the language in which they received literacy instruction. But, instruction in Spanish made a very significant contribution to the development of Spanish reading comprehension.

Droop and Verhoeven’s (2003) longitudinal study explored the relative influence of different aspects of children’s developing language proficiency, including: lexical
knowledge, morphosyntactic knowledge, oral text comprehension skills, and word decoding skills, on their developing L2 reading comprehension. The one year long study started when children were in 3rd grade and ended at 4th grade. Participating students were 163 Dutch, 72 Turkish, and 67 Moroccans living in the Netherlands. The study used Dutch measures of reading comprehension, decoding skills, and oral language proficiency. The analysis on oral language proficiency demonstrated that minority students, Turkish and Moroccans, were less proficient at word, sentence, and text levels than their Dutch peers. The decoding skills showed no difference in the reading aloud proficiency of the Dutch versus minority groups. Minority students read the monosyllabic words faster than orthographically complex words.

In terms of fluency, researchers have demonstrated that it is not uncommon for second language English learners to make pronunciation mistakes when reading (Garcia, 2003). For this reason, when students mispronounce words it is difficult for teachers to determine whether it is just a wrong pronunciation or if they are having difficulty decoding or recognizing the meaning. In her study, García (1988) found that a good L2 reader admitted having known the meaning of some words she read but mispronounced them. This study demonstrates the difficulty of measuring fluency in relation to reading comprehension in English.

**Role of instruction.** Findings from research have shown the benefit that second language learners get as a result of instruction on different aspects of reading. Given the strong correlation between vocabulary knowledge and comprehension achievement, researchers have studied the impact of vocabulary instruction.
Neuman and Koskinen (1992) examined whether comprehensible input in the form of captioned television might affect bilingual students’ acquisition of vocabulary and conceptual knowledge. The students were 129 seventh and eighth grade Cambodians, Laotians, Vietnamese, and Hispanic students exposed to science units. Students were divided into four groups: captioned television; traditional television; reading along and listening to text; and using the textbook only. The researchers reported that students who viewed television where captions were provided consistently achieved higher mean scores than any comparison group on all word knowledge tests, indicating that they were getting comprehensible input. Additionally, students who were most proficient in English at the beginning of the study made more gains than other students who had similar experience. The later results indicate that second language learners’ ability to acquire vocabulary through context is influenced by their level of linguistic proficiency in the language.

Carlo, August, McLaughlin, Snow, Dressler, Lippman, Lively and White’s (2004) study is an intervention designed to enhance fifth graders academic vocabulary. The study tested first, whether improvements in vocabulary related to improvements in reading comprehension for English language learners, and second, whether improved vocabulary and word analysis would be associated with improved reading comprehension outcomes. Participants of the study were from three different sites, California, Virginia, and Massachusetts and included 112 monolingual students and 142 bilingual students from different backgrounds including Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, and Spanish speakers from the Caribbean and Central America. The study design was quasi-experimental and classrooms at each site were randomly assigned to the treatment.
and comparison condition. At the beginning of each week 10-12 target words were introduced and instruction was delivered for 30-45 minutes four days a week. Every fifth week was devoted to review of the previous four weeks’ target words. The intervention was organized around the topic of immigration.

The measures included the Revised Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test and a polysemy production test to generate as many sentences as possible conveying the different meanings of polysemous words. Other measures were reading comprehension tasks; word mastery test; word association task; and morphology. Regression analyses were performed to determine the results. The researchers report that their curriculum, which focused on teaching academic words, awareness of polysemy, strategies for inferring word meanings from context and tools for analyzing morphological and cross-linguistic aspects of word meaning improved the reading comprehension of both English language learners and also English only students. The researchers concluded that direct vocabulary instruction is effective with both English language learners and for English only students if it incorporates the various principles obtained from previous work on monolingual English speakers and English language learner students.

One of the study’s methodological problems is that the reading comprehension tests relied mainly on cloze procedures. The measure generally involves filling in blanks with a correct word have been found to possess concurrent validity in the sense that tests correlate highly with other language proficiency measures such as grammar. There is a concern that this type of testing is inadequate in that it does not measure students’ ability to understand the concepts within the text (Bernhardt, 1991).
Another important research topic in the reading instruction of second language learners is the selection of appropriate reading texts. A study by Jiménez (1997) has demonstrated that after providing Latina/o middle school students with reading instruction that used culturally familiar texts, students improved in their reading skills and reading comprehension. They were able to connect their background knowledge with the texts they read. The study provides evidence that for struggling second-language readers to achieve in reading comprehension, teachers need to consider the use of culturally familiar texts in their instruction. Even though, Klingner & Vaughn (2004) have warned researchers not to make generalizations regarding students’ background knowledge since due to their diversity, it is not always the case that students will have the same shared common knowledge set. Jiménez (2001) has also discussed that there is a tendency to group together second language English learners who share the same language, for example Hispanics. Students do recognize their ethnicities and would prefer for their educators to consider that.

Researchers have reported that bilingual students who receive instruction on metacognitive and cognitive strategy use tend to gain knowledge on strategy use and hence improve their reading comprehension scores (Jiménez, 1997; Klingner & Vaughn 2000; Muñiz-Swicegood, 1994). Muñiz-Swicegood (1994) reports on a study that involved 95 3rd grade Spanish dominant students who were randomly divided into two groups, the experimental group and the control group. The experimental group was trained to use metacognitive reading strategies for ninety minutes each day for six weeks during the Spanish class. The metacognitive strategy they used was the development of self-generated questioning strategies. The technique involved teachers providing a model
by asking a variety of questions concerning comprehension of a story or text passage being read. Following the teacher’s modeling, students became dialogue leaders in their own small groups. The study reports that after six weeks, the bilingual students in the experimental group improved their reading performance in both Spanish and English tests. The results also indicate students’ ability to transfer strategies across languages.

Jiménez (1997) conducted a formative experiment based on reading strategy instruction with five seventh-grade Latina/o students who were performing four levels below their current grade. The instruction emphasized reading fluency and word recognition skills as well as strategies for solving unknown vocabulary and making inferences. Students were encouraged to search for cognates, translate, transfer knowledge, and reflect on the text in both Spanish and English. The findings revealed that the knowledge of Spanish facilitated comprehension and learning. Students used their prior knowledge to solve comprehension problems and used their cross-linguistic knowledge to understand unknown vocabulary.

In another study Klingner & Vaughn (2000), examined the frequency and means by which fifth grade limited English proficient and native English speaking students helped each other through the use of Collaborative Strategic Reading. This is an instructional approach for English language learners that involved cooperative learning and instruction in reading comprehension strategies. The approach involves teacher modeling, role playing, and think-alouds. Students of mixed reading abilities work in small cooperative groups and get explicit instruction on the use of a variety of strategies to support reading comprehension: preview (prediction of what the passage will be about); click and clunk (monitoring unknown words and concepts and using fix up
strategies); get the gist (restate the main ideas); and wrap up (summarize what has been
learned). A vocabulary measure requiring students to define words connected with one
science unit was used to assess progress. Students were found to engage for a substantial
amount of time in strategic discourse. They supported each other in using strategies to
identify the main idea, to figure out unknown word meanings and to relate to prior
knowledge. Vocabulary tests taken before and after the intervention revealed
improvements in students who were not of limited English proficiency.

The small research available on oral instruction for second language learners has
found that students’ oral reading skills can improve when given oral reading instruction.
For example, from his formative experimented study Jiménez (1997) found that poor
readers in middle school had improved their oral reading after he had taught them a
variety of reading strategies including reading instruction that emphasized oral reading
for two weeks. However, more studies are needed to test the effects of word recognition
fluency instruction on comprehension development (Grabe, 2004).

**Cognitive Factors in Bilingual Children’s Writing**

Research has shown that bilingual children apply their knowledge and hypotheses
when writing in L2 (Edelsky, 1982; Edelsky & Gilbert, 1985). Edelsky (1982) studied the
relationship between first and second language writing in 26 children; nine first, nine
second and eight third graders in a bilingual Spanish -English program that emphasized
writing, whole language approach to literacy, and literacy in the first language before
second language literacy instruction had begun.
Data for the study was collected from regular Spanish and English classroom writing at four different times during the school year. Edelsky found that the children used many of the same aspects of writing in a similar fashion across languages, such as discourse structure. However, they tended to make systematic errors in spelling, often based on their Spanish pronunciation of words and their limited awareness of orthographic patterns in English. Regarding code switching, the study found that it occurred occasionally in the children’s writing and differed depending on the direction of the switch. Students switched more in Spanish texts. Edelsky’s findings suggest that what a young writer knows about writing in the first language forms the basis of new hypotheses rather than interferes with writing in another language.

**Bilingual children’s writing instruction and practices.** Some researchers have studied bilingual children by focusing on writing practices and opportunities that support the use of writing in their L1 (Dworin, 2003; McCarthey & García, 2005; McCarthey, Guo, & Cummins, 2005; Moll, Sáez, & Dworin, 2001). Moll et al (2001) used examples from qualitative case studies of kindergarteners and a 3rd grader who were Spanish speaking children learning English, to represent selections from their previous investigations exploring biliteracy in various grades. The researchers focused on writing as a social practice, that is, as a practice mediated by the social organization of the classrooms. They highlighted how children used interactions to develop their literate competencies in Spanish and English. In the kindergarten class, the study found that students’ writing showed a free use of language, in English or Spanish. In addition, students shared their work with other students who also responded in English or Spanish.
The genre of their writing varied, with students writing notes, labels, signs, journal entries, stories and notes to other students.

In third grade, the researchers found that, in general, the classroom was socially and culturally organized to support and advance students’ academic work. They found that Spanish was used along with English as an unmarked language, that is, Spanish use was allowed in the classroom; it was not considered inappropriate, and the students could use either language in their academic work. Second, students were able to engage with texts in a variety of ways and develop expertise in a variety of written genres in either or both languages. In addition, as part of their classroom routines, students were learning how to use literacy in either language or in both languages. Focusing on the 3rd grade case child, the findings also show the characteristics of the student’s biliteracy. The child was able to read in one language and write in another; she used her lived experiences in one language to produce text in the other language; and she collaborated with another student in creating a new bilingual text. This study demonstrates that classrooms that support bilingualism and biliteracy play a significant role in bilingual children’s biliteracy development.

Findings from Valdés’s (1999) study suggest that classroom contexts and the quality of instruction affect student writing. She compared three teachers’ instructional approaches for teaching writing to bilingual Spanish speaking children: the controlled composition approach in which the focus of writing was on using correct grammar and vocabulary; in other words, instruction focused on form and correctness instead of meaning; and the process approach in which students worked on their rough drafts, talked to one another in Spanish about their writing, revised their drafts and later published their
work. Valdés argued that one of the inadequacies of this approach was that students’ products were often difficult to understand and editing took a very long time. The third approach, process writing and direct instruction, involved a combination of strategies. The teacher gave students a general scaffold or structure for the paper they were writing, and taught them about organization. In addition, students were prompted to think and to write about themselves and their lives, and they learned techniques of note taking. The steps in the writing process were also emphasized, including writing conferences and peer response. Valdés reported that the student taught by the teacher who practiced process writing and direct instruction had made great progress compared to the other two students in the study.

McCarthey and García (2005) used case study methods to examine 6 Mandarin and 5 Spanish fourth and fifth grade English language learners’ practices and attitudes toward writing in English and their L1, from school and home contexts. They followed students for two years. Data was collected through student, parent and teacher interviews, classroom observations, writing samples and district assessment data. McCarthey and García report a mixture of negative and positive attitudes towards writing among both groups of students, and that student attitudes toward native language or English writing depended on different home and school literacy experiences, such as opportunities to write in both languages at school, and encouragement to write in L1 at home. For example, the researchers report that some parents expressed that they did not encourage their children to write in Chinese because they were planning on staying in the US.

The findings also show a relationship between positive attitudes toward writing in students’ native language and good language skills in the language, suggesting that
writing attitudes predict writing achievement. Another finding is that by the second year of the study a number of the Mandarin students reported that they had forgotten many Chinese characters, and this caused a challenge in writing their compositions in Chinese.

In further examination of the data, McCarthey, Guo and Cummins (2005) found that Mandarin speakers who came to the US in second, third or fourth grade demonstrated some native language loss. Between year 1 and year 2 students’ writing differed in sentence complexity, character complexity, rhetorical features and voice, and they made different types of errors from one another. The researchers attributed the varied student performances to the students’ initial writing competence when they first came to the US. They also indicate factors that contributed to students’ Mandarin writing performance, such as lack of daily writing opportunities in the native language at school, and the type of writing that was required by the school district, as well as the home support which was lacking particularly from parents who did not plan to return to the home country.

Writing opportunities in the varied languages that multilingual children are learning is the focus of Schwarzer’s (2001) study. Using a case study design, the author analyzed the writing development of his first grade daughter in a public school in the US. Due to the family’s linguistic history, his daughter was becoming multiliterate (demonstrating literacy skills in more than two languages) in Hebrew, Spanish and English. The daughter received English at school, and received Spanish instruction in a bilingual classroom and some Spanish input at home, mostly from her father. The child received Hebrew input at home mostly from her mother, and from the Hebrew speaking communities. The one year study found that the writing opportunities that the child had
from her bilingual classroom, where she received English and Spanish instruction, and her home which provided her with Hebrew, Spanish and English support, were instrumental in the child’s multiliterate development. Although the child demonstrated positive attitudes towards all three languages, she wrote fewer pieces in Spanish and Hebrew compared to English even though she was in a bilingual Spanish-English class. The author attributed the finding to three factors: inadequate opportunities to write in Spanish at the school setting due to the teacher’s misconceptions about second language writing; inadequate encouragement by the parents at home to write in Spanish and Hebrew; and the child’s own reluctance to write in Hebrew, until she was offered formal instruction in Hebrew writing. Schwarzer’s analysis shows that the positive collaboration between the home and school that provided his daughter with a variety of bi/multiliteracy contexts was important for the child’s developing proficiencies in the languages.

**Language Loss**

Fishman (1991) asserts that language shift, a process of change in language use, is often a slow and cumulative process. Within a speech community, “language shift occurs when the stresses and strains of cross-cultural contact have eroded the ability of smaller and weaker language to withstand the stronger and larger” (p. 55). Often, the stronger and larger language has greater advantage in status, income, social acceptance and social participation. In the same manner, within an individual, language shift is a result of contact with such a language. Consequently, language loss occurs when a language is not used. A number of researchers (e.g., Guardado, 2002; Pacini-Ketchabaw, Bernhard and
Freire, 2001; Wong Fillmore, 1991) have studied first language loss in bilingual children from the family’s perspective.

Wong Fillmore (1991) reports on a nation wide study on language shift among language minority students in the US. The purpose of the study was to determine the extent to which family language patterns were affected by their children’s early learning of English in preschool programs in the US. The study surveyed and compared two groups of families: those whose children had attended preschool programs conducted exclusively in Spanish and those whose children attended English-only or bilingual preschools. Wong Fillmore found that children less than five years of age enrolled in English only or bilingual preschools were already losing their first language before they mastered English due to the pressure to learn English in school. She reports that as a result of first language loss, communication patterns and family relationships were adversely affected, especially in those families in which the language lost is the only language that the parents speak. Wong-Fillmore’s study also found that even when children continued to speak the home language, their fluency level was adversely affected. Moreover, they could only communicate about basic things because they lagged behind in the vocabulary and literacy level of the home language. Wong Fillmore (1991, 1996) recommends that young children should not be required to learn English until their native language development has reached a level where they can handle the inevitable encounter with English. She also recommends that parents need to be warned of the consequences when they do not insist that their children speak to them in the language of the home.
Pacini-Ketchabaw, Bernhard and Freire (2001) studied the home language practices and experiences of Latin American parents in Canada on when they made decisions about their children’s language. The researchers explored the parents’ reactions to the assimilative pressures and interactions with school personnel, for example, teachers made requests for parents to stop speaking Spanish with the children at home because it was affecting their children’s English pronunciation, or a psychologist asked a parent to stop speaking Spanish at home with the child because the child’s language and speech problems were linked to the use of Spanish in the home. Pacini-Ketchabaw et al used the participant observation method for three school terms of five months each to follow 45 Latin American students in their daily activities at school, both academic and nonacademic. They also interviewed school personnel and children’s families for a period of 18 months.

Four major findings emerged from the study. First, parents found that Spanish maintenance is a way to foster family unity. Second, the strong assimilative pressures they experienced often resulted in their doubting the desire to openly speak Spanish at home. Third, parents saw that their children were losing the home language very fast and therefore, they used a number of strategies to ensure Spanish maintenance. These included making sure that their voices were heard at home and school; having their children participate in home language programs; visiting relatives in their countries of origin; providing resources at home; talking to their children in Spanish, and having friends who speak Spanish. Fourth, parents wanted to see some changes at school such as encouraging, promoting and establishing heritage language programs.
Other researchers (e.g., Hinton, 1999; Kouritzin, 1999) have explored the effects of first language loss as a result of English acquisition in the school system from the perspective of the affected individuals themselves. These researchers have studied adults from diverse linguistic backgrounds. Kouritzin (1999) investigated the issue of language loss by using life histories of 21 adults in Canada. She explored questions about how and why language loss happens; what ages are more susceptible; the short and long term effects; and what happens to the psyche of the people when their heritage language is lost. The participants were primarily immigrants and subjects from first nations in Canada who spoke minority languages. The participants had lost their heritage languages while learning English as a school language.

The findings from the study show that lack of full development of the heritage language, that is, the first language in childhood, resulted in gradual loss of the first language. Generally, incomplete development of the first language occurs in the context of learning L2, particularly when the L1 is not supported. The participants indicated that first language loss adversely affected extended family relationships. Participants also reported that they did not maintain contact with grandparents, aunts, uncles, or cousins who either remained in the first language country or who immigrated to Canada but had never learned to speak English. Moreover, the participants experienced poor self-image and conflicting cultural identities. They experienced negative self-image because they did not receive positive reinforcement from their family or because they blamed themselves for their language loss. Participants were also uncertain about their own identities as they lacked the ability to identify with the heritage culture or the dominant culture, the English culture.
Hinton (1999) studied Asian- American first and second generation college
students at the University of California, Berkeley over a number of years. Using the
linguistic biographies written by the participants, she examined the pattern of language
shift that took place in the first and second generation students and why this shift
occurred. The study also explored the efforts by families to keep the first language.

Hinton found that the participants were losing their first language as a result of
focusing on the second language, English. Sometimes they could understand the first
language but were not able to speak it or learned to speak it but were unable to read or
write it. Hinton’s findings also show that as a result of first language attrition, participants
experienced problems communicating with extended family members or their own
parents. Some students who maintained their first language credited their parents’ efforts
for emphasizing the use of first language in the home or for providing first language
instructional programs. Such students also had opportunities to speak the first language
with other family members, friends and peers. Thus, Hinton recommends the use of first
language in multiple contexts that include insistence on the use of the language at home
and enrolling children in heritage language school; children having peers to speak the
language with, and when possible making return trips to the homeland.

**Supportive Bilingual and Biliteracy Development Contexts**

A number of researchers have shown that specific types of biliteracy contexts
encourage and allow bilingual students to use their L1 and develop their bi-literate
competences. These contexts are explored in this section.
**Bilingual and biliteracy development in school related contexts.** L2 students can benefit from classrooms that support bilingual and biliteracy development. In her research on L2 emergent readers, Gregory (1996) emphasized the importance of teachers’ knowledge about children’s home reading practices, and how the teacher could build upon those practices in the classroom situation. Using examples from French, Chinese, Bengali and Indian children, Gregory’s research shows how children’s reading experiences from home differ in terms of purpose for reading, material used and participation structures; and how each family differs in its interpretation of what counts as reading.

In order to examine biliteracy development in the context of L2 learning, researchers have studied children enrolled in bilingual programs, and children enrolled in classrooms that allow the use of both languages in learning (Dworin, 2003; Moll et al, 2001). Dworin (2003) explored the biliteracy development in both reading and writing of a Spanish third grader English learner in a bilingual education program classroom that had a language maintenance-type program for 9 months. He collected data using participant observations, student reading activities, writing samples, and interviews with teacher and student. The classroom he observed had linguistically diverse children with a diverse range in language and literacy abilities at the beginning of the year, and both English and Spanish were used for instruction.

Dworin’s findings show that English monolingual children acquired Spanish from Spanish speaking children and Spanish speaking children learned English from peers and the teacher. Thus, the use of English of native English speaking children and the bilingualism of the Spanish speakers provided children with resources for bilingual and
bilateracy development. The researcher notes that the case child developed literacy competences in reading and writing in both Spanish and English. This was due to the classroom conditions that allowed the students to choose their reading books, and use their own interests and experiences in their writing, as well as collaborating with other students. Comparable findings were reported in the Moll et al (2001) study where the availability of the social processes and cultural resources to the students in classrooms impacted the kindergartner and third grader in their biliteracy development.

Researchers have found that not all students who receive bilingual education programs develop and maintain biliteracy due to various factors. Hornberger (1992) recommended an analysis of the micro-macro (contexts at every level from face-to-face interactions to national policy and global political-economic situations), monolingual-bilingual (the degree to which contexts involve the use of one or both of the student’s languages), and oral-literate (the ways in which contexts mix oral and literate language use) dimensions to take into account the complex factors influencing biliteracy development. Hornberger studied the biliteracy development of students in the Puerto Rican and the Cambodian communities in Philadelphia. While the students from the Puerto Rican community received Spanish instruction by way of a two way bilingual program from grade 1 to grade 5, Khmer instruction was not available for Cambodian students in the school system. In a two way bilingual program, also known as dual language program, the minority language and English are used for instruction throughout the elementary grades, and the instruction is supposed to be provided to both ELLs and English speakers (Christian, 1996). The amount of instruction in each language is determined by the model followed by the program, for example, 90-10; 80-20 or 50-50.
The numbers indicate the percentage of native language and second language instruction that students receive.

Hornberger found that after the students who participated in the Spanish-English Spanish bilingual program left their elementary school, their language behavior in terms of maintaining minority language literacy was not different from the Cambodian students who did not receive Khmer instruction at elementary school. Hornberger attributed the findings to both the students’ and parents’ attitudes towards the minority language, which pulls students to English monolingualism and loss of the minority language. She also reported that although some of the Cambodian parents encouraged aspects of their culture in their children, such as, practicing traditions when observing holidays of their native country, some parents, and other contexts in the community did not encourage the use of the Khmer language (see also Hardman, 1998). Hornberger also observed that according to the findings, there seemed to be a separation between language identity and ethnic identity in both communities, in other words, the Puerto Rican and the Cambodian ethnic identities are maintained without the languages.

Issues of immigrant children and how differently they adapt to their new home (US) society and schooling have been discussed in Ogbu (1992), Suárez-Orozco (2000), and Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco (2001). The different styles of adaptation affect children’s literacy and academic success. The authors describe that some immigrant children tend to assimilate to the mainstream American culture, that is, they completely identify themselves with the mainstream culture. However, while they may succeed in school, they symbolically and psychologically alienate themselves from family traditions and the ethnic group. Others develop adversarial styles toward the mainstream culture.
Such immigrant children construct identities around rejecting the institutions of the dominant culture, including school. They perceive embracing aspects of the dominant culture such as speaking standard English and doing well in school as giving up one’s own ethnic identity. Consequently, they tend to have problems in school, and they are less likely to be successful in school. However, a majority of immigrant children adapt “the accommodation without assimilation strategy” (Ogbu, 1992) or transcultural style of adaptation (Suárez-Orozco, 2000; Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco, 2001), a style that creates bilingual and bicultural identities. Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco view the creation of transcultural identities as the most adaptive of the three styles. Children identifying with the style combine the parental traditions and the new culture and blend the two systems that become their own and foreign, hence they can achieve bicultural and bilingual competencies. Such children tend to be successful in school. According to Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco (2001), “children who develop bilingual and bicultural style are at an advantage over those who are alienated with part of their blended culture because the style preserves the affective ties of the home cultures while enabling the child to acquire the skills required for coping successfully in the mainstream culture” (2001, p.113).

**Bilingual and biliteracy development in other contexts.** According to researchers, L2 students can also benefit from non-school literacy programs that involve the use of students’ L1 and English. Gutierrez, Baquedano- López, Alvarez and Chiu (1999) reported on a 2 year qualitative study that focused on non-formal multi-purposed writing activity that utilized writing mixed genres including letters and narratives; and mixed discourses, including problem solving, narrative and academic discourse. The
literacy context was an after school computer club organized by university undergraduate students involving elementary school students of Latino/a, African-American and Tongan heritage. The literacy activities were performed in a playful setting through an ambiguous cyberspace character named *El Maga* who could be accessed through electronic mail. The study indicates that Spanish speaking children used English and Spanish freely in both oral and written discourse when communicating to one another, therefore, promoting biliteracy. The researchers assert that the hybrid literacy activities that students were engaged in, at the after school club, provided rich contexts for both social and cognitive development.

Some researchers have found that some parents are concerned about their children’s bilingual and biliteracy development and maintenance. Weisberg and Ortiz (2000) studied 28 immigrant parents who were attending New Mexico State University and were planning to return to their home countries upon completion of their graduate studies in the US. The parents, who represented a variety of national backgrounds, including Latin America, East Asian and Middle Easterners, with the majority of parents from Mexico, were concerned about the responsibility that they had to maintain their children’s L1 skills. Particularly, the study focused on the extent that the foreign student families viewed attrition of L1 literacy and academic skills; the steps that parents took to address the situation and how the parents mediated with the local US school personnel to provide for their children’s language education needs. In addition, the study explored the implication of parents’ attitudes, perceptions, and responses on general issues of L1 maintenance and biliteracy in bilingual families.
Weisberg and Ortiz collected data using questionnaires. They found that parents schooled their children at home using a combination of activities, such as, songs and games and academic tutorials in their primary language. Although parents were concerned with the effects of all English instruction on their children, they did not show any concern on their children’s academic success when they return to their home countries, where the primary language is used for instruction. Parents’ concerns in Weisberg and Ortiz study are of particular interest to the present study since parents of participating children are also planning to return to their home countries after completion of their graduate studies in the US.

Guardado (2002) conducted a study in Vancouver, Canada to examine the experiences of four Hispanic parents who had children either developing bilingually in Spanish and English while the L1 input was provided by one parent, or were developing as monolinguals in English. The researcher collected data from semi-structured interviews to determine factors that facilitate the maintenance of Spanish, and how the parents feel about their children’s loss or maintenance of Spanish. The findings indicate several important factors for maintaining the heritage language in the context of a dominant L2: L1 cultural identity, encouragement to speak L1, literacy in L1, and having an L1 community. These factors were also emphasized by the parents whose children were less successful in maintaining L1. In addition, all parents in Guardado’s study believed that bilingualism has future economic benefits for their children.

Some researchers have studied bilingual and biliteracy development on their own children. Similar to Guardado’s (2002) findings, Kravin (1992) argued that besides parental input, a broader linguistic input is an important factor for a child’s L1
maintenance. Kravin studied language development in his six year old bilingual English-Finnish speaking child living in the US who had moved to the US at age 0:5. Besides occasional contact with Finnish monolingual children in the US, and short visits to Finland, his family in the US practiced a one parent one language principle, that is, each of the parents spoke only one language to the child. The researcher analyzed data collected from diary notes of the child’s language use during the six years. He also made 13 one-hour recordings of speech samples in natural settings for a period of ten months. Kravin found that although the child had partially mastered the Finnish grammar, his speech did not show any increase or decrease in Finnish language development. He attributed the Finnish stagnation to English dominance in the environment around the child, and lack of input from a broader linguistic Finnish community.

Language use preference is a factor that plays a role in bilingual and biliteracy development. Arua and Magocha’s (2002) study conducted in Botswana explored parents’ and children’s language use preferences. The researchers used questionnaires to examine patterns of language use and language preferences of children age 6-15 and their parents. They found that the majority of the students preferred to speak the school languages, Setswana (national language) and English (official language) at school, at home and at the playground than the minority languages spoken in Botswana. Setswana and English are languages that students were proficient in. Most of the parents preferred their children to speak English at school and Setswana at home even if the parents speak a minority language. The findings suggest a preference for school languages over the minority languages spoken in Botswana. A similar situation is prevalent in many other
Sociolinguistic Context of Swahili in Kenya

Linguistic diversity and bilingualism are the norm for most African countries. There are 61 languages spoken in Kenya (Grimes, 2000), the home country of the case studies. Most people in Kenya speak at least three languages (Whiteley, 1974). The first language is the individual’s ethnic or tribal language such as Gikuyu, Luo, Kamba, and Meru. These languages are mostly used at home and for interethnic communication.

The second language is Swahili, which is the language of wider communication among Kenyans, particularly in urban settings. Swahili also is a national and official language of the country. According to Eastman (2001), a national language is generally described as a language that serves an entire nation rather than a regional or ethnic subdivision. It is a language of political, social, and cultural entity and functions as a national symbol. Official language, on the other hand, is described as a language used for government business in other words; it is “a language legally prescribed as the language of governmental operations of a given nation” (Ferguson & Heath, 1981, p. 531). In most African countries languages designated for school instruction also are designated as national and/or official languages. Reasons given for using such languages in education include that they are more likely to have been standardized, and teaching materials are more likely to be available.

The Swahili language is not only a Kenyan language, but it also is a language that is fast becoming an inter-African lingua franca. It is a language of wider communication.
in Eastern Africa (Lewis, 2009). Increased political and economic cooperation among countries in Eastern, Central and Southern Africa also have resulted in Swahili being used in more African countries.

The third language is the colonial language, English, which is also the second official language in Kenya. English is mostly used in the government and among the educated people (Mule, 1999). The status of English in Kenya is due to the fact that before its independence in 1963, the country was a British colony. Kenya is not the only African country that has maintained the use of English as a colonial language.

It is worth mentioning Pennycook’s (1998) discussion on the spread and use of English in some countries as a result of colonialism. Based on his work on critical social theory, Pennycook shows how language policies in the colonized countries were constructed as part of the colonial governance. He argues that colonialism is not only a site of colonial imposition of European culture on the colonized people, but also a site of production of the western culture and thoughts. British colonialism, therefore, with the spread of English, has produced Western ways of thinking and behaving among people. In Kenya, for example, English is viewed as a prestigious language among people.

According to Mule (1999), the education system in Kenya is 8-4-4, that is, eight years (grade 1-8) of primary education, four years of secondary school, and four years of college. While many children in urban areas get kindergarten schooling, it is not the case in the rural areas because such schooling is not considered part of formal schooling in the country. Table 1 provides a summary of language use in schools in Kenya.
### Table 1

**Language Use in Kenyan Schools**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Level</th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>Urban</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade 1-3</td>
<td>Ethnic language of the area</td>
<td>Swahili and/or English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 4-8</td>
<td>English or Swahili support in ethnic language</td>
<td>Content in English, Swahili as subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school</td>
<td>Content in English, Swahili as subject</td>
<td>Content in English, Swahili as subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College</td>
<td></td>
<td>English, Swahili in language courses</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most parents in the urban settings speak Swahili and English. The language of education from grades one to three in the rural areas is the language of the immediate community or the ethnic language, whereas Swahili and English are introduced in grade four. From grade four, content is taught in English or Swahili with support in the ethnic language. In urban public schools, from pre-school to grade three, English is introduced, but Swahili is the medium of instruction because it is the common language of children from different tribal groups. In both rural and urban settings, English is used to teach content from grade four through secondary school (high school) and Swahili continues to be taught as a subject. Students in Kenya are expected to perform well in the Swahili subject from primary (elementary) school through secondary school. In addition, students are required to pass the Swahili test on the national examination taken at the end of secondary in order for them to receive a secondary school education certificate (high school diploma). Meanwhile, instruction in all post-secondary education in Kenya is through English except for Swahili degree programs.
Researchers (e.g., Roy-Campbell, 2001; Oyetunde, 2002) have shown that similar language education policies are practiced in many sub-Saharan African countries where national languages and colonial languages, specifically English, French and Portuguese are used. When these language policies are implemented properly, students in the early grades are exposed to additive bilingualism.

Guided by theoretical perspectives that combine cognitive aspects (Collier, 1995; Cummins, 1981, 1989) and sociocultural aspects of literacy (Goldenberg, Rueda & August, 2006, 2008; Hornberger, 1989, 1992; Vygotsky, 1978), this study investigates the Swahili-English bilingualism and biliteracy in children. It is focusing on the influences at home and school contexts in relation to facilitating or delaying the development of bilingualism and biliteracy in the children studied.

**Summary.** Research on bilingual children’s reading comprehension demonstrates that English language learners are affected by various cognitive factors compared to English monolingual children. Studies have shown that unknown English vocabulary has adversely affected English language learners’ test performance. It has been found that bilingual students sometimes demonstrated understanding of L2 texts when test questions were asked in their L1. There is evidence that often L2 readers do not have sufficient background knowledge to fully comprehend the L2 topics they read, even though, other important aspects need to be considered such as the linguistic levels of the L2 texts.

Studies on bilingual children’s reading have also provided evidence for the importance of knowledge on reading strategies in relation to L2 reading comprehension achievement. Researchers have reported that students who had knowledge and strategies in L1, used those strategies when reading in L2 to solve comprehension problems. But, it
has also been found that much of student strategy use across languages depended on the
genre of the text, whether narrative or expository. This finding suggests the importance of
considering genre type in bilingual students reading comprehension.

Although the relationship between L2 oral proficiency and L2 reading
performance is still debatable, some researchers have found a positive relationship
between strong oral English proficiency and high English reading achievement. Other
researchers found that oral English predicted English reading better in the middle grades
than the lower grades. Researchers have also reported findings on the benefit that
English language learners get as a result of instruction that emphasized the different
aspects related to reading, such as vocabulary enrichment, reading strategies and oral
reading.

The findings reviewed on bilingual children’s writing suggest that although young
bilingual writers make spelling errors when writing in English, many aspects of their
writing are used in a similar way across languages, suggesting that L2 children apply
their L1 knowledge and hypotheses when writing. Therefore, what is observed in
children’s writing is not an interference rather it is an application of what students know.
Findings also suggest that the quality of writing instruction that English language learners
receive affect their writing. While some teachers used the control approach that
emphasized grammar and structure, and others used the process writing approach, which
often results in products that are difficult to understand, and also takes a long time for
editing, the process approach and direct instruction which involves a combination of
strategies was found to benefit ESL students better than the other approaches.
Further, analyses on bilingual children’s writing suggest that there may be a relationship between positive attitudes toward writing in students’ native language and good language skills in the native language. In the new country, classroom and home contexts can play a significant role to promote bilingual students’ attitudes toward native language writing and the realization of their bilingual identities. Research also informs that there is evidence that bilingual students’ native language writing performance may be affected by the amount of formal schooling and students’ initial writing competence in the home country before coming to the US.

In terms of language loss, researchers agree that providing students with reading and writing opportunities in their native language and English in the context of second language learning can increase biliteracy proficiency and can prevent native language loss. In particular, young children are more at risk of losing their first language when it is not used in the school curriculum. In addition, children and adults who have lost their native language are negatively affected psychologically, socially and culturally. At home, researchers recommend that students and parents need to have positive attitudes toward the first language and encourage the use of the first language in multiple contexts.

Biliteracy development success is dependent not only on being part of school curriculum but also on other factors, such as home literacy practices, as well as students and parents’ attitudes toward the languages. For example, some researchers have found that students who received L1 instruction in bilingual programs did not maintain the L1 literacy after leaving bilingual classrooms due to language behaviors in the community that pulled them to English monolingualism. According to this finding, the complex
factors affecting maintenance of biliteracy skills should be analyzed using the micro-macro; monolingual-bilingual; and oral-literate dimensions.
Chapter 3
Methodology

This chapter describes the research procedures and analysis used to conduct this study of Swahili –English speaking children attending elementary and middle school in the US. The study investigated the influences in the home and school contexts in relation to facilitating or delaying the development of bilingualism and biliteracy in the children; and examined their strengths and weaknesses in English and Swahili literacy. The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the factors at home and school that support Swahili speaking children’s bilingual and biliteracy development or contribute to their Swahili literacy attrition or loss?

2. How well do Swahili speaking students comprehend and write narrative and expository texts in English and Swahili?

The first research question sought to identify the social and cultural factors that played a role in the children’s bilingual and biliteracy development in English and Swahili. The second research question was asked to address the children’s state of literacy in the two languages considering the prevailing circumstances.

Research Design

The study used qualitative methodology. In qualitative research, the researcher does not seek to predict or control phenomena but rather to understand and describe the phenomena (Merriam, 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Mertens (1998) maintains that a valid reason for choosing qualitative methodology relates to the nature of the research question/problem. For example, if detailed, in-depth information is needed about certain clients or programs, qualitative methods are appropriate. The essence of qualitative
methodology, therefore, matches the purpose of this study, which was to understand the socio-cultural and socio-cognitive issues pertaining to bilingual and biliteracy development of Swahili-English speaking children. Qualitative methodology also allows conducting research in a naturalistic setting (Stake, 1995). The methodology was most appropriate because the research was conducted at the children’s homes and at schools where the events that the researcher was interested in occurred naturally.

Within the qualitative methodology framework, individual case studies and multiple case study design were used to obtain, describe and interpret data. Stake (1995) maintains that “the greatest concern of case study design is to learn about a particular case and come to know it well” (p.8). In other words, a case study is an in-depth study that seeks to understand issues intrinsic to a case. Case study design was therefore relevant for this study because it enabled the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of Swahili-English biliteracy development and factors across home and school contexts that related to L1 maintenance or loss in the context of L2 learning. The methods used to collect data in case studies, in particular, in qualitative literacy studies, include observations, interviews, literacy tasks and document analysis.

Research Site

The community. The study was conducted in a small university town in the US Midwest. According to the U.S. Bureau of Census 2007, the town had a total population of 190,260 residents. This town was chosen for convenience and suitability for the study and is a home to different communities including an African community. Within the African community there were sub-communities. First, there were some Africans who
were on US visas and who worked at the university campus and in town. Second, there was a group of Africans who were attending the local university. Another African sub-community was the East Africans. Some members of this group also belong to the former subgroups. While members of the large African community shared many common characteristics, the East African community that is formed by Kenyans, Tanzanians, Ugandans and Rwandese was of interest to this study because of their common cultural background, including use of the Swahili language.

The East African community consisted of about 13 families including children born in Africa and children who were born in the US. Among the families, 50% of the parents were not university students. Members of this community were in close social contact, and their children were friends. Community members met regularly for home country, US or religious holidays; parents and children’s birthday parties and other family occasions; or for recreational purposes. During holidays, children were invited to learn how to make snacks, including East African treats, at one of the member homes. Members met when a family was bereaved. They also helped one another in various ways, such as with child care and car pooling. Some community members attended the same church.

The schools. Two public schools, Vine Elementary School and Brooke Middle School (pseudonyms) were involved in the study. Kevin and Robert (pseudonyms) attended Vine Elementary School while Sophia, Diana and Victor (pseudonyms) attended Brooke Middle School.

Vine Elementary School had 297 students in attendance, of which 39.1% were limited English proficient (School Report Card, 2007). The school had a large population
of international students. About 50% of the students’ parents attended the local university. The school, which is a designated multilingual school in the school district offered multicultural and multilingual programs. The goal of the programs was to help to transition foreign families and children into the American school system (Interview with the Multilingual and Multicultural Supervisor at the school, February 2007). Fourth and fifth grade English language learners (ELLs) attended all English classes and received English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction for 110 minutes daily on a pull-out basis under the Transitional Program of Instruction. The Transitional Program of Instruction is a state approved program designed for ELLs when fewer than 20 students from the same language group attend a school. In this program, students receive ESL instruction, which focuses on literacy in English through content areas. In addition, they received instruction in the native language to the extent possible. At the time of the study there were about 150 students from K-5 in the ESL program. Some of the children were born in the US and some were born abroad.

Vine Elementary School also offered native language instruction for 45 minutes daily to some English language learners, depending on the number of children, availability of funding and human resources. The native languages that the school typically has offered include Russian, Chinese, Vietnamese, French, Turkish and Arabic. Since Fall 2006, Swahili has been one of the native languages offered at this school as a result of a parents’ initiative to help their children learn Swahili literacy in the school context. The program started with three parent volunteer teachers who were also graduate students at the local university and who had children attending the school. Instruction was offered three times a week, and the three parents alternated teaching the class.
Brooke Middle School also served international students, some of whom previously had attended Vine Elementary School. Among the school population of 932 students, 6.4% were English language learners (ELLs) (School Report Card, 2007). Like Vine Elementary School, these students were also offered ESL instruction according to the requirements of the Transitional Program of Instruction, but did not receive any native language instruction. ELLs attended ESL classes in English, US History, Science, and/or Geography which were taught by a certified ESL teacher. Until students are evaluated as having sufficient English language for schooling in English, the ESL classes replaced the regular classes. ESL classes in English were offered daily for 40 minutes.

Participants

The children and their parents. There were altogether seven Swahili speaking children from Kenya attending Vine Elementary School and Brooke Middle School in grades 1 through 7 at the time of the study. However, the selected study participants were five children attending grades 4 through 7. The children were selected through purposeful sampling, a type of sampling that “researchers working within the interpretive/constructivist paradigm typically use to select their samples with the goal of identifying information-rich cases that will allow them to study the case in-depth” Mertens (1998, p. 261). In other words, purposeful sampling involves selecting a target population that addresses the researcher’s interest and objectives (Merriam, 1998). The selection of the five children was based on the fact that they spoke Swahili in their home country and were literate in Swahili to varying degrees before they came to the US. In addition, the selection was made on the assumption that depending on various factors
experienced in the new country, children may experience language attrition or loss (Pacini-Ketchabaw, Bernhard & Freire, 2001). The focal students came to the new country at different ages. It was also assumed that among the students, those who came at an older age would experience a cognitive advantage in acquiring and developing the second language, English (Collier & Thomas, 1987).

Table 2 provides a summary of background information about the participating children. Pseudonyms are used to protect their identity.

Table 2

*Students’ Background Information*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>Number of years in the USA</th>
<th>Number of years schooling in Kenya*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sophia</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diana</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victor</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kevin</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The children’s number of years of schooling in Kenya does not include kindergarten. In the Kenyan education system, kindergarten is not part of formal schooling.*

Except for Victor’s mother, who was not in the country, it was the mothers who participated in this study. The mothers were chosen for two main reasons. First, for Sophia, her mother was the only parent available. Secondly, Kevin, Robert and Diana’s mothers were selected because compared to the fathers, they had spent the most time with the children. For example, they had stayed in Kenya with them when their fathers had first come to the US. The mothers provided information about their home and their children’s literacy backgrounds.
**Teachers.** A total of four teachers participated in the study. At Vine Elementary School, the main teachers who participated in the study were Ms. Ramos, the ESL teacher for 4th and 5th grades, and Ms. Brent, the 5th grade mainstream teacher. In addition, Ms. Li, a Title 1 teacher at Vine Elementary School allowed me to observe in her class during guided reading groups for fifth graders. Besides the teachers, the multilingual and multicultural director was a secondary participant at Vine Elementary School. She provided me with the state assessment data and background information about the students, and information on the different programs offered at her school. While I interviewed all other staff participants, I only had informal conversations with Ms. Li.

At Brooke Middle School, the teachers who participated in the study were Mr. Tangen, the ESL teacher for 6th, 7th and 8th graders, and Mr. Enodd the grade 7 English teacher. Teachers at both schools let me observe the student participants in their classrooms and were willing to participate in interviews on their instruction and student literacy performance.

**Researcher’s identity.** As the researcher, I am a bilingual Swahili-English speaker. I have taught in elementary schools and teacher training colleges in my home country Tanzania, which borders Kenya, the home country of the participating children. I have a background in linguistics and during the study I was a Swahili instructor at the local university. Some of my Swahili students were heritage language learners. These are students who were either born in East Africa and have now lost their Swahili language or were born and grew up in the US and did not learn to speak Swahili from their Swahili speaking parents. As a result, I understood the consequences of lack of home language,
attrition or loss. I therefore brought to this study my knowledge and experiences as a Swahili speaker, a Swahili language instructor and linguist. Some variations particularly in vocabulary do exist between the Tanzanian and Kenyan Swahili due to various sociolinguistic influences. However, this is a natural phenomenon found in all languages spoken in a vast geographical area and did not have negative effects on the study.

Since I am originally from the same geographical region as the participating children’s families, I considered myself an insider and obtained the participants’ insider (emic) perspectives (Mertens, 1998; Stake, 1995). My insider role during the study was also enhanced by the fact that I had known the children’s families for several years and to them I was a family friend, and “Auntie Josephine.” Throughout the study the children and parents interacted with me in a relaxed manner. To some of the parents I was a fellow graduate student, therefore, they understood the academic importance of the study.

While in the home contexts I was an insider due to my linguistic and cultural background, I was an outsider to the teachers in the school contexts. In my role as a researcher I spoke a research language and sometimes held different views about certain issues. My outsider identity was heightened by a lack of interaction opportunities with the teachers. I interacted with them very little during classroom observations. My interest in the children’s bilingualism and biliteracy was the main motivation for this study.

In addition, the community identified me with the Swahili language. Given that I always spoke Swahili to adults and children, community members knew that if they met me, the language we would use was going to be Swahili. Whenever appropriate, at gatherings, I would teach a couple of Swahili words to young children who did not speak Swahili. While children called me “Auntie Josephine,” most adults referred to me as
“Mama Josephine.” Although the basic meaning of the word *mama* in Swahili is *mother*, it is often used to show respect. During the study, I also used the opportunity to help parents become aware about the availability of Swahili resources in the local university’s library. In addition, I volunteered to help parents locate resources in case they needed my help. Such awareness was important considering that in some homes, such as, Robert and Diana, as well as Victor’s, Swahili materials were not available.

**Pilot Study**

I conducted a case study during the summer of 2003 on a Swahili-English bilingual 3rd grade child’s reading. The child had been attending school in the US for one academic year. The study described and analyzed reading strategies of the child, her strengths and weaknesses on reading comprehension tasks involving narrative and expository texts in the two languages. It described her use of bilingual reading strategies and cross-linguistic transfer.

The study found that the child used similar reading strategies as those demonstrated by strong bilingual Spanish-English readers (Jiménez, et al, 1996; García, 1998). The one strategy she did not use was making use of cognates, due to linguistic differences between Swahili and English. Her Swahili reading performance was at her grade level. The child studied in the pilot study is also among the student participants of the present study.
Data Collection Procedures

Data collection for the study was conducted from January to August 2007 at the children’s homes and in the community, at Vine Elementary School and Brooke Middle School where participating children attended. Data collection at both schools did not start until mid March 2007 due to research site access procedures.

In qualitative studies, researchers use mostly three main methods for collecting data, namely, participant observation, interviews, and document and records review (Mertens, 1998). Students were observed in naturalistic settings. These are places where the events that the researcher is interested in naturally occur (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Mertens, 1998). The multiple data sources that were used to collect data for this study provided comprehensive data for studying the cases and also assisted in validation and triangulation of the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Stake, 1995). I collected all the data myself.

Data collection at school. Data collection at school included observations of ESL instruction, literacy and English instruction, document and records review, and teacher interviews. Each of the data collection methods used at school is presented in the sections below.

Observations of instruction. The purpose of the classroom observations was to document the student’s participation in literacy activities including reading, discussing vocabulary, responding to comprehension questions, retelling and student’s language use and literacy use. Data obtained from classroom observations were verified in teacher and student interviews.
Since students were in different schools and classrooms, I observed each student individually on different days and times except for Diana and Victor who were in the same ESL classroom. It was initially proposed that each student would be observed once a week, but due to unexpected changes in the school schedule, sometimes my observation schedule needed to be adjusted. For example, if I didn’t observe a student one week, the following week he or she was observed twice. In addition, I tried not to always observe a student on the same day of the week for the reason that I wanted to see different literacy activities during the week. On several occasions, a student I went to observe was absent from class.

At Vine Elementary School I observed the ESL instruction that Robert received (daily for 110 minutes), and the literacy instruction that Kevin received (daily for 60 minutes) for a period of eight weeks. Both classes were offered in the afternoon. Swahili instruction was not observed because when I designed this study, the program had not yet started. Instructional data for the Swahili class was collected through interviews. At Brooke Middle School I observed Diana and Victor during ESL instruction in the mornings, while I observed Sophia in the English classroom in the afternoons.

During classroom observations I was a passive participant, that is, I was present in the setting but did not interact with participants (Spradley, 1980). I always sat where I could clearly see the participating student. Students were aware that I was in their class observing them, although they did not know what I was exactly observing. When any of the students asked me outside of class, I responded that I wanted to know how they were learning. While observing classrooms, I wrote field notes that were later typed and which I kept in an observation log. Table 3 presents the total number of classroom observations
per student. The settings were appropriate to get the required data, for the study from the classroom setting, that is, on children’s participation on literacy activities and use.

Robert, Diana and Victor were observed in an ESL setting because the ESL teachers were responsible for the students’ literacy instruction, while Kevin was observed during the literacy block in his mainstream class, because he had exited from ESL. At the time of classroom observations, the literacy instruction quarter for Sophia had elapsed, therefore Sophia was observed in an English class.

Table 3

*Total Classroom Observations per Student*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Instruction</th>
<th>Robert</th>
<th>Kevin</th>
<th>Diana</th>
<th>Victor</th>
<th>Sophia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ESL</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Student work and assessment data.* From the respective teachers, I collected at least one writing sample each week from students’ ESL, literacy or English classes. In addition, I collected from the school administration assessment data for three of the participating children who were either still in the ESL program or had exited the program. The assessment data were from the English Language Proficiency Test and the Illinois Measure of Annual Growth in English (IMAGE). Essentially, the data were collected to examine student performance on different aspects of English development and literacy. The 2006 data I collected was the most recent for all students.

*English Language Proficiency Test.* The test which is also known as Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State to State for English Language
Learners (ACCESS for ELLs) is required by the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. It is an annual test administered during the Spring semester. The purpose of the test is to determine the English language proficiency levels and the progress of ELLs in speaking, listening, reading, and writing. The student’s proficiency level determines whether he or she will continue in the ESL program or exit the program. For example, Kevin’s overall proficiency level determined his exit from the program by the end of grade 4, while Robert and Diana continued in the program to their next grade.

*Illinois Measure of Annual Growth in English (IMAGE).* This test measures the progress of ELLs English proficiency in reading and mathematics and is administered once a year in the Spring. I collected the reading assessment data because of its relevance to this study. The purpose of the test is to determine the English Language Learners performance in reading comprehension (graphic prompts, narrative passages and expository passages) and use of reading strategies (explicit ideas and inferences).

*Teacher interviews.* Formal interviews with semi-structured and open-ended questions were conducted with each of the four teachers. The open ended questions allowed the interviewees to have the freedom to provide as much information as possible on the topics (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Mertens, 1998). All interviews were audio recorded to capture the whole conversation and transcribed verbatim.

Originally it was planned that each teacher would be interviewed twice, one interview during the mid period of data collection and the second interview at the end of classroom observations. Due to an unexpected delay in starting classroom observations, only one interview was carried out with each of the teachers toward the end of the observations. Meanwhile, whenever it was appropriate I had informal short conversations
with the teachers on questions I had about things I observed in their classrooms. I included their responses in my observation field notes.

The formal interview durations varied from teacher to teacher but with an average of 50 minutes per teacher. The interview with Mr. Tangen, the ESL teacher for Victor was the longest, and it lasted 60 minutes, while the shortest interview was with Ms. Brent, Kevin’s fifth grade teacher. It lasted 40 minutes. The interview questions focused on English literacy development of the student, and the instructional materials and literacy activities that the teacher incorporated in her/his curriculum. In addition, teachers were asked specific questions that were informed by classroom observations and about information that I already had from other sources, for example, student formal assessment data, writing samples and student interviews (See Appendix A for interview sample questions). Except for Mr. Tangen’s interview, all other interviews took place at school either at the end of the school day or during the teacher’s preparation time. Mr. Tangen, who was also a part time teacher at Brooke Middle School, chose to schedule his interview at his home. He lived in the same housing complex that I did. During the interviews, teachers at Vine Elementary School demonstrated more knowledge about their students compared to the Brooke Middle School teachers.

**Data collection at home.** Data collection at home included a number of methods: observations of language use and literacy activities in the home and community, interviews with parents and children, reading and writing tasks for the children in Swahili and reading tasks in English. All interviews were semi-structured and had open ended questions. In the sections below I provide details on each of the data collection methods used.
**Home observations.** I conducted biweekly observational visits to the children’s homes in mid January through mid August. My entry into the children’s home was easy because of my relationship with the children’s families. During the visits I paid attention to the children’s language use as they interacted with their parents, siblings and other Swahili speaking children and adults who visited while I was there. I also paid attention to language used during interactions between children, parents and myself. It was initially planned that my visits would be audio recorded and the conversations transcribed. However, when I started the study, I encountered some problems in having my visits audio recorded. Every time I visited the homes, children greeted me as they always did before the study and went into their rooms, and I was left to chat with the parents. I made efforts to incorporate them in the conversations as much as possible although most of the time they talked with their siblings in their rooms and only occasionally with their parents.

I also observed children’s language use in any other setting where the opportunity to speak Swahili was available, such as at the African and East African social events, that occurred about six times during the study. They included birthday, baptismal, graduation parties, and recreational get together. Opportunities also happened during trips. For example, during the study, some of the families and I traveled together on three out of town trips.

Throughout observations, I listened to children’s and family conversations and documented them in short field notes, that were shortly afterwards expanded. The notes on speech events included the setting, topic and participants (Saville-Troike, 1989). In addition to paying attention to language use in the homes, I also paid attention to printed
materials available in Swahili and English and anything else that was of interest to the study. In addition to the short field notes, I also kept a retrospective journal.

**Reading tasks.** I elicited reading performance data from students between February and March, using tasks that I developed. Some of the tasks were adopted from the pilot study. I met with each student twice to conduct the Swahili narrative and Swahili expository reading tasks and twice to conduct the English narrative and English expository tasks for a total of four reading sessions. All the reading tasks took place at the children’s homes and each of the sessions lasted 55-60 minutes.

The Swahili narrative text read by 4th and 5th graders was *Sungura na Ndege* (Temu, 2005) and the 7th graders read *Malaika Aliyevaa Viatu* (Fulani, 1993). Both texts were from the researcher’s collection and had pictures. The expository texts were adapted from English versions and translated into Swahili by the researcher. The 4th and 5th graders read *Afrika* adapted from Striveildi (2003) while the 7th graders read *Wadudu Wanaofanya Kazi Pamoja* adapted from A Bobbie Kalman Book (2005); both texts had no pictures. The 7th graders read longer texts than the 4th and 5th graders. The lengths of the Swahili narrative texts were from 310-733 words while the expository texts were from 446 -540 words (See Appendix D for a sample of reading texts). The texts were given to three raters who were teachers in Kenya before they came to the US. Their task was to determine the level of difficulty in relation to students of the same grade levels in Kenyan schools. For each text they were supposed to choose from three levels: easy, just right, or difficult for the grade level. One of the three raters rated the 4th and 5th grade Swahili expository text as “difficult,” while the other two raters rated the text level as
“just right.” As well, one of the three raters rated the Swahili expository text for the 7th graders as “easy,” while the remaining two raters rated the text level as “just right.”

The English narrative text that the 4th and 5th graders read was One Small Dog (Hurwitz, 2000) while the 7th graders read Home is East (Ly, 2005). For the English expository texts, the 4th and 5th grade students read Waste Disposal (Morgan, 2000), while the 7th graders read Soil: A Resource Our World Depends on (Graham, 2005). All the English texts were selected from the library and the two expository texts had pictures. As in the case for Swahili reading, the texts read by 7th graders were longer than those read by the 4th and 5th graders. The lengths of the English narrative texts were from 654 to 975 words while the expository texts were from 587 to 731 words. Two graduate students, who were also elementary and middle school teachers respectively, rated the texts to determine the level of difficulty. The texts were rated as “just right” for students’ grade levels.

The reading activities included silent reading, responding to comprehension questions from the text and retelling the text. Comprehension questions that I developed for the task were classified following the taxonomy of reading comprehension test questions according to Johnston’s (1984) adaptation of Pearson & Johnston’s (1978) taxonomy, that has three types of questions. A comprehension question was considered Textually Explicit (TE) if a sentence in the passage presented both the question and the answer. A question was considered Textually Implicit (TI) if the question information and answer information are in the passage but not in the same sentence. And finally, a question was considered Scriptally Implicit (SI) if the reader must combine some of the information from the text with background knowledge or experience to answer it.
Before students started reading, they were told about what they would read, in which language, and how they would read the text. While they were reading I did not provide any assistance to the children, although, they often asked for the meaning of some vocabulary they did not know. The idea was to see to what extent the students could understand the text. They were given the opportunity to read the text more than once if they wanted to. After reading, children responded orally to comprehension questions about the content without looking at the texts. Then they were asked to tell the researcher all that they remembered from the text; they were asked to pretend that they were narrating what they had read to their siblings or parents. The students, with the exception of Victor, took longer to read Swahili than English texts. They also took longer to read Swahili expository texts than narrative texts. All the responses to comprehension questions and the retelling were audio recorded and transcribed.

**Students’ Swahili journal.** At the beginning of the data collection, students were asked to keep an ongoing journal to provide writing samples in Swahili. The Swahili journal was supposed to help determine students’ writing skills and use of Swahili language and experiences. I briefed each child on the task in the presence of a parent at their home and each student was supplied with a notebook. Students were asked to make a minimum of one posting (at least a paragraph) a week in their journal on their daily activities and topics of their choice (McCarthey & García, 2005). They were also encouraged to use different genres in their postings such as narratives, expository writing, letters and poems.

I checked students’ journaling each time I visited their homes for observations to follow up on the progress of their writing and encourage them in case they were not up to
date. Towards the end of data collection, Kevin who had expressed writing resistance from the beginning lost his journal, and had to start a new one. I collected student journals at the end of the study for review.

**Student interviews.** Two formal interviews that provided self reports (McCarthey, 2001) were conducted with each child and lasted for 35-40 minutes. The first interview focused on children’s literacy identity. Particularly, students were asked how they identified themselves as readers and writers in English and Swahili, and the types of literacy activities they engaged in outside school. The questions on the second interview emphasized children’s language use with parents, siblings, friends, and other Swahili speaking people, and their language preferences and attitudes towards English and Swahili. Both interviews were semi-structured with open ended questions (See Appendix B for sample questions). The interviews took place in the second half of the data collection period and were three weeks apart from each other. The reason for choosing the second part of the study for the interviews was to allow the inclusion of any relevant questions that emerged from the English and Swahili reading tasks that students performed during the first half of data collection period, as well as questions that emerged from the writing samples collected from school.

Parents preferred for children’s interviews to be conducted in their homes. The interview protocols were written in English, but before starting the interview sessions, each student was asked in Swahili to choose whether she/he wanted to take the interview in English or Swahili. All interviews were conducted in English except for Victor who wanted to take his in Swahili. I therefore translated all interview questions into Swahili. I took the opportunity to ask Victor why he preferred Swahili interviews. His response was
that he felt it would be more comfortable for him to speak Swahili than English. In order to capture the whole conversation, all interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. Interviews conducted in Swahili were transcribed and translated into English. Throughout the study I had some informal conversations with the children. Such data was incorporated in my research notes data.

**Parent interviews.** Parents were interviewed twice, and all interviews were conducted in English. The first interview was conducted at the beginning of the data collection period and the second interview took place towards the end of the study. The interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. Initially all parents preferred that the interviews be conducted at their homes. However, the plan did not work well particularly with two parents who had young children. They were comfortable to move the interview venue to my apartment.

The first interview addressed the child’s literacy history and the role of Swahili in the home country, Kenya. There were also questions on the language use in general in the family back home. The second interview focused on the child’s English literacy and biliteracy practices here in the US. The questions also addressed the parent’s role in the child’s bilingual and biliteracy development (See Appendix C for sample questions). Most of the time during the interviews, I expanded on the questions if I felt that I needed to get more information on the subject. Two of the participating children, Robert and Diana, were from the same family; therefore when conducting an interview, I asked the parent to respond for both children. As a result these interviews were longer, approximately 60 minutes each. With the other three parents, the interviews lasted between 45-50 minutes each.
Throughout the study parents were generous with their time. They were available to respond to my additional questions over the telephone or in a short meeting. I documented their responses and incorporated them as part of the interview data.

Data Analysis

Data analysis started in the field and continued throughout the study (Merriam, 1998). As I collected data from different sources, I read my field notes or listened to the interview tapes and wrote notes on issues I identified from the data and questions I needed to ask for follow up. All field notes from observations were typed, and audio recorded data from interviews and reading task sessions were transcribed. I transcribed all the data myself and during the process I reflected on it and gained some preliminary ideas on the findings.

In essence, analyzing qualitative data involves thinking about data and hypothesizing possible relationships and meanings (Mertens, 1998). The constant comparative method (Miles & Huberman, 1994) was used to analyze data for this study. This is a method that involves making contrasts and comparisons between and across data sources and methods, and enables the researcher to make both within and across case analysis. All data was read iteratively, sorted and coded into categories while paying attention to the research questions (Bogdan & Bilken, 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Data from students’ English literacy assessment were recorded and presented in a table format and interpreted. The assessment data enabled the researcher to discuss and interpret students’ literacy performance at school, for example, whether the reading scores indicated the student as below or above average.
Interview data from teachers, students and parents were read and coded; themes and issues were identified. During the reading process the researcher wrote personal reflections and other comments along the script statements and any related questions. Comparison of common issues and differences from different interview transcripts were made.

Observation field notes from ESL, literacy and English classrooms were read carefully to identify codes and emerging themes related to teacher instruction, materials and activities, and student participation during instruction. Field notes from the communicative behavior observed at home and in the community were read and analyzed according to the communicative situation and communicative event (Saville-Troike, 1989). The communicative situation is the context within which the communication occurs, such as the home. Description of the communicative event includes the purpose of communication, the topic, participants and the language involved.

Retelling of the narrative texts was analyzed using the story structure modeled by Morrow (1989) that consists of five elements that students needed to include in their retelling. The first element, the setting, includes the beginning of the story; names of the main character and other characters; and a statement about place and time. The second element is the theme of the story. This refers to the main character’s goal or problem to be solved. Another element is the plot episodes, and the last element is the resolution of the story and the ending of the story ends. The fifth element in the story retelling is an evaluation of whether the student’s retelling is in structural order.

Retelling of the expository texts was analyzed by using main ideas and supporting ideas as recalled by the student compared to the text, and how they were organized.
When scoring the retelling of the narratives and expository texts, a chart was used. Headings of the story structure from the narrative, or main and supporting ideas on the expository text were written on the left hand side of the table and from the student’s retelling, a credit was entered on the right hand side of the table (see Appendix D for sample of English and Swahili Reading texts and Retelling Templates).

To evaluate the students’ writing performance in the two languages, the English writing samples from school and Swahili journals kept at home were analyzed according to categories adapted from McCarthey et al (2005) and presented quantitatively and qualitatively. The categories include, grammar (punctuation, capitalization, tenses, subject-verb agreement); sentence complexity (simple, compound and complex sentences); rhetorical style (organization, coherence, metaphorical language and word choice); and writer’s voice (see Appendix F for scoring rubric). For the Swahili writing, the same categories were used but the category of linguistic transfer was added and analyzed as Yes or No. The linguistic transfer category related to the influence of English on students’ Swahili writing. In addition, topics that were used for writing were analyzed (McCarthey, et al, 2004; McCarthey, et al, 2005; McKay & Wong, 1999). It is important to note that Swahili and English are structurally different, but students’ writing in either language showed features of another language. While Swahili and English use the same script, Swahili also uses a phonemic spelling system (Laderfoged, 2006). According to Laderfoged, “There is little difference between a written version of a Swahili sentence, and a phonemic transcription of that sentence compared to English, for which the phonemic transcriptions are different from written texts” (p. 34-35). In addition, different from English, Swahili has an open syllable structure, which is a syllable with a terminal...
vowel. Stress in Swahili is realized at the penultimate syllable in the word, except for a number of loan words that are sometimes adapted in the Swahili structure with their original phonology pattern.

Swahili is a highly agglutinative language, a characteristic that is evident in the nominal morphology, and the productivity of its derivational verb morphology, which involves the use of prefixes, and suffixes. Inflectional morphemes in verbs show subject-verb agreement and object and object pronoun agreement. They also show tense marking.

Typically, Swahili has Subject-Verb-Object (SVO) word order similar to English but there is some freedom in Swahili word order depending on contextual situations. In unmarked noun phrases modifiers are preceded by the nouns they modify. For example, in Swahili the correct word order is: Nimesoma vitabu vingi, [I have read many books], but one of the children wrote: Nimesoma vingi vitabu [literally, I have read books many]. Notice in the sentence that the child wrote the modifier vingi [many] before the noun vitabu [books] making the sentence syntactically incorrect.

Finally, all these data have been combined to describe and interpret the case studies. The following themes emerged from the data: maintenance of Kenyan culture; varied Swahili language and literacy practices; school literacy instruction and assessment; and performance assessment of students’ biliteracy development.

**Research Validity/Credibility**

Data were validated using two methods: member checks and triangulation. The researcher shared summaries of interview data and observation field notes with parents to verify data they provided in order to make valid interpretations (Mertens, 1998).
Participant feedback has been incorporated in the data. Triangulation of data from different sources: school assessment data, observations, reading tasks and interviews, writing samples, has increased the internal validity of the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Mertens, 1998). For example, I compared what I observed at home with the information that children and parents provided during interviews. I also compared students’ reading and writing strengths and weaknesses identified by teachers in the interviews with information provided in the state assessment data and writing samples.

Additionally, in the presentation of the study findings, I have used verbatim narratives (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998) and vignettes (Stake, 1995) to provide thick descriptive data. Thick descriptive data may transport readers to the setting and give the discussion an element of shared experiences (Creswell, 2003) or gives the reader the experiential knowledge (Stake, 1995). The strategies have been used to give weight to findings and give credibility to the evidence.
Chapter 4

Findings

This chapter presents findings from the various data collected for this study. The data presented were obtained from classroom, home and community observations, interviews, school documents, English and Swahili reading tasks, and children’s English and Swahili writing samples. The chapter begins by introducing the participating children and their families. Second, an analysis of the varied opportunities available at home to support the development of children’s bilingualism and biliteracy development is presented. Third, under the heading of school literacy, instruction and assessment, findings are shared, which demonstrate to what extent, within school contexts, children’s bilingualism and biliteracy are valued and developed. Lastly, performance assessment of students’ biliteracy development from tasks conducted at home is presented. Throughout the presentation, pseudonyms are used to protect the identity of the participants including the students, parents, teachers, schools and locales.

Family Profiles

Table 4 shows that although the children came to the US at different ages, they all received Swahili and English instruction in Kenya, their home country. Swahili continued to be used by their parents in the home in the US, together with English; and in two families, an ethnic/tribal language was also spoken. Except for Sophia who started school in the US in the mainstream classroom, all the other children were placed in an ESL program in the U.S. All of the families are planning to return eventually to Kenya where Swahili is the language of wider communication.
### Table 4

**Summary of Kenyan and US Schooling and Family Information**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study Participants</th>
<th>School Languages in Kenya</th>
<th>ESL/Mainstream Placement Upon Arrival to the US</th>
<th>Age Upon Arrival and Grade</th>
<th>Family Language Use</th>
<th>Parents Occupation</th>
<th>Family Future Plans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kevin 5&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; grade</td>
<td>Swahili, English</td>
<td>ESL Part-time (exited end of 4&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; grade)</td>
<td>7 years; 2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; grade</td>
<td>Swahili, English</td>
<td>F: GS Linguistics; Teaching Assistant M: GS Education Teaching Assistant</td>
<td>To return to Kenya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert 1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; grade</td>
<td>Swahili, English</td>
<td>ESL Part-time</td>
<td>6 years; 1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; grade</td>
<td>Swahili, English</td>
<td>F: GS Labor and Industrial Relations; Graduate Assistant M: Stay at home mother</td>
<td>To return to Kenya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diana 7&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; grade</td>
<td>Swahili, English</td>
<td>ESL Part-time</td>
<td>9 years; 4&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; grade</td>
<td>Kimaragoli (parents only)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family 3</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophia 7&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; grade</td>
<td>Swahili, English</td>
<td>Mainstream</td>
<td>8 years; 3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt; grade</td>
<td>Swahili, English</td>
<td>F: United Nations Employee in Kenya M: GS Education Teaching Assistant</td>
<td>To return to Kenya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family 4</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victor 7&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; grade</td>
<td>Swahili, English</td>
<td>ESL Part-time</td>
<td>12 years; 7&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; grade</td>
<td>Swahili, English</td>
<td>F: GS Art Design; Teaching Assistant M: Office Secretary in Kenya</td>
<td>To return to Kenya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>F: Father</strong></td>
<td><strong>M: Mother</strong></td>
<td><strong>ESL: English as a Second Language</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>GS: Graduate Student</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

F: Father M: Mother ESL: English as a Second Language GS: Graduate Student
Kevin’s family. Kevin, a male student, was in fifth grade at the time of this study. He was 10 years old. Kevin was born in Kenya and had lived in Nairobi. When he was growing up in Kenya, he spoke Swahili as his first language, which was also the main language spoken in his family. While in Kenya, he spoke Swahili with his parents, younger sister, extended family members, friends, teachers and other children. His parents spoke different Kenyan ethnic languages, and he did not speak any of these languages. Kevin had started school in Kenya in kindergarten, where he was introduced first to Swahili and then to English literacy; therefore, besides Swahili, he also spoke English. His mother Chonge, stayed behind with him and his younger sister for two years when his father first came to the US for his graduate studies. Kevin was 7 years old when he arrived in the US and was admitted into 2nd grade. Although he had completed one semester of second grade in Kenya, he had to start second grade all over again due to the different school year calendar in the US. He attended a part- time English as a Second Language (ESL) program until he exited the program at the end of 4th grade. Since he came to the US in 2003, he has been back to Kenya once for four weeks at the end of 2006, when he was 10 years old.

In the US, Kevin’s family, his parents, and two sisters, including the three year old who was born in the US, lived at International Village (a pseudonym). This is a housing complex that houses many international graduate student families including some families from Kenya. Both of his parents were graduate students at the local university and Swahili instructors in the African Language Program at the local university.
Robert and Diana’s family. Robert, a male, was in 4th grade at the time of the study. He was 9 years old. His sister, Diana was in 7th grade. She was 13 years old. They were also born in Kenya. Unlike Kevin, they grew up in a small town in Kenya. Although their parents were from the same ethnic group, the two children grew up speaking Swahili, since it was the main language spoken in the home. Therefore, while in Kenya, Diana and Robert spoke Swahili in their home with parents and sibling, extended family members, friends and teachers. However, they were also exposed to their parents’ ethnic language, Kimaragoli, but they did not consider themselves to be Kimaragoli speakers since they knew only a few words of the language, with Diana knowing a little more than her brother, Robert.

Robert and Diana started school in Kenya in kindergarten where they were first introduced to Swahili literacy. English literacy began in first grade. When Robert and Diana came to the US, they were proficient in spoken Swahili and literacy at their grade level. Robert had completed almost all of 1st grade and Diana had completed almost all of fourth grade before they left Kenya. They also had grade level English proficiency according to Kenyan school standards. Robert and Diana moved to the US at the ages of 6 and 9 years respectively, to join their father who was in the US attending school at the local university. Like Kevin, when their father first came to the US, they had stayed in Kenya with their mother and younger brother for more than a year before joining him. At their new school, both children started their grade all over again, Robert was admitted in 1st grade and Diana into 4th grade. Both children were enrolled in the part-time ESL program, which they were still attending at the time of this study.
When Robert and Diana’s family first arrived in the US, they lived at International Village but later moved to another housing complex. While their father was a graduate student at the local university, their mother, a graduate of a Kenyan university and a high school teacher in Kenya, was a stay home mother. At the time of the study Robert and Diana had a two and a half year old baby sister who was born in the US.

**Sophia’s family.** Sophia, a female student, was in 7th grade during the study. She was 13 years old. When she first came to the US from Kenya to join her mother, Mkunde, who was a graduate student and Swahili instructor at the local university, she was 8 years old and admitted into 3rd grade. Sophia had stayed behind in Kenya with her father before joining her mother in 2002. Although she had completed one semester of third grade in Kenya, she had to start grade three all over again due to the different school year calendar in the US. Unlike Kevin, Robert and Diana, Sophia was not enrolled in an ESL program.

Swahili was her first language and the main language spoken in her home. Like Kevin, Sophia’s parents spoke Swahili all the time because they did not share a common ethnic language. Therefore, while in Kenya, Sophia spoke Swahili to her parents, her baby sister, extended family members, friends, neighbors, teachers and other children at school. The only other language besides Swahili that Sophia spoke is English. At the time of the study Sophia and her family, with the exception of her father who worked in Kenya, lived at International Village, the same housing complex where Kevin’s family lived.

Although her family did not have a lot of children’s books in Swahili, Sophia’s mother did read her some when she was young. When she came to the US, Sophia was proficient in spoken Swahili, and was reading and writing in Swahili and English at her
grade level. She started reading and writing in Swahili before first grade and learned to read and write in English when she attended school in Kenya.

**Victor’s family.** Victor, a male student, was in 7th grade at the time of the study. He was 13 years old. Unlike the other children who came to the US during their elementary school years, Victor came to the US when he was 12 years old and was admitted into 7th grade. He and his older and younger brother came to join their father who was a graduate student at the local university. He did not come with his mother. When he arrived in the US, Victor had completed one semester’s work of grade seven in Kenya but had to start over in grade seven in the US because of the US school calendar. He was also enrolled in a part-time ESL program. At the time of the study it was Victor’s second semester of schooling in the US.

Victor was born in rural Kenya where Swahili was not spoken much in the home; therefore, he did not speak Swahili as his first language, but spoke the ethnic language of his home area, Kisi. He started to speak Swahili in pre-school in Kenya, and continued to use the Swahili language in elementary and middle school where Swahili and English were used for instruction. During the time of this study, Victor spoke three languages, the ethnic language, Kisi, Swahili and English, but could only read and write in Swahili and English.

**Home and Family Influences on Bilingualism and Biliteracy Development**

**Maintenance of Kenyan culture**

**Kevin.** Although the family was away from Kenya, as voluntary immigrants, Kevin’s family kept their Kenyan cultural identities alive. For example, when I entered
Kevin’s home, I immediately knew that the people who lived there were from Kenya. The walls were decorated with artifacts from Kenya and even their calendar was from Kenya. Then I was offered chai (tea) from Kenya by Kevin’s mother, Chonge, who added milk and tea masala (a mixture of ground spices: ginger, cardamom and cinnamon) to it. In an interview, Chonge reported that many of their guests liked the specialty, and they made sure they had enough Kenyan tea all the time. She explained that her family maintained their Kenyan culture through food and other cultural practices and that it was important to remind their children about that. The family ate Kenyan foods such as ugali, chapati, pilau and sukuma wiki. She also took pride in talking about the Kenyan clothing she has. She said, “When we went to Kenya at the end of last year we bought more traditional dresses like kitenge, kanga and shirts with African embroidery so our children know these are Kenyan clothes.” In addition, Chonge explained that like many parents in other cultures, she and her husband liked to teach their children respect, the way they would have done if they were in Kenya. She said, for example, they have taught their children not to address African adults and family friends by their first names; therefore, they address them as, “Auntie Josephine,” “Uncle Peter” or “Mama Felix” (mother of Felix), as they would have done in Kenya.

Chonge reported that they played Swahili music mostly on weekends and on special days, such as when the family had guests who would enjoy the music. She added that although her children recognized the music, they did not pay much attention to it; for example, they would not select it. When I asked Kevin about it, he said that he could recognize the beats and rhythm of the Swahili music from other music, but he liked more
pop music from the West because he could understand it. Kevin’s statement appears to indicate loss of Swahili proficiency:

We have a lot of Swahili music in my house, and my dad keeps on buying them, church music and other music. I listen to it when my mom and my dad play it. But I understand only a little what they are saying in the songs because sometimes they sing very fast.

Robert and Diana. Like Kevin’s family, Robert and Diana’s family valued their Kenyan culture. When I visited the family one Sunday afternoon, I found them all dressed in their African outfits. Robert and Diana’s mother, Dangio, told me that they had recently returned from church. Like Kevin’s mother, Chonge, Dangio reported that sometimes the whole family wore their Kenyan outfits, especially when they went to church or to an African function. She said that she and her husband tried as much as possible to maintain their Kenyan culture in their home because it was important for their children. Dangio reported that “Sometimes I make food that we ate back home such as sukuma wiki. The children know it because they had eaten this vegetable back in Kenya.” Diana maintained that she liked many Kenyan dishes that the family ate, and she was learning to make chapati and other Kenyan dishes from her mother. She added that she liked learning to cook with her mother because sometimes they spoke Swahili when they were cooking. Diana said she learned some words used when preparing vegetables and words for cooking, “I know words for chopping vegetables, like sukuma wiki [kale], and words for frying and boiling. Because my mom will ask me to boil water for making ugali [corn meal], or sometimes I fry maandazi [East African doughnuts].”

Dangio shared more about her family’s appreciation for the Kenyan culture. She noted the importance of sharing home country information with their children. She explained, “We talk about Kenya all the time. Their father and I read news from the
internet and we discuss and the children hear about it.” In addition, in an interview Dangio mentioned that by being part of the East African community in town, her children are learning some of the traditions:

We teach our children to respect adults and our friends, and to be helpful to others. This is what we would have done back in Kenya. So our children do that, they respect our African friends in the community, for example greeting them politely and so forth. We integrate with other Kenyans. My children have seen some of the cultural practices that we do back home, for example, when I had my baby two and half years ago, my children saw women in the community visiting us and bringing us food and gifts for the baby. That is what we do at home. They have also seen me going to visit someone who is bereaved, and things like that.

Dangio explained that they had Swahili and Kimaragoli music in the home that she sometimes played and wanted her children to hear and enjoy it. However, from the interviews, I realized that Diana did not enjoy the Kenyan music as much as she enjoyed the Western music. She explained that “I listen to Swahili and Kimaragoli music from Kenya when my mom and dad play it, but I don’t understand a whole lot. When I want to play music I will not select Swahili music. I like rap music and R&B [rhythm and blues].” In addition, Robert did not seem to be much interested in the Swahili music either. When asked, he responded, “My mom has Swahili gospel music, I don’t listen to it, I like hip-hop and rap.” When asked further, if he would have listened to the music if it was not gospel music, he said, “I don’t understand it.” Like Kevin, the children’s attitude toward Swahili and Kimaragoli music could be an indication that they are losing their Swahili proficiency. They may also seem to relate to the Western music due to their generation’s music preferences.

Sophia. Having lived in the same housing complex with Sophia’s family for a number of years, I have noticed the cultural practices that Sophia’s family maintains that relates them to their home country. When I talked to Sophia’s mother, Mkunde, she
expressed that she wanted her family to uphold Kenyan culture not only through Swahili language but also through other aspects. Mkunde expressed that she liked cooking Kenyan foods like *githeri* (mixture of corn and beans) and that her children knew the names of the dishes. She said Sophia had started to learn to cook *githeri*. In addition, Mkunde explained in an interview, that there were other cultural practices that the family embraced, such as Kenyan artifacts on display in their house and the type of clothing that they sometimes wear:

> We have a lot of artifacts, Kenyan artifacts. Some of them are on the walls and my husband keeps on sending some every time he gets someone coming to this place. My children and I sometimes wear our African dress and Kenyan T-shirts that advertise Kenya.

In addition Mkunde explained that she wanted her children, Sophia and her sister to maintain connections with relatives in Kenya, she said, “I also talk with my children about relatives back in Kenya and what is happening there. By doing this the children will get a picture of their home, people and country.”

Like the other children, Sophia’s attitude toward Swahili music demonstrated generational music preferences. During an interview, when I asked Sophia about Swahili music, she explained that there was some in her home that her father had brought with him the last time he visited from Kenya. She added that he occasionally sent them more music. But like the other children, Sophia did not seem to enjoy the music from Kenya, she noted, “Sometimes my mother plays Swahili music. I don’t pick and play it myself because I don’t understand some of it, and I don’t like the types of beats they have in the Swahili music. I like hip-hop.” But even if Sophia did not understand everything in the lyrics, Mkunde seemed determined to play the music at home. She explained that “I want my children to hear the songs so that they can recognize the music when they hear it.”
Victor. After arrival from Kenya in the summer of 2006, Victor’s family integrated with other Kenyan families in the community. Like the other families, Victor’s family maintained Kenyan culture through food and other traditional practices. I was surprised when Victor explained that he had been assisting in preparing meals. Sometimes Victor found himself cooking because his mother was in Kenya, but he explained that he could only cook the food they ate in Kenya and that was good enough because he liked Kenyan food:

Sometimes our father stays late at school so my brother or I cook dinner or we help each other … I don’t know how to cook spaghetti yet, I only know how to cook ugali, rice, and vegetables like cabbage and sukuma wiki that we used to eat back home in Kenya. But I like Kenyan food … I learned to cook back in Kenya because I don’t have a sister.

During an interview, Mhina, Victor’s father, expressed that he wanted his children to remember Kenya all the time, because he thought it was important for them to know that although they were here in the US, they were Kenyans.

Swahili music was another aspect that Victor’s family connected with from Kenya. However, they only played it when riding in the car. Victor mentioned that no music other than Swahili was played in his father’s car. Unlike the other children, Victor mentioned that “I like the music, because when I hear it I remember home and my relatives and friends in Kenya.” With pride Victor’s father, Mhina, pointed out that “I enjoy playing the music and it reminds me of Kenya and Tanzania, I want my boys to continue hearing it, especially the little boy.”

Mhina also pointed out that when Victor and his siblings first came to the US, they brought their Kenyan T-shirts and he wanted them to continue wearing them. When I asked Victor about this, he reported that he liked wearing his Kenya T-shirts and
sometimes people would ask him if he was from Kenya. But Victor seemed to have mixed feelings about this. During the same interview he expressed that sometimes he did not like it when people asked him. Although there was no indication that he had received any negative responses, he did not take it to be a friendly gesture. He interpreted that probably people wanted to make fun of him. This misunderstanding could be due to his being new and not trusting the people around him (The English translations are provided in brackets):

Josephine: Sasa umesema hupendi kama watu wanakuuliza kuhusu T-shirt yako, na kama wewe unatoka Kenya. Kwa sababu gani hupendi? [You have said that you don’t like people to ask you about your T-shirts and whether you are from Kenya. Why does it bother you?],

Victor: Saa zingine sipendi kwa sababu sijui kama wanaona ni vizuri au ni vibaya au wanataka kunicheka. [Sometimes I don’t like it because I don’t know whether they like it or they want to make fun of me].

**Varied Swahili language and literacy practices**

**Kevin: Speaking Swahili as part of the Kenyan culture.** Swahili was the preferred language in Kevin’s home. According to Chonge, Kevin’s mother, all family members spoke Swahili, including Kevin’s three year old sister who was born in the US. Kevin seemed to be a proficient Swahili speaker. During my observations, I noticed that Kevin’s parents spoke Swahili between them and with their children. They used Swahili to give directions, commands or requests to their children. Kevin and his siblings spoke Swahili when playing or watching television. Moreover, conversations between family members involved different topics, such as the children’s day at school, or making reference to past experiences and events. When they talked about relatives in Kenya, Kevin was able to participate in the conversation because he had an opportunity to travel
back to Kenya less than four months ago. Kevin seemed to have the oral receptive and productive skills of Swahili.

In addition, Kevin’s grandmother visited with the family two years ago and stayed for about a year, helping to take care of Kevin’s sister when she was a baby. Chonge reported that while staying with the family, her mother-in-law spoke Swahili all the time with the children because she did not speak English. However, occasionally she used an ethnic language with Kevin’s father. The little English that she learned during her stay, she used only to communicate with non-Swahili speakers in the community.

I noticed that at times, the family members code mixed and code switched between English and Swahili: parent to parent; parents to children; and between Kevin and his siblings. Comparing the parents’ language use, the mother code mixed and code switched more than her husband. Spoken English was used more than Swahili when the parents and children discussed school related topics. Nevertheless, from my observations, the family spoke Swahili more than 80% of the time without code mixing and code switching.

Although Chonge was proud that her family was speaking Swahili, she acknowledged the challenges that the family was facing in making a conscious effort to get their children to speak Swahili. Chonge described, in English, how she supported oral Swahili use in the home:

At home my husband and I and the kids, we all speak Swahili and we push our children to speak Swahili … Kevin is a good Swahili speaker; I push him and his siblings to always speak Swahili. But we cannot avoid the use of English from time to time and we remind them that you guys have to speak Swahili, and this is because English is in “their mouth” we have to keep on pushing them to speak Swahili.
When asked about her family’s desire to speak Swahili in their home, Chonge explained that she and her husband value Swahili. They also wanted Kevin and his siblings to speak Swahili so that they could connect with people back home, grandparents and extended family. In an interview, Kevin demonstrated his awareness of the relationship between language and identity, he said, “I like it [Swahili] because of my cultural background, and it identifies me.” He also explained that he spoke more Swahili on weekends than on school days.

However, I was surprised to note that Kevin did not speak Swahili to some Swahili speakers, an observation that even his mother Chonge was aware of. He spoke Swahili to me because I always started talking to him in Swahili. He did not speak Swahili to children who visited his home or to those he met at school, including his Swahili classmate, Robert. Moreover, he did not speak Swahili to Swahili speaking adults when he met them outside his home, at places such as the community gatherings. When asked about his language use with other children, Kevin seemed to capitalize on the idea that Swahili was not the language of school:

I don’t speak Swahili to them (other children) because nobody starts speaking Swahili to me when we are together, and I don’t start … And if I see them at school, I don’t speak Swahili to them because the language of school is English.

While oral Swahili was emphasized in Kevin’s family, the same importance was not given to Swahili literacy. Kevin explained that he had two Swahili books that he had brought with him from Kenya when he first came; however, he had not read them since arriving in the US. In addition, he did not remember the titles of the books. But besides the Swahili books that Kevin claimed to own, there were also many Swahili books and other materials at Kevin’s home because both his parents have been Swahili instructors at
the local university since Kevin started schooling in the US. However, Kevin reported that he did not read any of the Swahili books or write Swahili. It seems that even though his parents were capable of teaching Kevin Swahili reading and writing, they did not make any efforts to push for Swahili literacy. When I asked Kevin’s mother about her child’s Swahili literacy, she acknowledged that although they had a lot of Swahili materials in the home, neither she nor her husband had provided any Swahili reading or writing instruction to their son. Moreover, they have not encouraged him to read or write Swahili on his own.

   However, Chonge recognized that although she and her husband were not making any efforts to encourage Kevin to practice Swahili literacy in the home, the child was interested in Swahili reading. In an interview, Chonge pointed out:

   Kevin gets interested when I read to his three year old sibling. Sometimes he sits next to me and his sister when we are reading Swahili and when the story is over he says, mom can you read it again or he asks questions about the story, like, what happened to the old man in the story, or something like that.

   While Kevin did not have English books of his own, he read books in English from his school library or from the local public libraries where he was a member. Kevin pointed out that he liked to read chapter books, and his favorite genre was fantasy. I also noticed that he had access to daily English newspaper that his parents brought home from campus. Like his father, Kevin liked sports and often read the sports pages especially when the local university teams played. But Chonge reported that although Kevin was a good English reader, at times he did not understand everything he read from the English newspaper, and he asked his parents for the meanings of the new words he encountered. In an interview, Kevin pointed out that he regularly worked on his homework for class. He wrote journals, summaries and worked on other reading comprehension tasks. In
addition, he liked browsing the internet and playing computer games. Chonge explained that, “I think what really pushes us to teach the child is when we are helping with the homework because here (in the US school) he does not have Swahili homework, so we don’t do it.”

Chonge regretted not supporting Kevin’s Swahili literacy. She explained that since both she and her husband were graduate students, and were busy with their own schooling, it was difficult to find time. She said that as a result of this study, she has become aware of the situation and will plan to help her son develop Swahili literacy. She expressed her desire for her son to be a proficient bilingual and bi-literate:

I want my son to know Swahili because it is important for identity. I would like to see him learn it, speak it, read it, and write it. But I would also like for him to understand other languages, international languages, because they are important for wider communication. I do not want any language to be killed because each language has its function.

Robert and Diana: Maintaining ethnic identity without language identity. While Kenyan maintenance of cultural traditions seemed to be important in Kevin and Robert and Diana’s families, language use in the two families varied. In contrast to Kevin’s family, English appeared to be the dominant language in Robert and Diana’s family. Moreover, besides Swahili and English, at times, Robert and Diana’s parents spoke Kimaragoli, their ethnic language. However, both children mentioned that they understood only a few words of Kimaragoli, because they did not learn the language. Although Dangio preferred for her children, Robert, Diana and others to speak Swahili at home, she also indicated that she liked them to be proficient in English, because it is the language of school. Only occasionally, I noticed Dangio speaking Swahili with the children. It happened when she was giving them instructions or asking questions. On the
other hand, Diana and Robert’s father, who was also at one time a volunteer Swahili teacher at Robert’s school, used English with the children almost all the time. From the observations, the family spoke Swahili for less than 50% of the time. Although Diana and Robert’s family was planning to return to Kenya eventually, it appeared that the home contexts did not seem to support the maintenance of Swahili. Dangio’s desire for her children to speak Swahili was not supported by actual practices.

When responding to a question on language use, Robert indicated experiencing Swahili language attrition, even though he was receiving Swahili instruction at school. He explained, “Although I like speaking Swahili, I have forgotten most of the words because I now speak more English.” Robert’s comment is supported by my observations. I noticed that he spoke English to his parents and siblings most of the time and only occasionally incorporated a Swahili word or a short phrase in his talk when responding to his mother. He never spoke any Swahili to his father, probably because his father always spoke English to him. In an interview, Dangio regretted that her children have almost lost their Swahili proficiency particularly, Robert:

They were proficient in spoken Swahili when we first got here, but now they have stopped speaking Swahili. They only speak English. Diana speaks Swahili occasionally to me and her father when she wants to do so. Robert is having problems now speaking Swahili, but when you speak to him he understands.

The belief that Robert had the receptive skills to understand his mother’s communication all the time differed from my observations. I noticed that at times Robert did not understand the interactions. This occurred when he made facial expressions or gestures like shaking his head, showing his mother that he was not certain of the direction, request or question asked.
Robert did not interact much in Swahili outside his home, either. When I asked him about his use of Swahili with other people, he indicated that with other people he just spoke English:

Sometimes I play with Kevin; he is my friend but we don’t speak Swahili. Even at school I don’t speak Swahili to him, or to V. or W. … and these days since we moved out from International Village we don’t attend many Kenyan parties. But when we go, I don’t speak Swahili to anybody because those people speak English. But sometimes I speak to you [me the researcher] when you speak to me.

When I asked him why he did not speak Swahili to Kevin, who was a friend, school mate and Swahili classmate, he responded, “Well, I don’t know, we just speak English.”

During an interview, Robert’s sister, Diana, indicated that she was also experiencing Swahili language attrition due to lack of language use opportunities. When I asked her, she explained, “I like speaking Swahili but I have forgotten some words because now I don’t use Swahili as much as I did in Kenya, I need to be spoken to more in Swahili.” Diana added that she liked it when people like me and other family friends like Baba Kevin [father of Kevin] spoke to her in Swahili.

Josephine: What language do you speak with people coming to your house who speak Swahili and English?

Diana: With some of them I have to speak to them in Kiswahili because when they come to my house all they do is speak Kiswahili [Swahili].

Josephine: Who are these people?

Diana: Some family friends like Baba Kevin, he speaks to me in Kiswahili [Swahili] all the time and I have to answer him in Kiswahili [Swahili], and you.

Josephine: Anybody else?

Diana: And sometimes Sophia’s mom.
Like Kevin, both Robert and Diana’s literacy practices focused on English and activities mostly related to school work. Moreover, it appeared that the parents provided a lot of English literacy support. In an interview, Dangio explained that on school days she and her husband took turns to provide help when their children were working on their homework. Although Robert did not own his own books, he liked reading English. Besides reading English books for homework, he was a member of one of the local public libraries where he checked out books regularly. When I asked him about the books he was reading, he mentioned that he liked to read horror books:

I liked reading books that I picked from the library every Saturday, but that was before our car broke down from a road accident three months ago. Now I don’t go to the library so often but I check out books from the school library and my favorites are horror books.

Like her brother Robert, Diana did not have English books of her own, but she checked out books that she liked to read from the school library and also from one of the local libraries regularly. It also appears that Diana did not want to disconnect with Africa. During an interview she explained that at times she enjoyed reading books on Africa such as, books describing different African cultures.

Both children spent a lot of time on the computer especially on weekends. While Robert played computer games with his brother, Diana browsed the internet, read and wrote electronic emails to her friends. She also said that at times she used the computer to work on her class assignments.

Swahili materials were not readily available in Robert and Diana’s home. The only Swahili materials that the family owned were three Swahili books that Dangio had brought from Kenya when the family first arrived. Robert said that he did not read any of the Swahili books. When I asked him why, he responded that he did not know why, but
when he wanted to read a book, he did not select a Swahili book. It appears that while the parent brought those books from Kenya to be read by his children, she did not encourage Robert to read them. Diana, on the other hand, reported that she had read the books over and over again and she now knew all the stories by heart. It seems possible that Diana wanted to get more exposure to literature materials in Swahili.

The parents were not good examples when it came to Swahili literacy practices. Dangio reported that she and her husband did not read any Swahili in the house. They mostly read some local English newspapers when they had time or browsed the internet and read online English news from Kenya.

Robert did not write Swahili at home. Although during the study he was getting Swahili instruction at school, he did not bring home any reading or writing homework. But it was different with Diana. She explained that once in awhile she wrote Swahili that she rarely shared with her parents. She said she liked to write poems. Poetry was a genre that she liked to write even before she came to the US. She added that she used to like reading poems from her Swahili textbooks in Kenya.

Surprisingly, for a short period of time, Diana and Robert had occasional opportunities to read Swahili with their father. During the few months when their father was a volunteer teacher of Swahili at Vine Elementary School, he gave Robert and his sister Diana some comprehension questions from the reading texts that he used for teaching. Diana expressed her enthusiasm:

When my father was teaching Swahili last semester he would sometimes give me and my brother Robert something to read, and answer questions or talk about the story. I liked reading the stories and talking about them. But since he stopped teaching Swahili, I hardly read any Swahili.
In spite of the lack of Swahili literacy support, Dangio reported that she favored biliteracy. She knew that it was important for her children but at the same time she was of the opinion that English was more important for her children because it was the language of school:

I don’t have time for that. Let me be sincere with you Josephine. Sometimes it is the ignorance on our part on the effect English is having on our children. It is like since they go to school they understand the teacher, they are able to write, and they will do exams. Then problems seem to have seized for us to emphasize to learn Swahili.

It appears that her participation in the study created awareness in Dangio about the language situation in her family. Dangio added that she would now seriously think about changing things around. She expressed her feelings and intentions: “I am ashamed. I will start to pay more attention to language use here at home and give these guys [her children, Robert, Diana and the others] the attention they deserve on reading and writing Swahili.”

Sophia: “The language situation in the home is bilingual.” In contrast to Diana and Robert’s family, in Sophia’s family speaking Swahili was emphasized. Mkunde explained that she wanted her children, Sophia and her seven year old sister to speak Swahili as part of their culture, but it was not without challenge:

I speak Swahili to the children, Sophia and her sibling all the time. Although I like and insist that Sophia and her sibling speak Swahili that does not always happen, the language situation in our home is bilingual. When they first came, they spoke Swahili all the time but as time passes, I am seeing Sophia and her sister choose to speak more English.

I noticed that Mkunde used Swahili when calling for her children’s attention, asking questions, directing or at times chatting with them. However, the children responded in Swahili or sometimes code mixed Swahili and English or code switched between the
languages. When children interacted among themselves, the language used was mostly English. Although they still speak Swahili, it appeared that the amount of Swahili spoken in the home was equally the same amount as that used to speak English.

When I asked Sophia about her use of Swahili, she explained that she liked to speak the language but sometimes she did that to please her mother:

I like speaking Swahili. I spoke Swahili in Kenya. On weekends I speak Swahili more because I am at home and my mother wants me to speak Swahili. She speaks Swahili to me all the time. I also speak Swahili over the phone with my father who is in Kenya on Saturdays or Sundays and also to my cousins, but sometimes I mix with English.

However, I noticed that like the other children, Sophia did not speak much Swahili with people outside her home. It also seemed that the family used Swahili only among themselves. During an observation, I was surprised when Swahili speaking visitors came to the house, and immediately the host family changed the language from the Swahili that they were using to English. I was curious about this situation. When I asked Sophia about her use of Swahili with people outside her home, she reported that she spoke Swahili with very few people in the community. She said she used mostly English because she was now used to speaking English all the time:

I am friends with Diana but we hardly speak Swahili at school or at home. And some of my Kenyan friends, they don’t speak Swahili because they were born here. I speak Swahili to a few people in the community, mainly family friends from Kenya and to you, but mostly I speak English to adults because I am now used to speaking English.

Sophia explained that she liked to read English all the time. She was interested in reading books from her school library as well as public libraries where she was a member. She also owned a few English books such as, *Arnold’s Christmas, Green Envy* and *The Seven Chinese Brothers* that she also read. When asked about reading English,
Sophia expressed that when she was not reading for school work, she liked reading fiction and non fiction books in series or by particular authors. In an interview Sophia’s mother, Mkunde said that Sophia was an independent reader, but at times she helped her with her homework. It also appeared that Sophia took seriously her passion for reading English. Mkunde described Sophia’s participation in a reading competition during the summer:

Last summer Sophia participated in reading activities organized by Barnes and Nobles. It was a reading competition where she had to read a certain number of books. Although she had read quite a number of books that summer she did not follow the competition to the end.

English literacy was also practiced in other activities. During my home visits, I noticed that Sophia spent a lot of time, about 40% of the time I was at her house, sitting at the computer. Like the other children, I noticed that she was doing research for her school work or typing her homework. She also browsed the internet, played games or wrote electronic mails. In addition, once a week Sophia attended youth programs at her church, and to prepare for the meetings, most of the time she had to read and write responses. Sophia also reported that every Friday night she read the Newsletter distributed by the International Village housing office where lived. She said she read the Newsletter mostly to find out if there was an interesting event that her family could attend, “I like reading the Newsletter because sometimes there are some events that me and my mom and my sister could attend. Sometimes they advertise some interesting events or trips.”

Even though English literacy was more practiced by Sophia, to an extent, Swahili literacy was also supported. Occasionally, Sophia read Swahili books from the few books that the family owned. She also read from copies of texts that her mother made for
her. In trying to help her daughter understand the readings, whenever possible, Mkunde gave Sophia some comprehension tasks to complete in Swahili, such as comprehension questions and summaries. Most of the time, Sophia completed the comprehension tasks orally. However, whether the exercises were completed orally or written, Mkunde discussed Sophia’s performance with her and helped her identify language problems, if any. As well, Mkunde admitted that most of the time she did not have much time to teach Sophia, Swahili, but she often encouraged her to read because her goal was for Sophia not to lose her Swahili literacy. In an interview Sophia pointed out that she read more Swahili when her mother was teaching Swahili at the university compared to the present time. Although Sophia occasionally read Swahili, she rarely wrote in the language.

Mkunde expressed her perspectives on Swahili literacy support. She thought that even if it was a difficult task, it was important for her to continue working hard to help her daughter maintain her home language, and that was what she was trying to do:

One major factor that the child has not been very keen on reading and writing Swahili even when I encourage her to do so is because it is not school work, but she tries … I believe that it is important for the child to maintain heritage language and for parents to work hard especially in the situation where there isn’t school and much community support.

**Victor: Speaking Swahili displayed bilingual identity.** Like Kevin’s family, in Victor’s home Swahili was the main language used for interactions. I noticed that it was used about 80% of the time without code switching and mixing. Victor’s father, Mhina, reported that although Swahili was the language used most, other languages used in the home were Kisi, the family’s ethnic language, and English. In an interview (this interview was conducted in Swahili. English translations are provided in the brackets),
Victor pointed out that he spoke all three languages, and elaborated on his family language use:

Katika familia yangu tunazungumza sana Kiswahili kwa sababu ninakipenda na pia ninakijua vizuri. Na yule kaka yango mdogo ambaye ana miaka sita hawezi kusema Kisi, na hajui bado kusema Kiingereza vizuri. Kwa hiyo tunasema Kiswahili wakati mwingi. [My family and I speak mainly Swahili because I like it and I know it better, and my six year old brother does not speak Kisi our ethnic language, and he does not know much English yet so we speak Swahili most of the time].

I noticed in Victor’s home that Swahili was used not only for procedural requirements but used more widely. Sometimes the whole family engaged in Swahili conversations and discussed different topics, such as, characters from television shows that the children liked or recent events when they were out of town on a weekend. When children wanted ask their father for something, they used Swahili. For example, if they wanted permission to play outside or if they wanted their father to take them some place. During one visit, I heard Victor speaking Swahili over the phone to his mother who was away in Kenya.

Language use in Victor’s home followed the communicative situations and communication events concept. When Mhina explained about his household’s language use, he said when and what language was used in his family depended on various things. For example, if the conversation included the whole family or he had a question directed to one of the children. In addition, language choice depended on whether the conversation was school or home related. His family used mostly Swahili for home related topics:

It all depends on what we are talking about and if we are having a conversation with the little boy and depending on other things. We use English for homework and other school issues. We use Swahili for everything else and sometimes we
mix all the three languages, Swahili, Kisi and English, but most of the time it is Swahili.

Besides family members, Victor spoke Swahili with adults from the community who would start speaking Swahili to him. However, like the other children, Victor did not have much opportunity to speak Swahili with other children. It was suprising to me that although he was in the same ESL class with Diana, he did not speak Swahili to her.

Victor’s literacy practices focused on English and only on school related activities. Victor’s father, Mhina, was aware that Victor was only reading for school work, “Most of the times he comes home with class readers, what they read in class. They put a lot of effort to encourage them to read. I haven’t seen him bring books from the library. I am not sure he borrows some from there.” This was in contrast to the other children who also read English books for independent reading. Some of the books that he had read for his ESL and Reading Literacy classes included *Bridge to Terabithia* and *Because of Win Dixie*.

It appears that Victor was probably overwhelmed with class work because he was new to the US school system. When I asked him why he was not getting books for independent reading, Victor expressed that he had a lot of school work and there was no time for other readings. However, he occasionally, at home, browsed the internet. Although the family focus was on English literacy, Mhina reported that the only time he provided Victor some help with reading or writing English was when he was doing his homework. He noted that occasionally he played Scrabble with his children and he sometimes used such opportunities to engage the child in English literacy.

In comparison to the other children, Victor was the only child who read Swahili on the internet. He reported that he occasionally read Swahili from the internet, but
mostly he read verses of Swahili songs, including the Kenya national anthem. He did not know how to access, for example, other Swahili texts such as Swahili newspapers from Kenya. Although Victor liked reading Swahili he did not have any Swahili material in his home. During an interview, he became aware of the need for Swahili reading materials in his home. He stated that he was going to ask his father to buy him some Swahili books when he travels to Kenya during the coming summer, “Baba yangu atasafiri Kenya mwezi wa sita. Nitamuuliza kama anaweza kuninunulia vitabu vya Kiswahili … ninapenda pia vitabu vya vibonzo.” [My father will travel to Kenya this coming June. I will ask him to buy me some Swahili books … I also like the cartoons.]

Victor also reported that although he used to write a lot in Swahili in Kenya, he did not write in the language since he came to the US more than six months ago because all school work is in English:

Kule Kenya niliandika sana Kiswahili niliandika katika Kiswahili wakati wote, lakini hapa, hapana. Sikuandika kitu chochote katika Kiswahili mpaka wakati huu, sasa ninaandika katika kitabu chako. Wakati wote ninaandika kazi za shule kwa Kizungu. [In Kenya I was writing Swahili all the time, but now I have not written any Swahili since I came to the US, until the time I started writing a Swahili journal for you. This is because all the school work is in English.]

Mhina did not recognize the importance of emphasizing Swahili literacy for his son. He explained that he did not find it necessary for his son to engage in Swahili literacy practices because, according to him, he already knew that language; “I don’t think that it was important to encourage Victor on Swahili literacy because he knows to read and write Swahili well from Kenya; we need to focus on English.”

**Summary.** There were efforts in all the families to maintain the Kenyan culture in different ways, such as, house decorations, food, clothing, music and other cultural practices. All parents indicated that maintenance of Kenyan culture was important for
their children because they wanted them to continue to identify themselves as Kenyans. Findings also show that Kenyan culture maintenance was enhanced by the cultural strength of the East African community. Although four of the children, Kevin, Robert, Diana and Sophia expressed that they were not interested in Kenyan music, but preferred Western music, their attitudes did not stop the parents from playing it in their homes. Victor, the child who arrived in the US in seventh grade, is the only one who continued to like Kenyan music.

The children’s use of Swahili differed from family to family; and code switching and code mixing were observed. In Kevin, Sophia and Victor’s households, Swahili was emphasized, although Sophia felt that she had to speak the language because her mother wanted her to do so. Also, in Victor’s home, Kisi, the family’s ethnic language was spoken. Findings show less emphasis on Swahili use in Robert and Diana’s home; the mother used Swahili occasionally and the father used English. In an interview Robert admitted language loss. Whereas all of the children expressed positive attitudes toward Swahili, Kevin and Victor perceived Swahili as part of their Kenyan identity. However, outside their homes, all of the children did not speak much Swahili, whether among themselves or with adults and they could not explain it.

All of the parents perceived supporting English literacy to be important because it was the school language. Although Kevin, Robert and Diana’s parents stated that they desired for their children to be bi-literate, there was not much evidence to support the statement. In the homes, children engaged in English literacy practices, such as, working on school work, doing independent reading from books borrowed from school or public libraries, and they all had support from their parents. Despite the availability of Swahili
materials in Kevin’s home, he did not read or write Swahili with his parents or on his own, but he liked hearing his mother read Swahili to his youngest sister. In Robert and Diana’s cases, only occasionally, for a few months when their father was teaching Swahili at Robert’s school, did they participate in Swahili reading instruction with him. According to the findings, Diana memorized all of the three Swahili books her mother brought from Kenya, and she also wrote poetry in Swahili showing that she was attached to Swahili literature. However, she lacked Swahili reading materials. Robert and Diana’s mother thought English was more important than Swahili. She indicated that she did not have time for Swahili literacy. Sophia was the only student whose parent emphasized Swahili literacy and consistently supported it. Victor’s parent was not as concerned about his continued literacy development in Swahili, because he stated that Victor already had enough Swahili literacy proficiency.

School Literacy Instruction and Assessment

Ms. Brent’s mainstream classroom: Teacher valued students’ backgrounds but did not recognize Swahili

Classroom setting and participants. Kevin was in Ms. Brent’s mainstream classroom. Ms. Brent was an African American woman who had been teaching 5th grade at Vine Elementary School for 5 years. She had a Master’s degree in education. The class had a population of 19 students who were all African Americans except for 3 students including Kevin who were non-native speakers of English. Among these students, one was an African girl who spoke a different African language from Kevin’s and was also in
Ms. Ramos’s ESL classroom together with Robert. The other student, a boy, was Hispanic.

The room was decorated with posters, charts and pictures. Most of the decorations related to students’ learning, such as math, science, social studies and English. Some charts were students’ work and others were made by Ms. Brent. For example, one of the English charts listed steps for writing a persuasive essay. Ms. Brent explained that she sometimes made reference to the chart during writing instruction. Bookshelves with reading materials such as books and magazines occupied one of the classroom walls. Literacy instruction was offered in the afternoon from 1:45 to 2:45.

**Instructional practices.** Ms. Brent explained that when she planned for instruction, her objectives were for her students to comprehend the information and to work on different reading strategies if they were having any problems with comprehension. For example, she had been practicing with them on how to use context clues and think aloud strategies while reading if they were having problems understanding the text. She added that the school had been focusing on the area of fluency so she has been helping her students become fluent readers. Since most of her students were dialect speakers of English, she modeled reading aloud before letting individual students read to the whole class and encouraged students to read the difficult words slowly without skipping them. At times students read aloud in pairs or groups to help each other in reading fluency. In an interview, Ms. Brent explained that she was working with Kevin on his problem of skipping articles when reading aloud. It seems that Kevin’s reading problem might derive from Swahili, because there are no articles in the language.
During classroom observations, I noticed that Ms. Brent included a lot of vocabulary instruction. In an interview, she explained that vocabulary instruction helped L2 students as well as her English dialect speakers to understand the concepts. Ms. Brent focused on vocabulary items that her students were not familiar with. At appropriate times during the reading, she picked a vocabulary item and asked students to provide its meaning and discussed it. Since reading comprehension depends on vocabulary knowledge, she sometimes integrated vocabulary instruction and reading comprehension strategies instruction. During such activities, students volunteered to speak by raising their hands, and sometimes she picked them. I noticed that most of the time Kevin volunteered to speak, indicating vocabulary knowledge and ability to comprehend the reading texts.

Often, at the beginning of a whole class reading session, Ms. Brent spent time to find out students’ background knowledge on the reading. For example, during one of my visits, the class read a text on the adventures of an urban girl who spent her summer on a farm. Ms. Brent asked what students knew about farms. The amount of background knowledge that students had on the topic varied. Kevin provided some of his own experiences from his grandmother’s village in rural Kenya. He shared mostly about the infrastructure, including the type of roads found in the rural areas where there are farms, buildings and the open farmers’ markets.

Ms. Brent’s conducted her instruction in whole class setting and in small groups. At times students read in groups and were assigned a comprehension task such as summarizing the text. When I asked Ms. Brent about the reading groups, she explained that she had organized the groups according to students’ reading abilities which she had
determined using the Direct Reading Assessment, “I have grouped students according to their reading abilities. This helps me to figure out the type of assistance to provide to different groups. I also use the groups for guided reading.”

On other occasions, such as during down time or when Ms. Brent was working with students, one on one, I noticed that students engaged in silent reading. Students were allowed to choose any book or magazine they wanted to read from the shelves and they could sit anywhere they wanted in the room. They could also read books they checked out from the library. It seems that students were accustomed to the structure because they did not seem to get off task. In an interview Kevin pointed out that once a week his class could go to the library to check out books. The librarian allowed students to keep books for two weeks. He also mentioned that Ms. Brent allowed them to pick any book that interested them.

At times during class children were pulled out for guided reading with another teacher for about 40 minutes. During that time, Ms. Brent continued class with the remaining students or conducted Direct Reading Assessments. Once, I followed Kevin with four other students to Ms. Li’s room for guided reading. The reading and discussion followed the literature circle format, that is, students were assigned readings to do at home and were also assigned responsibilities, such as serving as the discussion director. During the group session they discussed the assigned chapters. For example, when I observed on this visit, students were assigned to read two chapters from a mystery book *The Westing Game* by Ellen Raskin. Kevin summarized chapter 13 while another student in the group summarized chapter 14. Kevin was also the discussion director, he asked questions from the chapters, for example, questions about the setting. Often, Ms. Li
picked Kevin to respond to questions she asked from the chapters that other students could not answer. For example, when the teacher asked: from the chapters you have read who do you think is the character who bombed the building, and why do you think it is that character?

Ms. Brent integrated writing with reading. She mentioned that students completed summaries of books they read, and they responded to comprehension questions and other comprehension tasks. They also wrote journals. Most of the time students could write on anything they wanted in their journals, but she sometimes gave them a topic. When writing journals, Ms. Brent wanted her students to be able to develop ideas on their topics and write them down. Although students were allowed to write on any topic in their journals, according to Ms. Brent, Kevin’s writings did not portray any Kenyan influence. It seems that Ms. Brent did not encourage her international students to do that. However, on one occasion, I noticed that after the teacher read a comic chapter to students, she asked them to write a dialogue in a similar format. Students were given the option to choose any type of character that they wanted to use in their dialogue. Kevin chose animal characters: a lion and a giraffe. It appears that he had some background knowledge about the animals, since they are among the big five animals in East Africa.

Mostly, Ms. Brent directed the writing activities and interacted with students while they were writing. Although students wrote individually or in their small groups, they sometimes shared their work with the whole class. In an interview, Ms. Brent explained that since her students were in the process of practicing for the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT), they were working on different types of writing:

I want to make sure that they know how to do narrative writing, expository writing, and different topics of writing so they always have something that they
have to write and read. In critical writing they are doing problem solving with math so we do a lot of writing in all subjects.

**Materials.** Ms. Brent explained that since the majority of her students were African- American, she sometimes selected reading books with African, and African-American themes, such as, music, poetry, and other cultural themes. Also, there were many books in Ms. Brent’s classroom; she also mentioned that her students loved her magazine library:

This year I decided to have a magazine library and students are interested in reading my magazines. Students love Nickelodeon magazines, Sports Illustrator for kids, anything else that is magazine… So my magazine library this year has worked very well and Kevin is into reading magazines.

**Kevin: A strong English reader and writer.** Chonge’s assessment of her son’s literacy abilities in English seemed to correspond to that of both Ms. Li and Ms. Brent. Ms. Li pointed out that during guided reading activities, Kevin demonstrated good comprehension of the readings but she also mentioned Kevin’s oral reading problem of skipping articles while he read. Kevin’s reading strengths were also reported by Ms. Brent who said that Kevin had a lot of background knowledge, and read at grade level:

He reads very well in English and is able to meet the expectations of as fifth grader, and he is able to read above grade level. He knows the material … Although Kevin is from another country he seems to have a lot of background knowledge. He reads a lot so he has a lot of information.

Regarding English writing, Ms. Brent explained that although Kevin wrote well in English, “Kevin does well in writing English to write any information that he likes, but his weakness is that he does not add detail to his work. Often he has to write his assignments over or add more information.”

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Ms. Ramos’s ESL classroom: Teacher recognized importance of students’ cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Classroom setting and participants. Robert was one of the 20 students who attended Ms. Ramos’s ESL classroom for 4th and 5th grade English language learners. The students were from diverse national backgrounds, including African, Arab, Chinese, Indian, and Korean. The class met for 110 minutes Monday through Friday. Besides Ms. Ramos, there was always another adult or more in the room to assist students needing help with their work. One of the adults was specifically providing assistance to Chinese speaking students with their reading and writing tasks.

Observation data illustrates that in Ms. Ramos class, children’s cultural and linguistic backgrounds were acknowledged. Besides the Chinese language used between the Chinese adult and students, I noticed that at times students of the same language background spoke their native languages. Listening to them closely, it appeared that they were discussing the activities they were working on. Although there were several African children in Robert’s class, he was the only Swahili speaker in the class, so he did not benefit from native language use.

Instructional practices. Ms. Ramos explained that in her class she taught content-based ESL and literacy:

I teach content-based ESL and literacy. My instruction uses thematic units and I spend more time on the topic to be covered in depth because you have to get common vocabulary words and the vocabulary related to the topic you are teaching. And when I plan I look at integrating all aspects of literacy in terms of word literacy, reading literacy, writing literacy, all aspects of literacy and within a specific unit.
Ms. Ramos’s instruction focused on themes. During the study, the class had completed an insect topic and was preparing for the insect museums. When I asked Ms. Ramos about the goal of the insect museum, she explained:

The goal of the insect museums is to assess students’ knowledge on the topic integrating all aspects of literacy. This is because students have to be able to first write a speech, read a speech and incorporating all language and to present it in a precise fashion … The museum is a culmination of activities that represent all the content they studied. Part of the museum is to present research reports on the topic.

Throughout the time, I observed groups of students working on their insects sub-topics that included: Who Am I (information that described the characteristics of an insect); General Information on Insects (information about the habitat, food, reproduction); Insect Body Parts; Metamorphosis; Helpful and Harmful Insects; How to Survive or Protect Themselves; and Social Insects. Students researched their topics, wrote report drafts and revised them until they were ready for presentations. Robert’s group presented on the topic Helpful Insects and Harmful Insects. In his museum presentation, he discussed “mosquitoes as harmful insects.” He related mosquitoes to the malaria disease that affects many people in sub-Saharan Africa. He responded to a question from the audience on malaria disease by giving symptoms of the illness such as high body temperature and weakness. It seems that it was a relevant opportunity for Robert to use his background knowledge on the topic he obtained when he lived in Kenya or knew from his parents.

Ms. Ramos integrated different activities with reading. On one of my visits, the class read The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe by Lewis, C.S. and Baynes, P. (2003). Ms. Ramos let one student at a time read a short paragraph while others followed in their books. She asked comprehension questions and discussed vocabulary questions with
students. Each time they discussed a vocabulary item, she wrote it on the board and its meaning for students to copy. Later students were assigned to write one sentence for each of the vocabulary items as homework. Ms. Ramos had different ways of getting her students to participate during activities, such as vocabulary discussion. Robert was usually active during reading activities, he raised his hand to answer questions but at times Ms. Ramos picked students who did not raise hands and encouraged them to speak. During one vocabulary discussion Robert raised his hand to answer when Ms. Ramos asked for the meaning of the word “handkerchief,” Robert said, “like Kleenex” and Ms. Ramos wrote on the board: handkerchief = cloth like Kleenex.

Working in small groups was much demonstrated in Ms. Ramos’s class. While some reading activities were conducted in a whole class setting, others were completed in small groups. In their reading groups, students read a book, fiction or non fiction, and worked on a writing activity related to their reading, such as providing a summary from the reading. Students carried out independent reading as well. Although they could choose their own books for independent reading from the library, Ms. Ramos had to approve them. She said her students knew the rule that if they did not know five words on a page, the book is hard for them. This was contrary to Kevin’s teacher, Ms. Brent who did not provide book choice guidelines.

During one of my visits in the classroom I noticed that Robert had picked a book titled *Scream Shop: Revenge of the Gargoyle* by Tracey West and Brian W. Dow (2005). I was curious to know why Robert selected this particular book and he explained that he liked scary books. He also mentioned a book that he had read for independent reading, *Maasai and I* by Virginia Kroll and Nancy Carpenter (1997) whose content described a
child who met a Maasai for the first time. A Maasai is a person from the Masai ethnic group found in Kenya and Tanzania. Robert said he chose the book because he knew about the Maasai people from Kenya. Robert’s comment suggested that he was still able to connect with this cultural background.

Although students could write at different levels, such as at word level, for example, in spelling tests, and at sentence level, Ms. Ramos, maintained that she liked to bring writing to paragraph level even with beginning readers. She did this by encouraging them to tell her a story. During class, I noticed that when students had an in class writing assignment Ms. Ramos went around the class to check their work and help them identify problems on their writing, such as punctuation and grammar. She sometimes stopped the writing and discussed the identified problem on the board if she found it was a common problem among students.

Students also wrote journals. Like Ms. Brent, Ms. Ramos pointed out that most of the time students were allowed to write on anything they wanted but she asked for ideas of what they planned to write on. However, sometimes she controlled what they wrote on by giving them a topic. When I wanted to know the topics that Robert generally wrote on in his journals, Ms. Ramos indicated that Robert’s journals were on general topics, they did not demonstrate any Kenyan background. During my observations I did not notice that encouragement from her. And besides journals and summaries, students also wrote book reports from independent reading.

**Materials.** When I asked her about teaching materials, Ms. Ramos reported that as much as possible she used books with multicultural aspects, however, the use of such books depended on the topic being covered. She explained:
I had a whole unit for example on American culture, and what I have done is to kind of contrast between different cultures and American culture. And I have done an entire unit that deals with Cinderella stories where you can read Cinderella story in many cultures in mind. I don’t necessarily go with specific book but I generally have a topic that I am working on and find a multicultural book that fits the topic.

**Robert needed to improve.** Ms. Ramos indicated that her specific instructional goals vary depending on a student’s ability, in that she increased her expectations as the student ability increased. Regarding Robert’s case, it appears that Robert’s literacy performance at school might be one of the the reasons for English emphasis by parents at home. Ms. Ramos noted that Robert’s reading had improved since the beginning of the year and added that he was now reading at grade level, however, he was lagging behind in writing:

His reading fluency has reached a score of 156 and he has generally very good comprehension when he reads. At the end of third grade he had comprehension of 2.6 and a total score of almost mid grade level reading and I think now he has increased probably to fourth grade reading at this point. He is reading at grade level. With writing he still needs support.

**The Swahili program: Limited instructional opportunities for developing students’ Swahili language and literacy**

**Classroom setting and participants.** Swahili instruction at Vine elementary was a 50 minute class, which was taught by three volunteer parents who alternated over three days during the week. Mrs. Kiondo, one of the three volunteer parents explained that since Swahili was not offered at the school, the parents approached the administration and the multicultural director at the school to introduce the program. Mrs. Kiondo, who also had a daughter in the program, noted that the purpose of the initiative was to help their children become literate in Swahili and to avoid losing the language, especially because some of the children would eventually return to Kenya. According to her,
Swahili language loss was common among Kenyan children in the community who did not get much support in the past.

Since three teachers were involved, it was apparent that coordination of the teaching and maintenance of consistency was a problem. Mrs. Kiondo reported that at times the parent teachers met briefly over the weekend or talked over the phone. Regarding the program compliance to the district requirements in terms of learning standards, she informed me that they did not have to comply with the district requirements at that time because the program was on a voluntary basis. In addition, they did not have to send home a report card:

When we started we were not asked to comply to the district requirements in terms of learning standards in reading and writing, mainly because it was on voluntary basis. We did not send home a report card. And if at any one time none of us was available then the children just remained in their regular classroom.

Kevin and Robert were among the five children in the Swahili class, with three other students from different grade levels and with differing Swahili proficiencies. Therefore, the class had a male fifth grader, a male fourth grader, a male third grader and two female second graders. The third grader, who was also Robert’s brother, and the two second graders did not have any Swahili instruction before they came to the US. One of the second graders was Kevin’s sister.

Instructonal practices. Teaching seemed challenging due to students’ varied proficiencies. Mrs. Kiondo explained that in her literacy instruction, she integrated reading and writing activities. Most of the time, she engaged students in reading aloud and vocabulary discussion. She said she modeled reading and each child had an opportunity to read a short passage. Mrs. Kiondo reported that she needed to model reading because students’ pronunciation tended to follow that of English, and she thought
hearing an adult read Swahili helped them with their Swahili pronunciation. For example, a noteworthy feature across all students was the pronunciation of Swahili /e/ into /i/ as in the Swahili word /pete/ “ring” where students pronounced it as /piti/ a non-Swahili word. Another example is the Swahili /a/ into /æ/ in a word such as /paka/ “cat” where students pronounced it as /pæka/.

Mrs. Kiondo maintained that because of reading difficulties encountered by the younger students who had no Swahili literacy background from Kenya, sometimes the older students read aloud while the younger students only listened. After the reading, students responded to comprehension questions orally and sometimes wrote their answers if they could. She allowed the younger students to draw their answers if they could not write a sentence. In addition, she occasionally put students into two groups for reading activities, one group for the older students and the other group for the younger students. Although Mrs. Kiondo reported that Swahili instruction in the class incorporated speaking, reading and writing activities, it appeared that Swahili writing was limited only to filling in missing words in sentences or providing missing agreement prefixes in nouns, adjectives and verbs on worksheets (see a discussion of Swahili morphology in Chapter 3).

According to Mrs. Kiondo, although children were challenged to only speak Swahili while in the class amongst themselves and with the teacher, at times they failed to maintain a discussion in Swahili and they code switched and code mixed between Swahili and English. While it might show that children experienced limited Swahili proficiencies, during home observations I noticed the prevalent behavior of code switching and code mixing between Swahili and English in all children’s homes.
Nevertheless, Mrs. Kiondo reported that in the Swahili class, children talked about their families and extended families in Kenya, their friends, the games they liked, what they did when they were not at school and other general topics. In addition, they discussed the texts they read and the vocabulary.

**Materials.** When the Swahili class first started, teachers used mostly on-line materials for teaching. Later, the program received funding from the multicultural director to buy materials. A parent who traveled to Kenya brought back two basal books used for first and second grade in the Kenyan education system, titled *Msingi wa Kiswahili: Darasa la Kwanza* and *Msingi wa Kiswahili: Darasa la Pili*. Consequently, the Swahili program had more authentic reading texts, and the instruction became more structured. Each lesson in the books had a short reading passage, comprehension tasks and grammar information and exercises. During the study, the book that was used for the class was *Msingi wa Kiswahili: Darasa la Pili* (book for Second Grade). The book had stories, such as animal stories and short narratives like *Jikoni kwa kina Roda* (In Roda’s family kitchen) followed by comprehension and grammar exercises (see Appendix F for sample pages). There were also a couple of poems in the book so children were introduced to Swahili poetry. When I asked the children about the readings, they explained that they liked the readings in which they made connections to them:

Josephine: Robert, tell me about the book that you are reading in your Swahili class.

Robert: I like the book we read … it has pictures of children and their names are Kenyan, and the things that they do. Also there was this story of a grandmother telling stories to her grandchildren and they were sitting around her. My grandmother used to do that too when we visited her.
Josephine: What book are you reading in the Swahili class? Can you tell me something about it?

Kevin: It’s a book that my dad brought from Kenya (Kevin’s father bought the book for the program from school funds). There is this story I liked that story of a boy who traveled to Mombasa during school break. My father told us that many years ago he went to high school in Mombasa.

Mrs. Kiondo expressed that as a result of the reading passages, students became interested with reading because they could relate to the narratives. However, she explained that they had not yet gone far in the book so they had not yet read other genres very much.

**Strengths and weaknesses distinct to Kevin and Robert.** Mrs. Kiondo reported that “Compared to Kevin, Robert was a motivated Swahili student. He performed well in reading comprehension, although he understood the readings, he had problems responding to comprehension questions in complete sentences.” Mrs. Kiondo explained that “One of Kevin’s strengths in the Swahili class was his oral language performance. He knew the vocabulary and was able to respond to comprehension questions or retell a story.” However, there was a concern that Kevin’s attendance for the Swahili class was not consistent. Chonge, Kevin’s mother had confirmed that there was a conflict of interest between her son attending Swahili and math which was offered at the same time on the Swahili class days. As well, due to the situation in the class, she thought that her son did not benefit much from the Swahili program:

When Swahili class started Kevin attended and then it wasn’t always there, because he told me that the Swahili class was offered at the same time they had math in his class, so he really missed a lot. I don’t think he benefited from the program. There was a conflict of interest.
Mr. Enodd’s English classroom: Teacher unaware of Sophia’s international status

Classroom setting and participants. Sophia, who attended Mr. Enodd’s class, had never been in an ESL program in the US. During the study she was observed during an English class at her middle school. The class had 21 students from diverse backgrounds including African-Americans, European-Americans, Arabic, Chinese, Mexicans and Polish students, but Sophia was the only African student. The class met Monday to Friday from 2:50 to 3:35. Its walls were covered with information or definition terms used in literature, for example, simile, metaphor, personification. The class teacher, Mr. Enodd, had been an English teacher at Brooke Middle School for 2 years after completion of a Masters degree at the local university.

Mr. Enodd pointed out that his curriculum and objectives in his literacy instruction followed the state learning standards:

It is always comprehension, big emphasis on literary aspects, literature, making connections and those are common things in education. So my curriculum and objectives of my literacy instruction is basically what is expected from the state learning standards.

Instructional practices. I observed that at the beginning of every class there was a 5 minute grammar activity. Mr. Enodd wrote an ungrammatical sentence on the board and asked a student volunteer to correct it. The lengths of the sentences varied, but I noticed that some were as long as nineteen words. The class discussed the grammatical aspects that needed to be corrected, and Mr. Enodd used such opportunities to be teaching moments, to teach grammar and punctuation. During my visits, Sophia did not volunteer to go to the board to correct the grammatically incorrect sentences. Once, during class, Mr. Enodd picked her and she correctly fixed the sentence. Although Sophia
was not volunteering, she was proficient in English grammar. Mr. Enodd reported that
“She is shy; she does not volunteer a lot of information in class, but when she is called to
answer questions, she understands very well and she articulates well when she speaks.”

Another regular activity in the class was for students to complete spelling test
worksheets, some of them from the Making Meaning series. First, students were given a
word list to study, and before the test, the word lists were collected. On some occasions,
students had studied the word list on the previous day. During the test, the teacher read a
sentence from his worksheet including the word that was missing on the students’
worksheet. Students were supposed to fill in the blank space using one of the words
studied from the word list. Not all students heard correctly the sentence when it was read
the first time, so they often they raised their hands to request for the sentence to be
repeated. The spelling test lasted about 10 minutes. It was obvious from Mr. Enodd’s
comments on Sophia’s worksheets, that the child’s performance on the tests was always
very good.

Reading activities in the class included reading aloud in the whole class setting or
in small groups, and discussions from the readings, but children were not grouped
according to reading levels, rather, according to sitting arrangement in the class. When
reading aloud, sometimes the teacher picked students to read or students read in a pop
corn style, that is, after a student read a paragraph he or she chose another student to read.
Some of the readings were on tape; hence students listened to the tape and discussed the
reading. Under the stories theme students had read Cinderella story which is a universal
story. Other reading activities included students working on comprehension tasks.
Mr. Enodd explained that occasionally the class watched movies tied to the readings. Discussions and writing assignments followed after watching a movie. He added that “It’s good for kids because a lot of them are visual learners. They learn from watching than reading, and after the movie they get some topics to write on like prejudice, power of love, forgiveness and the like.” During one of my visits, the class watched a movie titled *God of Winds*. Before starting the movie, Mr. Enodd introduced it by asking questions from the reading. He also cautioned students that the movie was a little different from the book. I noticed that although the movie was in English, it also had captions which seemed to support student comprehension of the movie. Other movies that the class had watched include *The Odyssey*, which is based on Greek mythology, also related to class readings.

I observed that from the reading texts and movies, students had writing assignments. For example, after watching the *God of Winds* movie, students were asked to write about the setting, the rising action, the climax of the story, the falling action and the protagonist. Additionally, after a reading, students were asked to work on written comprehension exercises.

Besides all the other writing activities, students wrote journals two times a week. Mr. Enodd’s way of assigning journal writing did not differ much from the other teachers in the study. Although he gave his students topics to write on, it was completely free choice. He explained that “I usually give them a variety of topics and they have to write things like poems and other things, and the topics are designed to be of high interest to students but it is optional.” Despite the opportunities to write on a topic of choice, Sophia’s writing, like the other children in the study, did not demonstrate her Kenyan
background. When I asked Mr. Enodd about what kinds of topics Sophia wrote about in her journals, he explained that the topics she chose to write on were general; they did not show any influence of her home country, in fact he did not know that Sophia was an international student. Furthermore, he explained that Sophia did not talk or give any examples in class discussions about Kenya or Africa, but it seems that Mr. Enodd recognized students’ cultural heritage. For instance, he gave an example of a student in his class with a Polish background, who often shared about his home country, Poland, in class discussions.

I also observed that sometimes students’ journal writing related to readings. For example, after reading a text in which greed was demonstrated, students were given this topic: “What happens to people who value money more than anything else? Write about a modern day situation in which greed led to suffering or unhappiness.”

Although Sophia participated effectively in pair or group work, I noticed that most of the time she chose to work with the same people. She usually contributed to the discussion and completed the work. During one of my visits, students were asked to work on cartoon strips related to a reading about Hercules’s 12 tasks. Students were supposed to draw 12 boxes and include a picture representing each task in each box and write a caption. Sophia and her partner got half the work done like most of the other pairs in the class. The activity was to continue the next day.

**Materials.** Students were exposed to a variety of other readings, however, the main textbook used for the class was *Elements of Literature, First Course* (Annotated Teacher’s Edition) by Rheinhart and Winston Holt. The book is designed in thematic units and has a collection of readings in different genres: stories, poems and drama,
fiction and non-fiction readings. In addition, it has supporting materials such as textbooks, tapes, and a lot of activities after each reading, such as comprehension tasks and vocabulary exercises for identifying word meanings, synonyms and antonyms. Mr. Enodd pointed out that he liked the questions from the readings, because they followed the Bloom taxonomy in that they started with basic questions and got to the higher level evaluating the literature. In addition, he described the book as being multicultural and had ideas of pluralism. His opinion was that it exposed students to different cultures:

I think the book has been designed to strengthen pluralism, and serve a wide variety of cultures. I think this is the best book to address the issue of different cultures and being different. I think it is the best resource that can help Sophia and my other students.

I also noticed that students had independent reading opportunities. The class had magazines and local daily newspapers. Between activities, students were allowed to choose what they wanted to read from the available selections. However, not many students took advantage of the reading materials, including Sophia.

**Sophia: An excellent reader and writer.** Though Mr. Enodd had some low performing students in his class, he was impressed by Sophia’s literacy performance:

In this class I have students who read at different levels, some as low as fourth grade level. But Sophia reads at grade level and may be eighth grade. To be that successful in a language that is not your own, I can say it is quite impressive. Sophia writes well at grade level probably a little above. She is probably in the upper third of the class. She is bright, she pays attention, and she gets something out of the class; she is always engaged.

**Mr. Tangen’s ESL classroom: Teacher invited students to use their culturally relevant knowledge**

**Classroom setting and participants.** Diana and Victor attended Mr. Tangen’s ESL literacy classroom at Brooke Middle School, which met Monday through Friday
from 9:40 until 10:20. Mr. Tangen was a part-time certified ESL teacher who had a Masters degree in English. Before coming to the US, a few years ago, he had taught English in his home country. During the study, he was a graduate student at the local university and this was his first year teaching ESL at Brooke Middle School. Besides the classroom teacher, at times there was another adult in the room. According to Mr. Tangen, the adult was a mentor, who was in the class assisting students who needed help. I learned that from time to time, new students in the program needed extra help hence her presence in the room.

The class had 23 grade 6 and 7 students from different countries, including Palestine, Syria, Cambodia, Vietnam, Morocco, Mexico, Ghana, Kenya, China and Korea. Among them, including Diana, were continuing ESL students from elementary school, while for the others it was their first year in the program. It seems that planning for instruction was not easy for Mr. Tangen due to varied students’ English language proficiencies. Mr. Tangen mentioned that while some of his students did not receive any English instruction in their home countries before they came to the US, some did. This category of students included Diana and Victor. Mr. Tangen explained that when he planned for instruction his objectives were to focus on reading and writing skills, and connect readings and activities to students’ backgrounds:

I always bear in mind that my students are second language learners. So there is more work to do than you would in a mainstream class, in reading and writing skills and vocabulary. The activities that I plan, I always try to connect them with their own cultures. For me to achieve these goals, the reading and writing activities are integrated.
**Instructional practices.** Mr. Tangen implemented instructional practices that had the potential to foster children’s English literacy. His instruction was organized in units according to genres, such as, autobiographies, biographies, poetry and folk literature. Throughout the study, I observed Mr. Tangen integrating vocabulary instruction with reading. He identified the key words from the readings and discussed them with students. Sometimes students were given reading homework and were asked to identify words they did not know and bring the list to class on the next day. I noticed that like Ms. Ramos, the ESL teacher at Vine Elementary School, Mr. Tangen also used the board almost all the time to write the key words and a short meaning. When discussing the vocabulary, he did not start by telling students the meaning of the word rather, he asked for the meaning and if he was not satisfied with students’ responses, he asked them to read the paragraph where the word was used and let students use context clues to figure out the meanings. In other words, he practiced reading comprehension strategies with the students. I noticed that while Diana participated actively during such activities, Victor’s participation was minimal. Although his English proficiency was not as good as Diana’s, he also seemed to be shy, because when he was selected to participate, he was able to provide correct answers.

Mr. Tangen organized reading activities in different ways. At times students read aloud to the whole class. Either the teacher picked a student or students volunteered to read. I noticed that Victor only read when he was picked; he never volunteered. At other times, students read in pairs or in groups; often a reading activity was followed by writing activities. Mr. Tangen explained that the groups were not based on student reading abilities and sometimes students were allowed to choose their partner. I perceived that
students wanted to sit with their friends, with students from their culture or students of their own gender. Almost all the time the Spanish, Chinese and the Arab speaking students sat together in their groups. Like in Ms. Ramos’s ESL classroom, Mr. Tangen’s students were also allowed to speak their native languages during discussions.

However, I did not see Victor and Diana work together nor hear them speak Swahili. When I asked Mr. Tangen about the students, he replied that they never sat together and he did not force them, only occasionally when he wanted them to work together, “I did put them together when we were working on a mystery story because I wanted them to work on a mystery story from their country, so in that project they worked together. But I have never heard them speak Swahili.” I also observed during all my visits that Victor did not take opportunities to learn with other children in pairs or groups. He was always working on his own even after Mr. Tangen asked students to work in pairs. It appears that gender relations played a role between Diana and Victor’s interactions, because Mr. Tangen added that Diana chose to work with other female students, and Victor was a bit shy and most of the time preferred to work on his own. In an interview I asked Victor about his isolation from other students and from Diana. His view was that he would have worked with Diana if she were a boy: “Sina marafiki wengi. Hakuna watu pale ninaosoma nao katika darasa jingine. Na Diana anapenda kusoma na marafiki zake wale wasichana wa Ghana na Congo. Ningesema naye Kiswahili kama angekuwa mwanamme.” [I don’t have many friends. There are no students in that class that I meet with in my other classes. And Diana likes to work with her girlfriends, those from Ghana and Congo … I would have spoken Swahili to her if she was a boy.]
Often after completing individual projects, students were invited to share their findings with the class. On two occasions during my visits, students were sent to the computer laboratory to do research for their papers. During one visit after reading the text about Cinco de Mayo in class, students were asked to search on the internet for information about the history of national holidays in their countries and how they are celebrated. Mr. Tangen had directed students to a particular website where such information was available. At the computer laboratory, he was available to help students get the relevant information for their projects. Victor seemed excited to learn about the history of *Madaraka Day* holiday which he did not know much about it, before this project. *Madaraka Day* is a Kenyan holiday celebrated on June 1\(^{st}\), the day the newly independent country from the British colonialism was given authority to govern themselves.

Although students were exposed to a variety of genres and readings in this class, I was curious to know about their independent reading. Mr. Tangen reported that that he encouraged students to get books from the school library:

I let them choose whatever they want and some of them have been made into movies, so they watch the movie after they have read the books. I work in corporation with the librarian on what kinds of books will best suit my students needs and she gives me a choice of books … She prepares the books in a special section and directs students to that section. Most of the books she selects represent diversity.

Apparently, unlike in Ms. Ramos’s ESL class where independent reading was tied to writing book summaries, independent reading in Mr. Tangen’s class was optional, and students did not have to write book summaries. Mostly, during class, students did their independent reading between activities. However, in an interview, Victor mentioned that
he checked out only those books that were recommended for class work; he did not check out any books for independent reading.

Students did a lot of writing in this class which were mostly teacher directed. Mr. Tangen explained that the focus of writing activities in his class was to help students enhance their English writing skills. Students completed comprehension tasks including summaries of the reading texts, and they wrote journals, stories and essays from their own topics or those provided by the teacher. For example, during one visit the teacher had four topics on the board, and students were asked to choose one topic to write an essay during the class time: What will you do if there was no summer break this year? What do you think you will do to make school better? If you had a budget of $5000 and had parents’ permission where would you go on vacation? Why would you go there? What would you do? Think that you are 20 years old. What do you think your attitude will be at that time toward schooling? Both Diana and Victor chose the first topic, while Diana had a full hand-written page on the topic, Victor completed his essay in half a page, probably indicating limited literate productive proficiency.

Almost all the time during my observations, Mr. Tangen used the board to write the class agenda. When it was time for an activity, he wrote the activity instructions or sometimes the instructions were on a piece of paper. He stated that he wanted his students to hear what he was saying, because he read the instructions aloud and also see them on board or on paper. For example, during the week the class was working on autobiographies, on the day of my visit, students were writing their own autobiographies. He had the instructions on the board: 1. Write your interview answers; 2. Write your memorable moments; 3. Combine (1) and (2).
Writing activities were also completed individually, in pairs, or in small groups and students shared their work or ideas they had written. At one time after students had read a story, Mr. Tangen put on the board the components of a story in a spider web, with the word story in the center of the web. He wanted students to use the components in their own stories that they were going to write: setting, fantastic elements, problem(s) and morals. After they were given enough time to work on the activity individually, students shared with the whole class their ideas on each component and the teacher listed them on the board under the appropriate heading.

Like Ms. Ramos, when students were working on a writing activity Mr. Tangen moved around the class to see whether every student was on task or he stopped to talk to students. Occasionally he stopped the class to clarify directives or correct together with students some common problems that he identified in students’ work. Also, students raised their hands to draw Mr. Tangen’s attention when they needed help. Although in most cases Victor demonstrated shyness to raise his hand during teacher questions, he was not inhibited when he had to ask for the teacher’s attention during writing activities. This aspect might suggest Victor’s eagerness to learn English.

On some occasions when students were writing, Mr. Tangen had conferences with individual students and provided them with feedback. Process writing was also practiced in the class. I observed that on some projects, students wrote several drafts before they submitted the final version. Students got feedback on their drafts from their partners as well as from the teacher. According to Mr. Tangen, when students turn in their final draft they are supposed to turn in all the drafts they have written on that project. He pointed out
that “I want to see the improvements made as a result of the feedback they get. I also note down things on my records.”

Victor reported that he liked his ESL class; in particular he liked the readings and the projects he worked on for this class, “Ingawa ni vitu vingi vya kusoma, ninajifunza viti vingi. Ninapenda vitabu tulisoma kama Walk to Moon. Ninapenda kazi tulifanya kama puzzle na hadithi tulianjika. Ninapenda pia tunapofanya kazi kwa kompyuta.”

[Although there is a lot to read, I learn a lot. I like the books we read, such as, Walk to Moon, and I like the stories that we wrote, and also I like the word puzzles. I also like working in the computer laboratory.] It is probably possible that Victor liked working on word puzzles because they helped him learn English vocabulary. I noticed that often the class worked on word puzzles where the words on the puzzle related to the topic covered. For example, when they read about the Mexican war on Cinco de Mayo, the word puzzle required students to know the war words used in the reading. However, Victor did not like it when he had to write several drafts of his paper before publishing. Given that it was his first year in US schools, process writing practice might have been new to him. Diana, on the other hand, did not communicate dissatisfaction with the writing process. She pointed out, “My paper becomes better after I do the drafts. Most of the time Gertrude and Anna [her partners] read my paper and I read their papers, and the teacher reads it, then it becomes good. We did the same in my other ESL class last year.”

**Materials.** It seems that Mr. Tangen was more purposeful when selecting reading materials for his class; he planned to bring multiculturalism into the class. He explained that although his students read texts which could also be used by mainstream students, sometimes, within the genres, he selected materials that represented diversity:
When I select books to read I try to get something that my students can relate to. For example, at the beginning of the semester we read a tale called The Gingy from the book *Dark Thirty: Seven Tales of the Super Natural* by Patricia McCarthety. The tale was about an African American family. When we did folktales, we read *Snow White* and *Cinderella, Cinderella* is kind of a universal story; it is told differently in different cultures. Now we have started a new text on Cinco de Mayo; it is about the time the Mexicans got rid of the French. I have some Mexican students in the class, but I plan to connect the historical events in the book with national holidays that students celebrate in their home countries.

**Diana and Victor: Varied literacy abilities.** Although Victor had English instruction in his home country, Mr. Tangen expressed concerns about his literacy development, which to him was at the developing level:

Victor’s English language proficiency is low; he is probably at the developing level. Although he worked hard and completed his assignments, he needed to improve the quality of his work. At the beginning of the year, I also taught him ESL science, but his family opted out of ESL science and put him in an art class which I saw as a positive action because he has a talent toward art.

Despite the difficulties that Victor was experiencing, there were some positive attributes. Mr. Tangen explained that Victor related his work to his original culture:

Victor is focused. He produces more authentic material. When asked to do an assignment he uses examples from his home country culture. He does it through his parents, and he is enthusiastic about it. Diana is more mainstream while producing such work.”

However, according to Mr. Tangen, Diana’s English language proficiency was higher than Victor. He explained that Diana demonstrated characteristics of a proficient reader, she read and comprehended material well and was very good at working with other students. He added that “I think she is now ready to exit from ESL.

**ESL students' literacy assessment on school tests.** Kevin, Robert and Diana’s performance on the English Language Proficiency Test from 3rd, 4th and 6th grade respectively are presented in Table 5. These are the most recent test results for the students obtained during the study. During Spring 2006 when the test was taken, Victor
had not yet arrived in the country. The test is a state test for English Language Learners (ELLs) developed by World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment Consortium (WIDA) on language skills. WIDA has developed learning standards and tests for ELLs, and has categorized ELLs language proficiencies in six levels, “Level 1 (Entering), is the lowest language proficiency, followed by level 2 (Beginning), and level 3 (Developing). Others are, level 4 (Expanding), level 5 (Bridging), and the highest proficiency is level 6 (Reaching) (www.wida.us/standards/RG_PerformanceDefinitions.pdf).” An English language learner who attains level 6 language proficiency is ready to exit from ESL.

Table 5

*Kevin, Robert and Diana’s English Language Proficiency Test Scores (Spring 2006)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Name</th>
<th>Reading S. S.</th>
<th>Writing S. S.</th>
<th>Oral LanguageA S. S.</th>
<th>LiteracyB S. S.</th>
<th>ComprehensionC S. S.</th>
<th>Overall ScoreD S. S.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kevin</td>
<td>395</td>
<td>391</td>
<td>396</td>
<td>393</td>
<td>394</td>
<td>394</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>390</td>
<td>377</td>
<td>358</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diana</td>
<td>367</td>
<td>376</td>
<td>393</td>
<td>372</td>
<td>374</td>
<td>378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

S. S.: Scale Score

P. L.: Proficient Level

A - Oral Language - 50% Listening + 50% Speaking
B - Literacy - 50% Reading + 50% Writing
C - Comprehension -70% Reading + 30% Listening
D - Overall Score - 35% Reading + 35% Writing + 15% Listening + 15% Spelling

As Table 5 indicates, on the literacy proficiencies, Kevin’s performance was excellent in reading, attaining the highest proficiency level, Reaching (6.0), and in writing, attaining between Bridging and Reaching levels (5.5) (See Appendix E for performance definitions for the levels of English Language proficiency). His overall score of 6.0 which combines reading, writing, listening and spelling, means he attained a Reaching level. According to this proficiency level, “English language learners are able
to process, understand, produce or use: specialized or technical language reflective of the content areas at grade level; a variety of sentence lengths of varying linguistic complexity in extended oral or written discourse as required by the specified grade level; oral or written communication in English comparable to proficient English peers” (www.wida.us/standards/RG_PerformanceDefinitions.pdf). Therefore, this proficiency attainment allowed him to exit ESL by the end of 4th grade.

Among the three students, Robert performed the lowest in reading where his proficiency level was closer to the Developing level (2.8), but performed well on writing, attaining a proficiency level between Bridging and Reaching (5.4). Although in an interview Ms. Ramos had expressed that Robert performed better in reading than writing, the test results show the opposite. However, it is not clear why there is such a big difference between his reading score and writing score. As the Table shows, Robert performed better in the oral aspects of the language compared to the literacy (reading and writing put together) aspects. Robert attained an overall score of 4.7, which means he attained English proficiency at the Expanding level. According to this proficiency level, English language learners are able to process, understand, produce or use: specific and some technical language of content areas; a variety of sentence lengths of varying linguistic complexity in oral discourse or multiple, related sentences or paragraphs; oral or written language with minimal phonological, syntactic or semantic errors that do not impede the overall meaning of the communication when presented with oral or written connected discourse with sensory, graphic or interactive support. Attaining this proficiency level meant that Robert had to continue attending the ESL program in fourth grade.
On the literacy proficiency (reading and writing) as well as reading and writing itemized separately, Diana had attained a proficiency level of 3.9 for each, that is, she was at the Developing level but very close to the Expanding level. Her proficiency was higher on oral language (listening and speaking) 4.9 at the Expanding level, and on Speaking, itemized separately as 5.5 at the Bridging level. Like Robert, Diana was doing well in the oral aspects compared to the literacy (reading and writing) aspects of the English language.

As Table 5 illustrates, Diana had reached overall English language proficiency (reading, writing, listening and speaking) of 4.2. Like Robert, Diana had attained English proficiency at the Expanding level. According to this level, in sixth grade, Diana was not yet ready to exit ESL (www.wida.us/assessment/ACCESS/tiers.aspx). However, it seems that Diana had made some improvement since last Spring when she took the test, because according to Mr. Tangen’s assessment, Diana was ready to exit ESL.

Besides the English Language Proficiency Test (WIDA), the three children also took the Illinois Measure of Annual Growth in English (IMAGE), in reading which also was taken in the Spring. Table 6 below summarizes the students’ performance on the test.
Table 6

Kevin, Robert and Diana’s Illinois Measure of Annual Growth in English (IMAGE) Reading Scores (Spring 2006)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Name</th>
<th>Performance Level</th>
<th>Scale Score</th>
<th>Graphic Prompts</th>
<th>Comprehension</th>
<th>Application Strategies</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*N.P.</td>
<td>E. P.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kevin</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diana</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Performance level codes: W = Academic Warning, B = Below Standards, M = Meets Standards, E = Exceeds Standards
*N. P. - Narrative Passages
E. P. - Expository Passages
*E. I. - Explicit Ideas
I. - Inferences

Contrary to his performance on the English Language Proficiency Test (WIDA), Robert performed better on the Illinois Measure of Annual Growth in English (IMAGE), in reading, also administered during third grade, possibly because the test was easier. As illustrated in Table 6, the reading comprehension performance for Robert is interesting. There seems to be a big margin between Robert’s performance in reading expository passages and narrative passages. While he attained 90% in reading expository passages, he attained only 75% while reading narrative passages. On the application of strategies in reading, Robert used more explicit ideas (93%) compared to making inferences (81%). Overall, Robert attained a reading performance level of “Meets Standards,” one level lower than the highest level.

The results of IMAGE as displayed in Table 6 are consistent with Ms. Brent’s assessment of Kevin’s reading development, that Kevin is a good reader and that he reads at grade level. As illustrated in the Table, Kevin’s fourth grade performance on the test
was excellent. The scores show that his performance did not vary much between test variables, for example, between comprehending narrative passages (95%) and expository passages (97%); or between using explicit reading strategies (99%) and making inferences (95%).

In Diana’s case, her sixth grade reading performance did not vary much between different items. For example, she scored 85% on reading narrative passages and 83% on reading expository passages. In addition, she had the same score for each of the items under application of strategies: using explicit ideas 87% and using inferences, 87%. However, she scored higher in using graphic prompts 89% while reading compared to comprehension and application of strategies. Analysis of the performance on the English language proficiency test in Table 5 and the Illinois Measure of Annual Growth in English Reading (IMAGE) in Table 6 shows that while Robert and Diana were making good progress in English literacy, Kevin had made significant progress in English language learning.

**Summary.** Kevin’s teacher, Ms. Brent, and Sophia’s teacher, Mr. Enodd, both provided appropriate instruction that supported children’s English literacy development. Literacy instruction in Ms. Brent’s and Mr. Enodd’s classes integrated reading and writing activities. Ms. Brent taught vocabulary and practiced reading strategies with the children. During reading and writing activities, students had opportunities to work individually and in small groups, they also had guided reading sessions. According to Ms. Brent, she selected reading materials that were appropriate for her students who were mostly African-Americans. Other reading materials in her class, including magazines, gave Kevin and other students a variety of materials to choose from during down time.
Ms. Brent indicated that Kevin liked her magazines and that he was a strong English reader and writer.

Mr. Enodd’s literacy instruction focused on grammar, comprehension and literature. He began each class with a grammar activity. Mr. Enodd integrated reading and writing activities that were completed individually, in pairs or small groups. Some writing assignments were completed at home. Mr. Enodd exposed his students to a variety of readings, but he also used a multicultural literature book that was designed in thematic unit, including stories, poems and drama, fiction and non fiction readings. Like Ms. Brent, he also had other materials for his students to read during down time, such as daily newspapers.

Ms. Brent knew that Kevin was an English language learner. Findings show that Ms. Brent’s instruction valued her students’ background knowledge. During reading, she tapped her students’ background knowledge on the reading topics. For example, when reading about farms, Kevin shared his background knowledge and experiences from his grandmother’s village in rural Kenya. He described the type of roads found in the rural areas and the open farmers’ markets. He also seemed knowledgable about the big five animals found in East Africa that he used for the comic strip assignment. Unlike Ms. Brent, Mr. Enodd did not know about Sophia’s status. He admitted that he was unaware of her international status. However, Mr. Enodd perceived Sophia to be a strong English reader and writer.

Ms. Ramos, Robert’s ESL teacher, and Mr. Tangen, Diana and Victor’s ESL teacher, implemented instructional practices that had the potential to foster the children’s English literacy. While Ms. Ramos’s instruction was content based, focusing on themes,
Mr. Tangen’s middle school instruction was organized into units according to genres, such as, autobiographies, biographies, poetry and folk literature.

In both classrooms students received vocabulary instruction, and teachers integrated reading and writing activities. At times students worked in small groups for reading, writing and inquiry activities. One of the differences between Ms. Ramos and Mr. Tangen classrooms is that students in Ms. Ramos’s classroom were required to write book reports on their independent reading. Students in Mr. Tangen’s classroom also practiced process writing; they rewrote their drafts based on their partners and teacher’s feedback before publishing their work.

Ms. Ramos and Mr. Tangen recognized the importance of students’ cultural and linguistic backgrounds. They allowed students to use their L1 when appropriate. Since Robert was the only Swahili student in Ms. Ramos’s class, he missed the opportunity to speak Swahili when engaging in group activities. However, the findings show that Diana and Victor did not use Swahili in Mr. Tangen’s class since they did not choose to work together. Gender issues may have played a role because Victor indicated that he would have spoken Swahili with Diana if she were a boy; and Diana expressed that she preferred to work with the other African girls who were non Swahili speakers.

Both Ms. Ramos and Mr. Tangen were purposeful when selecting reading materials for their students. Ms. Ramos reported that as much as possible she selected reading materials with multicultural aspects. It seems that Robert responded to the multicultural readings in the class. The findings show that on one occasion, for independent reading, he chose a Maasai story that relates to the Maasai culture in East Africa. In addition, Robert used his background knowledge when presenting his topic
about mosquitoes at the insect museum. He related the mosquitoes to the malaria disease which affects many people in Kenya. Likewise, Mr. Tangen planned to bring multiculturalism into his class. He selected reading materials that represented diversity and invited students to use their culturally relevant knowledge when discussing readings and writing their assignments. According to Mr. Tangen, Victor’s work used examples from home country culture and he was enthusiastic about it. In the contrary, Diana was more mainstream oriented.

According to Ms. Ramos, Robert needed to improve especially on writing. On the other hand, Mr. Tangen was of the opinion that Diana’s reading and writing had improved since the beginning of the year, and she was ready to exit from ESL, however, Victor was still at the developing level.

Performance on the English language proficiency test and the Illinois Measure of Annual Growth in English (IMAGE), demonstrated that Kevin was a strong reader and writer compared to Robert and Diana. Kevin performed excellently on all test variables. Robert attained an overall score that was higher than Diana’s on the English language proficiency test, but performed lower on reading than Diana. Robert and Diana’s literacy performance may be one of the reasons for their parents’ emphasis on English literacy at home.

The Swahili program at Vine Elementary School was developed and taught by parent volunteers. It provided Swahili language support in the school context, which Kevin and Robert were missing before the program was established. However, the program experienced challenges, such as lack of a well designed curriculum, a student population with varying literacy abilities, and coordination problems. For example,
among the five students in the class, only Kevin and Robert had had Swahili instruction before they came to the US. According to the teacher, mostly, Swahili instruction focused on reading activities, including vocabulary instruction, but students had fewer writing opportunities. In addition, children did not get opportunities to read informational materials.

Moreover, the findings demonstrate that the efforts made by the parent volunteers at school in facilitating the students’ development of Swahili literacy were not supported at home. Although parents initiated this program, they did not encourage or support Swahili literacy practices in the home. Kevin was strong in oral language compared to Robert, but his attendance may have affected his literacy development. According to the teacher, Robert was a motivated Swahili student and he made good progress in Swahili literacy. Before they came to the US, Kevin had almost two years of Swahili instruction while Robert had almost all of 1st grade Swahili instruction.

Performance Assessment of Students’ Biliteracy Development

**English reading tasks.** Kevin and Robert read two texts, a narrative and an expository text. The narrative text titled *One Small Dog* (Hurwitz, 2000) is about a boy whose parents divorced and as a result of the family split, his life changed. To make him feel better, after the divorce, his mother allowed him to get a dog, a pet that he had wanted to have for a long time since he was younger. The expository text was titled, *Waste Disposal* (Morgan, 2000). The text provided information on how waste is turned into heat energy, and the effects of harmful wastes from industries and farms into rivers and seas to the aquatic life. Between three difficult levels: easy, just right and difficult,
the raters rated the difficulty level of both texts as “just right” for the students’ grade levels.

Similarly, Sophia, Diana and Victor also read a narrative and an expository text. The narrative text, *Home is East* (Ly, 2005), is a story about a girl who experienced harassment from friends in her community because her parents were social outcasts. Without involving her parents, she decided to fight back to gain respect. The expository text that students read is *Soil: A Resource We Depend on* (Graham, 2005). The text describes how soil is made, and the soil layers and types of living things contained in the soil. It also describes the importance of soil to humans and animals. Both texts were rated at the difficult level of “just right” for the grade level.

After reading each of the texts silently, all students responded orally to comprehension questions which were classified into three types: textually explicit (TE), textually implicit (TI) and scriptally implicit (SI) questions (see Chapter 3 for definitions), and performed a retelling task. Students could not see the text to answer questions. All comprehension questions were asked in English.

*English reading comprehension.* Table 7 displays the children’s English narrative and expository text reading comprehension performance on comprehension questions and the retelling. As the Table shows, almost all the children performed higher on the narrative tasks than on the expository tasks.
Table 7

Summary of Students’ English Reading Comprehension Performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Narrative Text Comprehension Questions</th>
<th>Retelling</th>
<th>Expository Text Comprehension Questions</th>
<th>Retelling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TE (4)</td>
<td>TI (5)</td>
<td>SI (2)</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kevin</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*(4)</td>
<td>*(5)</td>
<td>*(2)</td>
<td>*(10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophia</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diana</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victor</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Maximum score possible

Kevin: Better on narrative comprehension questions than expository. As Table 7 shows, Kevin performed better than Robert on the narrative and expository tasks. He correctly answered 8 (80%) of the 10 comprehension questions from the narrative text with his comprehension evenly distributed among the three types of questions. He also answered correctly the 2 scriptally implicit questions, demonstrating his ability to draw information from the text and from his own experiences. For example, one of the questions asked about the main character’s mother’s emotional behavior, he answered, “Sometimes Curtis’s mother wiped eyes or she wept when she watching a movie not because something bad on the movie made her sad but probably because she missed the life she used to have before she divorced her husband.” The information that Kevin gave about Curtis’s mother being sad because she missed the life she used to have before she divorced her husband was not in the text.
Text: “And when we were sitting together watching a video, she began wiping her eyes. What’s the matter?” I asked her as she blew her nose into the tissue. It felt like strange seeing her tears. “This is a sad movie,” she said. Well, it was a little sad. But I don’t think that was why she was crying.”

When answering questions, Kevin used the vocabulary and phrases used in the text in appropriate contexts, such as excitement, driving him bananas, underfoot. However, he sometimes provided distorted information when answering questions. For instance, on one textual explicit and one textual implicit question he answered incorrectly. The textual explicit question asked about the differences between the old apartment and the new one that Curtis moved to. While Curtis, his mother and younger brother moved to an old brownstone house, Kevin said the family’s new apartment was in a modern highrise building.

The analysis of the task performance demonstrates a lower performance on the retelling than on the comprehension questions task; Kevin scored 6 (60%) out of 10 points. Kevin gave a rather short and incomplete retelling. He did not recall much about the setting, or introduce the characters. Although he recalled some of the plot episodes in the story, he retold them without much detail. For example, he recalled that Curtis’s father moved from the family house, but he did not say whether Curtis’s mother, his younger brother and Curtis stayed in the house, or moved to a new place, nor did he describe the new apartment. When I noticed that his retelling was short and not detailed, I asked him if he had anything else to add, but he replied, “No, that’s all.” It seems that although Kevin was able to give correct answers to the comprehension questions, indicating good comprehension of the text, he did not use that information in his retelling. It could be due to lack of effort during the retelling or lack of English proficiency.
Given that the topic of the expository text, *waste disposal*, seemed to be familiar to Kevin and his good performance on the IMAGE, I expected him to perform better than he did. He answered correctly 6 (60%) of the 10 questions. In contrast to his comprehension of the narrative text, he demonstrated comprehension mostly on the textually explicit questions. He missed 1 textually explicit question, 2 textually implicit questions, and 1 scriptally implicit question. Several times during the task he asked for the question to be repeated, but even after the question was repeated, he sometimes gave a wrong answer. On other occasions he seemed to give answers from his general knowledge and not from the information he read in the text, as illustrated below:

Josephine: How do landfills produce heat?
Kevin: Can you ask that again?
Josephine: How do landfills produce heat?
Kevin: It gets hotter.
Josephine: Why is it important to sort out garbage before it is burned?
Kevin: Because if they burn everything, it will pollute the air.

From the interaction above, on the first question, Kevin did not use the information he read from the text to explain the process of how landfills produce heat while on the second question, he did not consider the concept of recycling which was emphasized in the text. In addition, at times, he provided distorted information:

Josephine: How do industrial and farm waste like sewage and slurry, and the thick liquid waste, affect other life in water?
Kevin: It affects because it takes out oxygen and therefore it takes out oxygen for other lives in the ocean.
Kevin’s answer demonstrates that he recalled about the importance of oxygen for lives in the water; however, what he did not say was which organisms feed on sewage and slurry and use much of the needed oxygen to support other lives in water.

My analysis shows that Kevin seemed to know how to structure a summary, probably from Ms. Brent’s literacy instruction. When he was retelling the text, he started with a summary statement. He stated, “In the text, I read that …” then he gave the information he read on the first part of the text about different ways to manage garbage. And when he started recalling the second part of the text, he said, “On the water part I read …” Although he introduced the subtopics from the text, as he was retelling, he did not recall some of the information related to those subtopics. He scored 11 (65%) out of 17 points for recalling the main and supporting ideas. The analysis shows that he did not recall supporting ideas about heat energy, and industrial and farm waste indicating comprehension difficulties. In addition, he provided information that was not correct as illustrated below:

Text:  
Fertilizers and sewage contain nutrients that encourage the growth of tiny plants called algae. As the algae multiply, they cover the surface of the river like a blanket, blocking sunlight from the plants below and causing them to die.

Kevin:  
And I learned that some plants they take too much oxygen and fish cannot live without oxygen on the underwater oxygen [my emphasis]. So they use plants which are like a blanket that block sunlight to the other plants.

Regarding the excerpt above, it appears that in his retelling, Kevin did not follow the order the information was given in the text. He mixed up information from two different sections of the text, the section on the effects of harmful wastes, such as industrial and farm waste like sewage and slurry, in relation to the amount of oxygen in
the water, and on the other section, which was about the killer weed, the algae, in relation to the plant blocking sunlight for other plants in river water. The analysis shows that the information that he was asked to provide when answering the comprehension questions that he answered incorrectly, is the same information that he did not recall on his retelling indicating limited comprehension of the text.

Kevin’s performance on his grade 4 results of the Illinois Measure of Annual Growth in English (IMAGE) was excellent on both the narrative and expository passages compared to his performance on the reading. It is possible that Kevin’s higher performance on the IMAGE is related to the test difficulty level and how the test is administered. To answer comprehension questions on the IMAGE, students can have access to the text. In addition, Kevin might have viewed the IMAGE as an important assessment because it was taken at school, and, therefore, he worked seriously on it. But his performance might also relate to what Ms. Brent expressed about Kevin’s weakness, that is, although Kevin has a lot of knowledge, he tends to provide the minimum unless he is made to produce more.

Robert: Better when answering questions than retelling. After reading the narrative text *One Small Dog*, silently, Robert answered correctly 7 (70%) of the 10 comprehension questions. As illustrated in Table 7, Robert performed lowest on the textually implicit questions; out of the 5 textually implicit questions he only answered 2 of them correctly. But he was able to provide correct answers to the 2 scriptally implicit questions. When he was answering questions, Robert demonstrated that he had knowledge of the vocabulary used in the story. However, on one occasion, he substituted *Christmas time* for *winter time*. Analysis of Robert’s retelling shows that most of the
time, on the questions he answered correctly; he gave answers with details, indicating his comprehension of the story:

Josephine: Why was Curtis hopeful that his parents may someday get back together after the divorce?

Robert: The things that gave him hope were that there was this girl in his class. One day she was crying because her parents were divorcing but the next day she came excited because her parents were getting back together. That is why he thought his parents will come back together.

When Robert recalled the story he scored 6 (60%) of the 10 points, a performance score that was the same as Kevin’s on the task. Although he recalled events in the order they occurred in the story, he did not necessarily recall all the story episodes in the story. For the episodes he recalled, he provided details. At the beginning of his retelling, Robert did not provide information on the characters, and when he mentioned them as he was recalling the plot episodes, he mixed up their names and information. My analysis shows that Robert used the vocabulary in the story; however, at times he also used language that was not used in the story. For example, he used phrases such as, “he was going to take some of the stuff they owned …” instead of mentioning the actual things. On one occasion he substituted the word young for small, he also used an incorrect name; he mentioned the name of the dog, Sammy, instead of the boy’s name, Curtis. He said, “Sammy cried but his brother was small to know, so he didn’t care.” Analysis also shows that in his retelling Robert provided information that he had missed on comprehension questions. Robert’s performance suggests that he comprehended the text but had difficulties producing the answers or the information that he was retelling.

On the expository text, Robert answered correctly 5 (50%) out of 10 comprehension questions. In relation to the three types of comprehension questions, his
comprehension was evenly distributed. He missed 2 textually explicit questions, 2 textually implicit questions and 1 scriptally question. Robert did not answer correctly the questions related to production of heat energy from landfills and its dissemination.

Analysis also shows that at times, Robert remembered only part of his answers, or did not produce the vocabulary used in the text, as illustrated in the following examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text:</th>
<th>Warm water contains much less oxygen than cold water. This means that aquatic life, especially fish, cannot get enough oxygen to survive. Adding warm water to rivers and seas is called thermal pollution.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Josephine:</td>
<td>From the text that you read, what is thermal pollution?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert:</td>
<td><em>Things</em> are thrown into water and it’s like the water gets polluted and <em>animals</em> living in water are harmed or could die.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text:</th>
<th>As the algae multiply, they cover the surface of the river like a blanket, blocking sunlight from the plants below and causing them to die.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Josephine:</td>
<td>How do the algae affect other plants in the river?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert:</td>
<td>It blocks other plants where it grows.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the first example, Robert did not use the phrase *warm water* but used the word *things* instead. In addition, he did not use the word *fish* but said *animals*. On the second question, Robert left out the word *sunshine*. He needed to say, “It blocks other plants where it grows from getting *sunshine.*” However, from his answers, it seems that Robert had comprehended this part of the text.

My analysis of the retelling shows that Robert gave an incomplete retelling; he scored 6 (41%) out of 17 points. Although he recalled the main ideas as they were presented in the text, he left out most of the supporting ideas. At times he gave some inaccurate information, as shown in the last sentence in the example below:
Robert: Waste can be turned into heat energy because they have this machine called incinerator they put the waste there in the machine to get up to 180 degrees so it could burn the waste and if it is lower than that the waste won’t produce enough energy. And they make the energy in another thing and they take it to factories to be made into things. [Emphasis added]

In addition, as shown in his answers to the comprehension questions, at times he did not use the terms used in the text. In the example above, the text used words such as, biogas and electricity that Robert did not include. His retelling also shows that he did not give some of the information he used to answer some of the comprehension questions. For example, he did not give any information about the algae and its effect on other river plants. However, the analysis shows that Robert was creative when he was retelling the text on water pollution. He rephrased the text by saying:

Text: Some waste contains poisons, such as pesticides and oil. Bacteria in the water feed on sewage and slurry. As they feed, they use up oxygen, so the water cannot support much other life. Warm water contains much less oxygen than cold water. This means that aquatic life, especially fish, cannot get enough oxygen to survive. Adding warm water to rivers and seas is called thermal pollution.

Robert: Water pollution does not help animals because water can be polluted and animals could be harmed or die and different species will not exist anymore and live in water.

Roberts’s reading comprehension shows a higher performance on comprehension questions than retelling.

Sophia: Better on retelling narrative than expository text. As Table 7 shows, except for the expository retelling, Sophia’s comprehension performance was almost evenly distributed within the tasks compared to the other children. In addition, among the three middle school children, she is the one who scored highest on the narrative and expository comprehension questions and retellings. When answering comprehension
questions from the narrative text, she answered correctly 9 (81%) of the 11 questions. Surprisingly, Sophia missed 2 textually explicit questions, but correctly answered all of the textual implicit questions and scriptally implicit questions. Once, when she did not immediately answer a question, she kept silent for a long time, but after I rephrased it, she gave a correct answer:

Josephine: What do you know about the neighborhood where Amy lived?
Sophia: No answer.

Josephine: Who are the people that lived in the neighborhood where Amy and her family lived and how were the homes?
Sophia: They were Cambodians who came from where she came from. The homes in the neighborhood were not big. Some families lived in duplexes and some had one bedroom apartments. She and her parents lived in a one bedroom house.

During the task, when Sophia was not able to answer a question, she simply said, “I don’t remember.” However, more often than not she provided more information on her answers indicating comprehension of the text, as illustrated in the example below:

Josephine: How was Amy’s father treated by fellow Cambodians?
Sophia: Her dad was made fun of. One of the men who were there at the birthday party was asking him when his wife was going to leave him. While Amy’s dad felt bad, the other men laughed and seemed to enjoy it.

Josephine: How did Amy’s mother feel about the other Cambodian women?
Sophia: She was young than the other women and she did not trust them. Sometimes she felt that they were interested in her husband and wanted to take him away from her. She did not like it when they made fun of her that she married an old man compared to her age.

Sophia’s good comprehension of the text was also reflected in her retelling. She provided a detailed retelling of the story. She scored 9 (90%) out of 10 points in her
retelling. She started with the setting, by stating the place, the main character, Amy, and her family. She also introduced the other Cambodian families. Sophia stated the theme of the story and recalled the plot episodes in the order they occurred in the story, and she provided details. The analysis shows that at times, when Sophia was recalling the story, she paraphrased the information demonstrating her comprehension of the story and her language capabilities. For example, where the text stated, “Janet got mad …” Sophia said, “Janet took it really badly ….” From her performance on the comprehension questions and the retelling of the story, it appears that Sophia comprehended most of the story.

Sophia answered correctly 8 (80%) of the 10 comprehension questions after reading the expository text. The textually explicit questions were the easiest for her. She missed 1 textually implicit question about the characteristics of the soil layers; and 1 scriptally implicit question about types of soil and how good they are for growing plants. Sophia correctly used the key terms used in the text when answering questions, such as, *humus, nutrients, living organisms, bacteria* indicating vocabulary knowledge.

Comparing the two genres, Sophia’s performance was low on the expository task. Although she seemed to have comprehended the text, like the other children, she gave a short retelling but the sequence of her ideas followed the order in the text. She scored 13 (52%) out of 25 points. At times she did not give information that she provided when answering the comprehension questions. More often like the other children she gave the main ideas without providing the supporting ideas. For example, in the retelling excerpt below, she did not provide the names of the layers to show the knowledge she obtained from the text nor did she characterize the layers:
Sophia: I have read about things to do with soil. Soil is made of humus and water and is divided into layers. And rocks sometimes they are banged by water which causes them to break off and help create the soil.

As the excerpt shows, Sophia stated that “soil is made from humus and water,” while the text stated that soil is made from sand, small gritty pieces of rock, water and dead plant called humus. However, the analysis of her answers on the comprehension questions shows the use of some of the information about soil layers when answering the comprehension questions. Also, Sophia’s retelling of the text shows the use of key words used in the text, such as, humus, water minerals and layers, indicating productive understanding of the text. Therefore, it is not known why she was not able to perform better on the tasks.

Although Sophia’s performance on the expository retelling was low, in general, her reading comprehension performance on the narrative and expository tasks was fairly high and corresponds with the performance assessment on reading comprehension given by her English teacher, as well as her mother.

Diana: Demonstrated similar comprehension on the narrative and expository texts. As displayed in Table 7, Diana’s comprehension of the texts was not high and her scores were evenly distributed across task variables. On the narrative comprehension questions, she performed lower than Victor who was a new student in her ESL class. Diana responded correctly to 7 (64%) of the 11 comprehension questions on the narrative text. The analysis shows that she comprehended 3 of the 4 textually explicit questions, 3 of the 5 textually implicit questions, and 1 of the 2 scriptally implicit questions. At times, when answering the comprehension questions, she gave distorted information and elaborations, for example in the following excerpt where she talked about Amy’s mom
being American when answering a textually implicit question. In fact, Amy’s mother was Cambodian; she came to America after she married Amy’s father:

Text: He [Mr. Peera] came from Cambodia many years ago. He went back to marry his wife ten years ago. He could not bring his wife soon after the wedding because of the papers but his pregnant wife joined him six months later.

Josephine: What does Amy say about her family background?

Diana: The dad is from Cambodia and the mom is American so they had a daughter who was born American.

Diana’s answers suggest that she did not pay attention to details when she was reading the text because she also provided distorted information when answering a textually explicit question. For the question that asked about the type of housing that Amy’s family lived in, Diana replied, “They had a small house and her dad had a room in the backyard,” The text only talked a small house, and did not state that his dad had a room in the backyard. In addition, Diana did not give much information when answering some of the comprehension questions. For example, when asked, “How was Amy’s father treated by his fellow Cambodian men?” Diana answered, “They teased him.” Although the answer was correct, she had an opportunity to say more. Sophia had given a much more detailed answer to this question.

On the retelling Diana scored 6.5 (65%) out of the 10 points. Although she started well with her retelling, “This story is about a girl whose dad is from Cambodia,” she did not mention the dad’s name or the girl’s name, which was the main character of the story, until later in the retelling, nor did she mention the mother. Also, she did not recall the place that the family lived and other characters involved in the story. Although Diana recalled events in the sequence as they occurred in the story, she left out some of
them, for example, she did not include the group of Cambodian men teasing Amy’s dad.

For the story resulotion, Diana did not mention about Amy going to apologize for her behavior. However, at times, Diana gave a lot of details for some of the events. For example, when she was retelling the problem part in the story, she elaborated on it although she mixed up names and relationships of the people involved:

Diana: So she [Amy] decided to play outside with her cousin Janet and her friends Melissa and Lulu. Janet told Melissa to go get fruit so they could play the cooking game. So Amy was looking for the fruits around the tree with Melissa and she found a bird nest with the mom and children and called Janet and Melissa so they came to the tree. Melissa asked where the bird dad is and Janet was like may be the dad is off looking for the other kids. And then Lulu asks how do you know? Then Amy said may be the dad is looking out for food and then he will bring to the mom. So Janet got pissed off because Amy had a good idea and so Janet told Amy that her dad isn’t really her dad because her mom came to America pregnant and that’s how it happened.

The analysis shows that Diana’s retelling incorporated the knowledge she demonstrated in the comprehension questions. She also repeated the same distorted information that she used to answer the comprehension questions, for example, about Amy’s mother being American. On one occasion, she demonstrated vocabulary strength when she used a synonym for a word in the text. She said, “Janet got pissed off …” while in the text, the sentence reads, Janet got mad … From her performance it appears that Diana comprehended some parts of the story but had difficulties retelling it.

Diana responded correctly to 7 (70%) of the 10 questions on the expository text. She answered correctly 3 textually explicit questions, 3 textually implicit questions and 1 of the 2 scriptally implicit questions. Diana used her general knowledge or inferencing to answer a scriptally implicit question. The text stated that “The subsoil is even more pressed down and contains very little humus or nutrients.”
Josephine: Why is it that the subsoil cannot be good for growing plants?

Diana: Well, may be because the water probably cannot really get down to the subsoil.

Although it appears that Diana understood where the subsoil layer is found in the soil layers, she could not give the details about it.

Analysis of Diana’s answers also shows that at times she did not comprehend some parts of the text, as shown in her answer below to the question about living things contained in the soil. If Diana knew the word grit she would know that it is not a living thing:

Text: Soil contains living things, along with sand, grit, humus, water and air. Most living things are so small that you cannot see them. The smallest are bacteria, organisms that can cause disease, and microscopic algae, or simple green plants without stems, roots, or leaves. There are also tiny animals, mostly worms called nematodes and other organisms called tardigrades …

Josephine: From the text, what are the living things that the soil contains?

Diana: It contains um … something like grit and um …

When I asked Diana to retell the text, I instructed her to provide all the information she could remember from the text. However, she gave a very short retelling, leaving out some important information. Analysis of her retelling shows a score of 11 (44%) out of 25 points. Although Diana correctly listed the different types of soil layers, she did not define their characteristics. Then as she was concluding her retelling, she said, “Some animals live under the soil and birds make nests from soil” and stopped. As her concluding sentence shows, she did not mention the animals that live under the soil. I asked her to make sure that she had finished her retelling:

Josephine: Is that all you have read?
Diana: Some soil is not good for plants.

Josephine: Can you say more on that?

Diana: [She shook her head]

Diana’s performance on the comprehension questions is not reflected in her retelling. It seems that Diana did not relate the information she used to answer comprehension questions with the information she needed for the retelling task. Precisely, she demonstrated limited ability to retell the text. I wonder whether her performance was affected by lack of attention during the reading or inability to comprehend the text. Although Diana’s ESL teacher had evaluated Diana’s reading ability highly, the performance on the tasks is not consistent with the evaluation.

Victor: He needs more reading instruction. As shown in Table 7, among the three middle school children, Victor performed the lowest on the narrative and expository retelling. On the narrative task, he responded correctly to 8 (72%) of the 11 comprehension questions showing the most comprehension on the textually explicit questions. He missed 1 textually explicit question and 2 textually implicit questions even after I repeated or rephrased them for him. But he answered correctly the 2 scriptially implicit questions. In the following example, Victor used a term that appeared to be easy for him to remember when he responded to one of the textually implicit questions. Victor’s answer shows that he understood the concept while reading, but he lacked productive ability, therefore, he translated it, even though, the answer given was incomplete.

Josephine: What do you know about the neighborhood where Amy lived?

Victor: People who lived there were from the same tribe.
The term *tribe* which Victor used in his answer is commonly used in his home country to refer to people from different ethnic groups, such as the Kisi tribe, the Luo tribe or the Kamba tribe. Victor’s answer demonstrates the use of a strategy that English language learners can use during reading activities. In the text, the concept was referred to as the *Cambodian neighborhood*. On another occasion, Victor substituted the verb *kicked* for the word *punched* that was in the text. Victor’s use of of the verb *kicked* showed he had receptive competence; both verbs demonstrate aggressive behavior.

Further analysis shows that Victor may have lacked English productive ability because although he may have provided correct answers, most of them lacked details. As illustrated below, compared to Sophia and Diana, he provided a short answer when answering a question about Amy’s father’s relationship with other Cambodian men in the neighborhood:

Josephine: How was Amy’s father treated by fellow Cambodian men?  
Victor: They started making fun of him.

Victor scored 5.5 (55%) points out of 10 on the retelling. He started by introducing the family, he said, “There was a mother and a father, and they got a daughter now their mother was too young and the father was old.” But he did not provide a setting statement or identify the other characters in the Cambodian neighborhood. Victor knew how to tell stories because he recalled plot episodes from the story, by using story telling words, such as, *one day* and *then*. Nevertheless, Victor gave a short and incomplete retelling of the story. He started recalling events that occurred at the beginning of the story according to their sequence, but as he continued with the retelling, he mixed up information or added information that was not in the story, or he repeated ideas. For
example, in the excerpt below, he repeated the idea that the family went home twice. In addition Victor said the mother did not want them (the family) to watch TV. Yet, the story stated that many times, the mother did not want to share quality time with the husband and daughter such as watching TV together. Moreover, the story said Cambodian women prepared food for the birthday celebrations at one of the Cambodian families, but Amy’s mother did not prepare dinner alone as Victor recalled:

Victor: Then the mother didn’t want them to watch TV. Then they went back to their home and the father found a lady walking. And they went home and the mother went and made dinner then it was time to go back to their home.

When he stopped, I asked him if he wanted to add anything else to his retelling, but he acknowledged that “I didn’t understand the remaining part of the story.” Although Victor was able to produce more information when he responded to the comprehension questions than when he was retelling the story, he demonstrated limited comprehension of the text and less ability to recall what he read.

Victor answered correctly 7 (70%) of the 10 comprehension questions from the expository text demonstrating the most comprehension on textually explicit questions. He answered correctly the 4 textually explicit questions but missed 1 textually explicit question and 1 textually implicit question. He answered incorrectly both of the scriptally implicit questions. The questions he answered incorrectly asked about characterization of the soil layers. These were the same questions that Diana answered incorrectly. Although Victor answered 7 questions correctly, often, he gave short answers suggesting limited ability to express ideas. For example, when I asked him about the importance of soil to animals and birds, he only responded about birds:

Josephine: How important is soil to different animals and birds?
Victor: umm …

Josephine: What did you read about the use of soil to different animals and birds?

Victor: Some birds they swallow grit and gravel.

The question asked above required Victor to also provide information on why birds swallow grit and gravel. The text stated that “Many birds swallow grit and gravel and use them to grind up their food.”

Although Victor knew that he was supposed to provide a detailed account of what he had read in the text, his retelling was short, and he stopped often as he was giving it. Unlike the other children, Victor did not start by situating the topic, or giving a summary statement about the text. The analysis shows that he scored 8 (32%) out of 25 points, the lowest score on the task, among all the children.

While Victor was able to provide some ideas in the order they were presented in the text, such as, what soil is made from and uses of soil, he did not provide details or supporting ideas related to them. For example, although he recalled about what soil is made from, he did not recall any information about soil layers and ability for plants to grow. Victor’s performance on the comprehension questions is not reflected in his retelling. It appears that like Diana, he did not use the information he used to answer the comprehension questions in his retelling. Victor’s reading comprehension performance supports his ESL teacher’s opinion that he is experiencing limited reading comprehension in English.

**English writing development.** The children’s English writing samples analyzed include summaries, descriptive passages, journals and worksheets. Robert, Diana and Victor’s samples were from their ESL classrooms while Kevin and Sophia’s samples
were collected from the mainstream classroom and English class respectively. The length of the samples varied as well as the topics, depending on the assignment instructions. Although all the teachers had indicated that the students were at times allowed to write on any topic of their choice, all of the student journals covered general topics which did not portray any Kenyan influence.

Table 8 shows the students’ writing performance analyzed from the samples using five writing categories: grammar, sentence complexity, rhetorical style, voice and linguistic transfer (see Chapter 3). As the Table illustrates, two children, Kevin and Sophia, performed fairly well, scoring overall at the competent level (see Note below) displaying writing literacy proficiency, while Robert, Diana and Victor performed below competent level demonstrating limitations in writing English. The analysis shows that Kevin, Robert and Diana’s performances correspond to their writing performance on the English language proficiency test taken during their previous school year. In addition, all the children’s performances correspond to their teachers’ assessment of their English writing development.
Table 8

*Ratings of English Writing*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Features</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Grammar</th>
<th>Sentence</th>
<th>Rhetorical</th>
<th>Voice</th>
<th>Linguistic Transfer</th>
<th>Overall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kevin</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Robert</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sophia</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Diana</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Victor</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* 5 – Advanced; 4 – Competent; 3 – Not completely competent; 2 – Developing competence; 1 – Beginner

**Grammar.** Under this category, the analysis focused on appropriate use of language conventions such as capitalization and punctuation including commas, semicolons, colons, question marks, and exclamation marks. In addition, capitalization of proper nouns and first word in a sentence consistently, and whether the writing exhibits subject-verb agreement.

Analysis of students’ writing shows that except for Sophia, all the other students’ writing demonstrated grammatical errors. Mostly, all the students used correct subject-verb agreement. At times, Kevin left out articles, connectors and prepositions, which sometimes interfered with the reader’s comprehension of his narrative, for example, “The rain started everybody tried getting shelter … After that we went back school”; instead of “The rain started and everybody tried getting to the shelter... After that we went back to school.”
Although Robert used correct subject-verb agreements and tenses, he missed articles or he used the wrong ones, such as *a* and *an*, for example, he wrote, “I did a lot of fun stuff and also got into *a* accident” In another example he wrote, “When Helen Keller was born she was *healthy* child.” Also, there were missing words in his sentences, for example, “He had shake it to make it move”; and on a few occasions there were some missing number agreements, “Her *parent* were very worried about … Helen can’t learn how to speak or hear *other* speak.” Moreover, in some occasions, he used incorrect homophones, for example, “Horses wear *hoofs* on there legs … When I got there, *there* house was amazing.”

Diana demonstrated the most difficulty with capitalization and punctuation and like Kevin and Robert, she also omitted articles. Sophia and Victor are the only children who did not omit articles in their writing. It is possible that this problem for the children stems from Swahili, because the language does not have articles. At times Diana did not use capital letters appropriately, or did not use commas in appropriate places, such as when she was providing a list, as in the following example: “I have two brothers one sister and *Two* loving parents.” She sometimes used capital letters for the entire word. An example occurred when she wrote a paper on her favorite things, *MY* favorite sport is swimming … *MY* dreams are to become a model … my favorite show is *I LUV* new york… my favorite singer, modler and actress is *BEYONCE* [emphasis mine]. If she used capital letters for any particular purpose, she was not consistent.

Like Robert, homophone errors were prevalent in Victor’s writing. When he was solving the mystery of the *Poor Family* story, he wrote, “If there were two fathers and two sons, then there was a father who had a son and the son had a son. *Their* is one who
is a father and a son. So they are three and caught three fish.” And at times he also confused *they* and *their*. An example is from *The Chicken – Coop Monster* mystery story. He wrote, “*Their* are all characters Jay, Jef, Alancky, Monster and the story is realistic because it takes place in a family … *Their* was no monster but *their* was a Raccoon.” In addition, Victor mixed up the words, *new* and *knew*. An illustration occurred when he wrote his summary of the Anne Frank biography, “*A knew* leader was elected and he hated Jewish … Otto Frank got a *knew* job and lived in a safer place.”

**Sentence complexity.** Regarding sentence complexity, the analysis focused on how children used a variety of types of sentences including simple, compound, and complex (one independent clause and one or more dependent clauses).

The children’s samples show a mix of simple and complex sentences that used conjunctions, such as, *and, because* and *but*. However, the length of sentences varied between students with some students producing longer sentences than others. According to World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment Consortium (WIDA) English language proficiency levels, when an English language learner can produce a variety of sentence lengths of varying linguistic complexity in oral or written work, it means he or she is making good progress in English; she or he has proficiency beyond developing level.

Kevin used different conjunctions in his writing. For example, in his journal about his favorite day of the week, Kevin wrote, “The first reason I love Friday is because I can look forward to the next day which is Saturday …. The second reason I love Friday is because I can stay up late and wake up late on Saturday.”

Robert also wrote compound sentences. At times he used two conjunctions to connect phrases or ideas, for example, in his journal about his sister’s birthday he wrote,
“For dessert I ate ice cream and I put every single topping on it but it did not taste very pleasant …After we had finished eating and drinking we drove to Crystal Lake Park so we could walk around for exercise.” In another piece about the television show he watched, he wrote, “The part I did like was when the alien attacked someone and grabbed a long 3 ft. sharp object and stabbed the man from the back through his stomach.”

Most of Sophia’s writing demonstrated an ability to write sentences of varied lengths. In an example below she appropriately used the conjunction because when she wrote an essay about the difference between the Hercules movie and the Hercules myth.

One difference in the movie and the myth is that in the myth, he is mortal because his dad is a god and his mom is a human. However, in the movie, he is immortal because both of his parents are gods. Another difference between the movie and the myth is that in the movie, he is willing to do the tasks because he wanted forgiveness for killing his family.

In another example, from a journal about height, Sophia wrote, “The final thing that I will be able to do when I’m an inch tall that I can’t do right now is sneak stuff from the kitchen into my room without my mom knowing it was me. Those are the three things that I would be able to do if I was one inch tall that I can’t do right now.” Complex sentences in Sophia’s writing were not only found in journals and summaries, but also in her worksheets. For example, when she worked on an expanded response assignment from the class reading book, she wrote, “The reasons I think letter “a” [answer choice from four choices] shows how Gale’s character has changed is because before, he used to be quiet and shy but now he has been around Brian he started to talk more.”

Diana did not use a variety of conjunctions to connect phrases; she mostly used the conjunction, and. In a summary she wrote from The mystery of a dead woman she wrote, “He stopped near her and asked if she needed a ride and she nodded and she got in the
car. … Then one morning, the man went to the girl’s house, he knocked on the door and an old lady opened the door.” However, at times her use of conjunctions created very long uninteresting sentences. An example occurred on one of her worksheets, she wrote, “I had bad feelings because they [children] were working too much and they didn’t complain and poor families needed their children for lives and that is bad as child labor.”

Mostly, Victor wrote simple sentences. Following is an illustration from his summary of a story about *A Poor Family*:

> Once there were two fathers and two sons. They had no food to eat in the evenings. At lunch, they ate lunch. All the rice was gone when they ate it. They had no food left. They bought flour and all the money they had was gone. They decided to go fishing. They went all together. They caught three fish.

**Rhetorical style.** In terms of the children’s rhetorical style in their writing, the analysis focused on how they organized the information they were writing for narratives or descriptive writing, the metaphorical language they used, and appropriate word usage in different contexts. The analysis shows that while all the students organized information in their narratives or other pieces systematically, not all of them demonstrated competence in other aspects. For example, Kevin varied words in his writing, demonstrating vocabulary knowledge. In one of the samples, he described how excited he was to get outdoors during one of his classes. Kevin used words, such as, blast and rocket, to relate to his actions, emotional state and the speed he wanted to use to get outside the classroom. He also used numbers, counting from five down to show readiness for action, like a rocket or spaceship before takeoff, “I was so happy that I would blast, kind of like a rocket. I couldn’t hold it anymore. In 5, 4, 3, 2 … suddenly Ms. Brent opened the door.”
Robert also used varied words in his writing, displaying proficiency in using words appropriately. For example, when he elaborated about swimming at his friend’s house, he wrote, “After that we went swimming in the swimming pool they had in the backyard. We did flips, dived and raced across the swimming pool.” In this writing, Robert used the words he knew about swimming, creating a picture in the reader’s mind, of how Robert and his friend swam. In his journal about Spring Break, he provided many details about the places, the people he visited with, and interesting things he experienced.

Sophia’s samples displayed good organization of ideas and elaborations. She used varied vocabulary, demonstrating literate productive proficiency. In her writing she used transitions and at times she included her audience, as if she was talking to them. An example occurred when she wrote:

In the next part, I’ll tell you why I think the movie and myth are different. As you can see, the movie and the myth have a lot of differences. One reason I think there are differences is because the people who made the movie wanted to make it more interesting since it is a children’s movie … Next time you watch the movie of Hercules or the myth, try to see if you can find more differences.

Sophia also stated her opinions in a piece she wrote about her favorite places:

The reason I like to hang out at the mall is because I usually see people I know and it is also tons of fun to shop til you drop or just browse around…The reason I like hanging out at the movies is because it’s just fun to go with your friends and watch a funny movie with popcorn and candy.

Although Diana demonstrated vocabulary knowledge by using appropriate
English words in her writing, there was not much evidence of metaphorical language or good organization. For example, when she wrote her autobiography, while she had the main ideas written in individual sentences, the whole autobiography was presented in one long paragraph for a whole page.
Analysis shows that Victor organized his work but he did not provide many details on events or ideas he was developing. Compared to the other children, he often used simple vocabulary in his writing probably indicating limited vocabulary knowledge.

**Voice.** As described in the rubric, under this category, the analysis focused on the presence of a writer’s voice in the writing. Voice includes the use of a rich variety of descriptive and lively language, including figurative language; use of precise verbs, and varied sentence structures to maintain the reader’s engagement. Mostly, children wrote about their personal experiences; therefore, the writing expressed the personal voice. At times children used lively language to describe ideas, events or opinions.

Kevin demonstrated his voice in some of his writing. For example, in the excerpt below from one of his postings, he wrote about his annoying young sister who disturbed him while he was sleeping:

Last Saturday we celebrated my younger sister’s birthday. People left our apartment very late after the party, so I went to bed late. Next morning I was still tired and wanted to sleep in but my younger sister kept on disturbing me. It was annoying. Then I yelled at her, and she started crying and left my room. I felt like I was a bad brother. I promised her I will play with her later.

Robert’s voice was present in some of his writing. For example, he expressed his unhappiness when he wrote about an accident that badly damaged their car, “We turned on the street and suddenly a car hit us on the side of our car. The police came and said our car was so damaged they had to call the tow truck to take it to the junk yard. So that was it, the end of our car!

In her writing, Sophia showed her voice and demonstrated ability to give opinions. For example, in her piece about height, she wrote about what she would do if she were one inch tall, she wrote, “One thing I would be able to do is to sneak into
people’s conversations… I would be able to pull off pranks much better than right now … I will be able to sneak stuff from the kitchen …” While Sophia demonstrated voice throughout her work, in much of Diana’s writing, lively language that would engage her readers was lacking. However, in one of her pieces, she chose words that demonstrated her excitement when she found out that she was nominated for student of the month at her school, she wrote, “… My most memorable moment was when I was nominated for student of the month on April 2, 2007.”

Although it did not occur often, at times, Victor took the opportunity to show his voice, for example, when he described his first visit to a state fair in the US. At that time, he had been in the US for only a short time, he wrote, “I will never forget the first day I went to the United States state fair. It was cool. I went on a train that goes in a circle. It went very fast, I felt like I was falling. I will never ride that train again.” In this writing Victor successfully shared his experience with his readers.

**Linguistic transfer.** Linguistic transfer refers to the influence of one language on another, in this case the influence of Swahili on English. There was not much evidence of transfer from Swahili to English writing except for an isolated example of transferring the Swahili orthography into English. Once, in his inquiry project about one of the Egypt’s rulers, Tutankhamen, Kevin wrote, “It could have bin caused by bad mummification. It might also have bin a servant doing his job.” While *bin* in this sentence is a wrong spelling, it is a possible linguistic transfer from Swahili phonology. In the Swahili writing system each single vowel is one sound; whereas in English, a sequence of same or different vowels in a word could be pronounced as one sound, such as /oo/ and /ou/. Since Kevin is working with two language systems, English and Swahili, the example
might suggest that he was thinking in Swahili while writing in English. Home data demonstrated extensive use of spoken Swahili in Kevin’s home.

**Swahili reading tasks.** It was the first time for all of the students to read the passages. Kevin and Robert read silently a narrative and an expository text for the Swahili reading tasks. The narrative text was a story about two animal characters, *Ndege na Sungura*. The friendship between *Ndege* and *Sungura* broke up when first, *Sungura* invited *Ndege* for dinner at his house and did not feed him well and then *Ndege* paid revenge by doing the same. The expository text was titled *Afrika*. The text provided a brief introduction to the general geography of Africa, the various regions in the continent and the wildlife of Africa. The raters rated the difficult level of the texts as “just right” for the students’ two grade levels.

Sophia, Diana and Victor read a narrative text *Malaika aliyesaa viatu* [The Angel that wore shoes]. The story was about a farmer who attempted to steal pumpkins that overgrew on his neighbor’s old thatched roof, on a dark night. Through a hole on the old roof the bad neighbor fell off and landed on his neighbor’s bed. He pretended to be an angel and demanded to be given money otherwise he was going to take the neighbor and his wife to god, because he claimed god had sent him to get them. For the expository text, the children read *Wadudu Wanaofanya Kazi Pamoja* [Insects that work together]. The text described the life of social insects, their nests and how they are constructed, their reproduction behaviors, and how they survive in their environments. Both texts were rated at the difficult level of “just right” for the grade level.

After reading each text silently, each student responded orally to textually explicit, textually implicit and scriptally implicit questions from the text (see Chapter 3
for definitions). In addition they gave a retelling of the text. Both tasks were conducted in Swahili.

**Swahili reading comprehension.** Table 9 summarizes the children’s Swahili narrative and expository text reading comprehension performance based on the comprehension questions and retelling of the Swahili narrative and expository tasks. Compared to their English reading comprehension (see Table 7 above), the students performed lower in Swahili suggesting that Swahili is their weaker language, except for Victor, the new arrival from Kenya. Victor performed excellently on the Swahili narrative comprehension questions and out performed the other children on the retelling task. In addition, Table 9 shows that almost all students demonstrated better comprehension on narrative than expository text. Also, students demonstrated the most comprehension on the textually explicit questions. It appears that not all of the children were able to comprehend the Swahili narrative and expository materials, which were written for their grade level.
Table 9

Summary of Students’ Swahili Reading Comprehension Performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Narrative Text Comprehension Questions</th>
<th>Retelling</th>
<th>Expository Text Comprehension Questions</th>
<th>Retelling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TE</td>
<td>TI</td>
<td>SI</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kevin</strong></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>72%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Robert</strong></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(5)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*(10)</td>
<td>*(10)</td>
<td>*(10)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sophia</strong></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Diana</strong></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Victor</strong></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Maximum score possible

**Kevin:** Better on answering the textually explicit questions. As shown in Table 9, on the narrative text, Kevin scored fairly well on the comprehension questions, answering correctly 8 (72%) of the 11 questions. He demonstrated the most comprehension on the textually explicit questions, answering 4 of 5. In addition he answered the two scriptally implicit questions correctly. The information he missed on 2 of the 4 textually implicit and 1 of the 5 textually explicit questions were from the middle part of the story. It seems likely that he did not pay attention to the reading.

In some of his answers, Kevin provided detailed answers. An example occurred when he explained how Ndege paid revenge for his treatment at Sungura’s home:

Kevin: Ndege akamfundisha Sungura somo. Akamleta nyumbani yake akampatia chakula na kulikuwa na chupa na akatia chakula kwa chupa lakini Sungura hakweza kula kitu lakini Ndege alikuwa amekula yote [Ndege taught Sungura a lesson. He brought him home and gave him food in a jar but Sungura could not eat and Ndege ate everything]
Analysis of Kevin’s retelling shows he did not start the retelling with the story starter as it was on the text, *Siku moja kulikuwa na* … (One day there was …). Further analysis demonstrates that although Kevin did not recall two plot episodes from the story, he recalled the events in the order they occurred. He scored 7 (70%) of 10 points on the retelling. This performance corresponds to his comprehension performance on the comprehension questions. Some of the information he did not retell was the same information he did not provide when responding to some of the comprehension questions he answered incorrectly. For example, when he was retelling, as shown in the excerpt below, he did not mention the cause of the problem between Sungura and Ndege that later led to the friendship breakup. In other words, he did not recall why Ndege went home hungry after being invited for dinner at Sungura’s home:

Kevin: **Sungura alikuwa amekwisha kula chakula nyingi na Ndege hakukula chakula nyingi. Kwa hiyo alikwenda nyumbani na njaa nyingi** [Sungura ate a lot of food while Ndege did not eat much. Therefore Ndege went home hungry]

After reading the text, *Afrika*, Kevin orally answered correctly 7 (63%) of the 11 comprehension questions. This performance is lower than his performance on the narrative text. But surprisingly, while Kevin did not answer correctly some of the textually explicit questions he answered both of the scriptally implicit questions correctly, indicating that he did have some background knowledge on the text sub topics. Kevin was able to answer correctly questions about the characteristics of the rain forests in the Congo, about the savanna lands and the general culture, such as the different languages among the African groups. When he was not able to answer questions, I rephrased them for him. I noticed, however, that although I asked questions in Swahili and students were
expected to respond in Swahili, Kevin incorporated English words in his responses. The

English words in the excerpt below are italicized:

Josephine: Mahali panapoitwa jangwa katika Afrika, kama vile Sahara pana sifa gani? [What are the characteristics of a place called desert such as the Sahara?]

Kevin: No answer.

Josephine: *(Rephrased question)* Tunajuaje kuwa mahali fulani ni jangwa? [How do we know that a place is a desert?]

Kevin: Kuko na *sand* nyingi, na kuna *rocks*, na hakuko na *water* nyingi na *rain* hakuko nyingi. [There is a lot of sand, and rocks, and there isn’t much water, there isn’t much rain]

Josephine: Je, katika misitu ya mvua ya Congo utaweza kuona nini? [What will you be able to find in the Congo rain forests?]

Kevin: Utaweza kuona *snakes*, unaweza kuona *monkey* na *bugs* na *crocodiles* na kitu kingine. [You will be able to see snakes, you will be able to see monkey and bugs and crocodile and other things]

The interaction above shows that although Kevin used some English in his answers, he demonstrated receptive competence; he seems to have understood the text and the questions. Sometimes bilingual children code mix when they know what the word means in both languages but they prefer to use a word from one of the languages. However, at times they do not have the productive competence. Most of the English words that Kevin used in his answers were key words in the text such as, *sand*, *rain*, *water*, and *rocks*. On another occasion he substituted a word for a hand gesture to answer a question:

Josephine: Katika bara la Afrika kuna bahari moja upande wa mashariki na bahari nyingine upande wa magharibi. Bahari gani iko upande wa mashariki? [There are two oceans on each side of the Africa continent? Which ocean is on the east?]
Kevin: Upande huu kuna Hindi [This side there is Indian]

During this interaction, Kevin did not produce mashariki [east]. In addition, he only mentioned Indian, without its modifier, bahari [ocean], the complete answer should be “Upande huu kuna Bahari ya Hindi” [On this side there is the Indian Ocean].

Kevin scored 12 (38%) out of 32 points on the retelling task, a much lower performance than his performance on the comprehension questions. Kevin started his retelling of the text with an introductory summary statement:

Kevin: Nimesoma vitu zile utapata huko Afrika, kama deserts, savanna, rainforests na nchi na wapi Afrika ipo na cultures za watu kamaiko na different cultures kwa nchi. [I have read about things you will find in Africa, like deserts, savanna, rainforests and the countries and the position of Africa (geographically) and peoples cultures in different countries]

However, after listing some of the main ideas from the text, he was able to only recall the information about the equator, the rain forests and the savanna. He also mentioned people with different cultures and languages, but used English to state this information indicating that he was comfortable discussing the text in English. According to the order of the text, most of the information he recalled was found at the beginning and toward the end of the text and, therefore, as he performed on the narrative text, he left out most of the information in the middle part of the text. He did not provide ideas about the deserts, the rivers, mountains, and the oceans.

Robert: Better on the narrative than expository task. Robert responded correctly to 7 (63%) of the 11 questions on the narrative task and demonstrated the most comprehension on the textually explicit questions. Robert missed 1 textually explicit question, 1 textually implicit and 2 scriptally implicit questions. Although Kevin performed better on the task than Robert, he seems to be doing well considering that he
received little Swahili literacy instruction in Kenya compared to Kevin. It appears that in some instances Robert did not know the answers due to lack of vocabulary knowledge used in the text. For example, Robert reported that he did not know the word *mlafi* (glutton), a word used in the text that he needed to know to answer one of the questions. On another occasion he did not know the word *kushirikiana* (to maintain a good relationship), which was a key word in the question. Even after I rephrased the question for him, Robert did not answer it correctly:

Josephine:  Kwa sababu gani unafikiri Sungura na Ndege hawawezi kushirikiana? [Why do you think Sungura and Ndege could not maintain a good friendship?]

Robert:  [Robert asking in English] Can you ask that again?

Josephine:  Kwa sababu gani unafikiri Sungura na Ndege hawakuweza kuwa na urafiki mzuri?  [Why do you think Sungura and Ndege could not be good friends?]

Robert:  Hawakukula vizuri [They did not eat well]

On the retelling, Robert scored 6 (60%) out of 10 points, a lower retelling score than Kevin’s. However, unlike Kevin, Robert started his retelling with the story starter “Siku moja kulikuwa … (One day there was …). Although Robert seemed to have a general comprehension of the story plot, he lacked some important details. For example, he started his retelling by introducing the main characters, Sungura and Ndege, but he was not precise on how the two characters were related. In other words, he did not mention that the two animals were friends. Another example occurred when he recalled the episodes that were the problem part in the story. Like Kevin’s retelling, Robert mentioned Ndege’s visit to Sungura for a dinner invitation, but he did not provide information on why it was difficult for Ndege to eat the meal prepared by Sungura.
Sungura eating hurriedly as recalled by Robert was not the problem; rather, it was the utensil in which the food was served that made it difficult for Ndege to eat:

Robert: Sungura alikaribisha Ndege kukula chakula na yeye lakini Sungura alikuwa anakula mkubwa mkubwa. [Sungura invited Ndege for a meal but Sungura ate hurriedly]

Likewise, when he was retelling the second part of the problem in the story, he missed some details; for example, he did not mention Sungura’s problem, that is, because of his big mouth, he failed to eat the meal prepared by Ndege, which was served in a jar with a narrow opening:

Robert: Halafu siku moja Ndege alikaribisha Sungura nyumbani yake kukula mchele lakini Sungura hakukula kwa sababu mchele ilikuwa kwa chupa na Ndege alikuwa anakula na mdomo wake mrefu [Then one day Ndege invited Sungura over to his house to have dinner with him but Sungura could not eat because Ndege had served rice in a jar. He (the host) was able to eat well using its long beak]

Analysis of Robert’s comprehension of the expository text, as measured by the comprehension questions, demonstrated that Robert had more problems in this text than he did the narrative. He answered correctly 4 (36%) of the 11 questions. He missed 2 of the 5 textually explicit questions, 3 of the 4 textually implicit questions and 2 scriptally implicit questions. His performance on the narrative task also shows that he missed the 2 scriptally implicit questions. This performance suggests that Robert may not have comprehended some parts of the text. The questions to which he responded correctly included those that required him to show his comprehension about information on the African countries, the Congo rainforests and the mountains. Although most of the time he asked for a question to be repeated, he was not able to answer them. It seems that he was able to answer correctly one of the questions because he could connect the reading with
his background knowledge. He correctly answered about Kilimanjaro Mountain, a mountain in Tanzania, a country neighboring his home country, Kenya.

Josephine: Je, Mlima Kilimanjaro una sifa gani? [What are the characteristics of Kilimanjaro Mountain?]
Robert: Ni kubwa. Ina snow juu [It is big. It has snow on the cap].

However, in his answer he substituted big for tallest, the word provided in the text. But he correctly said that it has some snow on its peak.

Similar to Kevin, Robert may have recognized the key vocabulary in the text but could not say them in Swahili, such as, mashariki [east], magharibi [west], kaskazini [north], and kusini [south], mto [river], bahari [sea/ocean] and others as demonstrated in the excerpt below. The English words in Robert’s Swahili answers are italicized:

Josephine: Umesoma kuwa kuna nchi ngapi katika Afrika [from the reading, how many countries are there in Africa?]
Robert: Fifty three.
Josephine: Ni mahali gani katika jangwa la Sahara ambapo watu na wanyama wanaweza kupata maji? [What is the place in the desert where people and animals get water?]
Robert: Wanapata maji kutoka kwa cacatu [They get water from cactus].
Josephine: Mahali panapoitwa jangwa katika Afrika, kama vile Sahara pana sifa gani? [What are the characteristics of a place known as a desert, such as Sahara?]
Robert: Iko dry hakuna maji. Utaona sand dunes. [It is dry, there is no water. You will see sand dunes]

Besides the code mixing in Robert’s answers, the analysis also shows that he provided distorted information in his answers. For example, from the text, people and animals in the Sahara desert get water from places called oasis and not from cactus as Robert stated.
When Robert was retelling the text, he scored 7 (22%) out of 32 points, the lowest score among all of the children, indicating lack of comprehension of the text. Robert recalled partial information about the equator, forests, and people and their languages. The excerpt below is all of Robert’s retelling. Besides the information he read in the text, he added some of his own, for example, although it is a fact that it is hot in the Congo, the detail was not in the text:

Josephine: Sasa ninataka unieleze kuhusu mambo uliyosoma. Nieleze mambo mengi, kila kitu unachoweza kukumbuka [Now I would like you to tell me what you have read from the text. Tell me everything that you can remember]

Robert: Iko na ikweta na Afrika iko na nchi nyingi. Kongo iko hot sana kwa sababu iko near ikweta. Iko misitu [There is the equator and there are many countries. Congo is very hot because it is near the equator. There are forests]

Josephine: Umesoma nini zaidi? [What else did you read?]

Robert: Iko na watu wengi wanasaema lugha nyingi … [There are many people and they speak different languages …]

Josephine: Endelea, nieleze zaidi, umesoma nini zaidi? [Continue, tell me more, what else did you read?]

Robert: umm …

Robert’s performance on the two genres shows that he had most difficulty comprehending the expository text. When I asked him in Swahili about his experience reading the text, he replied in English, “It was difficult to read, because I have never heard these words before, but I know ikweta [equator], I know savana [savanna] because I have read them in English.” It seems that Robert was able to recognize these words because they are borrowed words from English written in Swahili morphology.
Kevin and Robert: Using code switching and code mixing to perform Swahili tasks. Code switching and code mixing were prevalent in Kevin and Robert’s Swahili tasks particularly on the expository genre. For example, in Kevin’s retelling he used 21 different English words:

Kevin: Nimesoma vitu zile utapata huko Afrika, kama *deserts, savanna, rainforests* na nchi nyingi na wapi Afrika ipo na *cultures* za watu kama iko na *different cultures* kwa nchi. Ikweta iko ina kama *separate the earth into two different parts,* kama iko *half na half.* Naweza kusema tena watu wako na *different cultures* watu wasema *different languages.* Kuko na misitu kwa Afrika na kuko ile unapata *rainforest* iko unapata huko Congo. Katika *rainforest* utaona miti *rain* nyingi na wanyama wengi kama *snakes, frogs, crocodiles* na kitu zingine kama *monkeys.* Kwa *savanna* utaona *lions, giraffe, zebra,* na vitu zingine zile inaweza ku-*survive* katika savanna.

When asked, after the task, both children indicated that they did not know some of the Swahili words. Kevin reported, “I don’t know some of the words in Swahili; I read them here [showing me the text] but I can’t remember them.” Similarly, Robert responded, “I could think of these words only in English, I have never said them in Swahili.” Yet, not all English words used by Kevin and Robert in the comprehension tasks were specialized vocabulary for the topic; some were common English words. The analysis shows that although Kevin and Robert code switched and code mixed, the incorporation of English elements in Swahili was consistent with the Swahili grammar.

Sophia: Better performance on the narrative task. After reading the story *Malaika Aliyevaa Viatu,* Sophia answered correctly 11 (78%) of the 14 questions. She demonstrated the most comprehension on the textually explicit questions. She missed 2 textually implicit questions and 1 scriptally implicit question. It appears that Sophia knew most of the vocabulary used in the story, and used it when answering the questions.
However, on one occasion she mixed up words: *mboga* [vegetables] and *maboga* [pumpkins]. The confusion could be a result of word use differences in Kenya and Tanzania where the author originates. While *maboga* [pumpkins] is commonly used in Tanzanian Swahili, in Kenya, the word used is *manenge* [pumpkins]. Only once, Sophia used an English word *shoe print* when answering a comprehension question. She acknowledged that she did not remember the Swahili word for *shoe print* that she read in the text. When Sophia could not answer a question, she did not make an effort to try, she shook her head and replied, *sijui* [I don’t know].

On her retelling, she scored 7 (70%) out of 10 points. Sophia missed the story starter “*Hapo zamani...*” (Long time ago …). Although her retelling followed the order of the plot episodes as they occurred in the story, she missed some of them that were important to connect the different parts of the story. For example, she did not recall how Gumi and Adiza handed over their money to the “angel” and how the “angel” left. In addition, at times, Sophia gave distorted information. For example, she gave wrong information when she said that Sumo, Gumi’s friend, is the person who caught the thief, Tanko, by summoning all villagers to a meeting where he checked their shoe prints to identify him:

Sophia: Ikawa mchana penye wameamka wakaenda nje kwa rafiki ya Gumi, Sumo halafu Sumo akasema atafuta huyo mwizi kwa sababu aliacha, *shoe print* kwa matope. Akasema kila mtu ataenda nje ya nyumba kuona ile *shoe print* itafanana na ile imeachwa kwa matope [During the day they went outside to his friend Sumo then Sumo said he will look for the thief because he left a shoe print on the mud. He said everybody will have to go outside the house to see the shoe print that resembles the one left on the mud (outside Gumi’s house) so we can see if their shoe print resembles the one left on the mud]
However, Sophia ended the story well. She retold that after Tanko was identified as the thief, he was asked to ride his bicycle with the police officers to the police station.

Sophia answered correctly 6 (60%) of the 10 questions from the text *Wadudu Wanaofanya Kazi Pamoja*. Similar to the performance on the narrative text, she demonstrated the most comprehension on the textually explicit questions. Sophia missed 2 textually explicit questions, 2 textually implicit questions and 1 scriptally question. Although she comprehended the questions asked, she did not always use the appropriate Swahili words when answering them. For instance, in the example below, she code mixed in English and questioned if honey was the correct word for *asali*:

Josephine: Umesoma kuwa wadudu wengine wanaharibu vitu, na wadudu wengine wana manufaa kwa binadamu. Je binadamu wanapata faida gani kutoka kwa baadhi ya wadudu hawa? [You have read that some of the insects are destructive but there are some benefits from some insects. In what ways do humans benefit from some of these insects?]

Sophia: Wanatupatia chakula. Labda aaaa… honey [People get food. Maybe eee… honey]

She also did not use some of the key words used in the text, for example *mzinga* [beehive], and *nta* [wax].

Further analysis shows that at times when Sophia was answering comprehension questions she used more words than necessary to describe something in Swahili, instead of using appropriate verbs as a proficient Swahili speaker would do. For example, when she was asked about the types of responsibilities the different types of insects have in their nest, Sophia said, “Kuna wale *wanafanya vitu vya kujenga nyumba*” [There are those doing things related to building a house]. Ideally, she could have said, “Kuna wale *wanaojenga nyumba*” [There are those who build a house].
However, Sophia gave all her retelling in Swahili. She scored 10 (45%) of 22 points. Mostly, in her retelling she missed the supporting ideas related to information on both honeybees and termites. At times, she did not use the key words used in the text, for example, she substituted *nyumba* [house] for beehive and *nyumba* [house] for termite mound, whereas the text used *mzinga* [beehive] and *kichuguu* [termite mound]:

Sophia: Na ndani ya *nyumba* ya nyuki kunakuwa na vyumba vingine huko ndani. [Inside the beehive, there are some other spaces]… Mchwa wanatengeneza *nyumba* yao kwa mti *nyumba* ya mbao na chini [Termites build their nest in a tree, wooden house and on the ground]

*Diana: Better on answering expository questions.* On the narrative text, Diana answered correctly 8 (57%) of the 14 questions. Like Sophia, most of the questions she answered correctly were the textually explicit questions. She missed 1 textually explicit question, 3 textually implicit questions. Although the text topic seemed familiar to Diana, she answered incorrectly the two scriptally implicit questions that required her to use information from the text and from her background knowledge and experience. Diana was not able to answer all the questions, but she provided detailed answers to the questions to which she did respond correctly, indicating some comprehension of the story as exemplified below:

Josephine: Gumi na Adiza walifanya nini ili malaika asiwachukue kwapelekakwa mungu? [What did Gumi and Adisa do to avoid from being taken to god by the angel?]

Diana: Walimpa fedha zao, halafu wakapiga magoti, walimwomba malaika asiwachukue kwapeleka kwa mungu kwa sababu wao wana watoto wadogo. Malaika akiwachukua watoto wao watafanya nini? [They gave him their money then they knelt down and asked the angel not to take them to god because they had young children. Their children will suffer without them.]
My analysis shows that mostly Diana used the vocabulary used in the story to answer the comprehension questions. Diana did not perform highly on the comprehension questions, but she demonstrated vocabulary strength when on one occasion she used the word *hekima* [wisdom] in her answer, a synonym for *busara* [wisdom] that was used in the story.

Diana’s retelling performance was lower compared to Sophia. She scored 6 (60%) out of 10 points. Diana gave an incomplete retelling; she missed the resolution and the ending. Like Sophia, Diana missed the story starter “*Hapo zamani ...*” (see Appendix D, for comparison of Diana and Victor’s retelling. The underlined first sentence on Victor’s retelling is supposed to be the story starter). When Diana abruptly stopped her retelling, I asked her if she had anything more to add, but she indicated that that was the end of her retelling. Her inability to give a complete retelling corresponds to her performance on the comprehension questions. She incorrectly answered questions whose answers were in the last part of the text which she did not retell. It is possible that she did not comprehend the last section of the text.

In addition, the analysis demonstrates inconsistencies in Diana’s retelling; while she provided details on some of the episodes she retold, at times she gave partially incorrect information. An example occurred when she was summarizing the setting of the story. She stated that the main characters, Gumi and Tanko were friends, while in fact the two men were only neighbors. However, Diana gave all her retelling in Swahili except for the English phrase, *jealous of*, which she used when she described Gumi’s neighbor, Tanko.
For the expository text, Diana answered correctly 7 (70%) of the 10 questions. She missed 1 textually explicit question, 2 textually implicit questions; but answered correctly the two scriptally implicit questions. Like Sophia, Diana did not use some of the key vocabulary used in the reading, such as mzinga [beehive], nta [wax] and asali [honey] when responding to questions. In addition, she used a number of English words in her answers, while some of them were key words for the topic, such as *honey*, *wax*, *forest*; others were common vocabulary such as *face*, *tiny*, *piece of wood*, *biggest*. It seems that Diana was comfortable using the English words in her discussion of the text.

When she was retelling the text, Diana scored 9 (41%) of the 22 points. Diana did not recall much about the honeybees whose information was in the first part in the text. Inability to recall information on honeybees corresponds to her performance on the comprehension questions. All the information she recalled from the text about the honeybees is provided below:

Diana: Nyuki inakuwa dudu enye inataga mayai halafu inakuwa ni *queen* halafu dudu ina –communicate na kitu inakuwa karibu na mdomo yao halafu iko na kitu *at the end* katika *body* yake [A honeybee is an insect that lays eggs, then it is a queen, then the insect communicates using something that is at the end of its body]

From her retelling of honeybees’ information, above, it appears that Diana had limited comprehension of the text. Her summary is incoherent and the information is distorted. Further, it is not clear whether her use of English in the excerpt is related to lack of vocabulary knowledge because she had used Swahili words before for some of the English words in the excerpt, such as, *malkia* [queen]. Similar to the analysis on the comprehension questions, her retelling demonstrated inability to use the appropriate
Swahili terms *mzinga* [beehive] and *kichuguu* [termite mound], instead, she used *nyumba* [house/home] for both terms.

**Victor: Reading Swahili effectively.** Victor’s performance on the narrative task was markedly different from Sophia and Diana’s. He answered correctly all 14 (100%) questions. Moreover, his answers were detailed. It was interesting when Victor used *otero*, a word used in his ethnic language, Kisi, referring to a sandal made from an old tire, because he could not remember the Swahili phrase *viatu vya matairi yaliyokwishi*, which was used in the text:

Josephine: Kwa sababu gani Sumo hakuamini hadithi ya Gumi kuwa malaika alikuja nyumbani kwao usiku? [Why didn’t Sumo believe Gumi’s story that last night they had a visit from an angel?]

Victor: Sumo hakuamini hadithi ya Gumi kwa sababu aliona nyayo zake zimetengenezwa aaaa... ile nyayo ilikuwa imezeeka, ndiyo. Sijui nini ya gari. Najua inaitwa *otero* [Sumo did not believe Gumi’s story because he saw a shoe print made from aa... that print was old, yes. I don’t know, but it is something from a car. I know, it is called *otero*]

When Victor was retelling the story, there was no hesitation. However, on one occasion he substituted the title *mkuu wa kijiji* [village chief/leader] for *mfalme* [king]. It appears that the use of the word *mfalme* [king] was an influence from his experience. When I asked him after he gave his retelling, he explained “Nimesoma katika hadithi nyingi kuhusu mfalme, sasa sikuambuka mtu huyu wa kijiji” [I have read in many stories about king, and now I could not remember the name of this man in the village].

Victor’s retelling was given entirely in Swahili. In addition, his retelling was markedly different from those of Sophia and Diana in terms of the episodes retold and the details given (see Appendix D for a comparison of Diana and Victor’s retelling). He scored 9 (90%) out of 10 points, and this performance appeared consistent with his
performance on the comprehension questions, indicating excellent comprehension of the story. He retold the setting as provided in the text and the plot episodes systematically. He gave the resolution and story ending. However, on one occasion Victor did not make a distinction between a ladder and a tree. When he was retelling how Tanko, the bad neighbor fell under Gumi’s old thatched roof, he stated, “Alipoenda huko, akaiba maboga alichelewa kutoka kwa mti akaanguka ndani ya paa la nyumba ya Gumi” [When he went to steal the pumpkins, he did not make it on time to get off the tree and fell under Gumi’s roof]. The text mentioned a ladder.

On the expository text, Victor answered correctly 8 (80%) of the 10 questions. Like the other children, Sophia and Diana, Victor demonstrated the most comprehension on the textually explicit questions. He also answered correctly both scriptally implicit questions and missed 2 textually implicit questions. Analysis shows that one of the questions that Victor answered incorrectly is among the questions that Sophia and Diana could not answer. The question asked how honeybees build their nests. It appears that all children lacked vocabulary knowledge of the word nta (wax) because it was important for answering the question. However, among the three students, Victor was the only one who used the Swahili word asali [honey] when answering comprehension questions, while Sophia and Diana used the English word, honey.

There was a difference between Victor’s performance on comprehension and retelling. While he performed fairly well on the comprehension questions task, he scored 10 (45%) of the 22 points when retelling. However, his retelling was presented in the order the ideas were presented in the text. One of the main ideas that he did not recall related to the types of bees in a beehive and their characteristics. However, he had given
this information previously when he was answering the comprehension questions. Like Sophia and Diana, at times, during the retelling, Victor did not always use the terms used in the text, for example, every time he needed to refer to beehive or termite mound he used nyumba [house] instead of mzinga and kichuguu respectively.

**Swahili writing development.** The children’s Swahili writing was obtained from their journal postings. Although the number of postings differed for each child, most children made a minimum of one posting a week. The length of the postings also differed from child to child, from two sentences to half a page. Diana made more postings than the other children but her postings were the shortest, while Sophia and Victor’s postings were the longest. Kevin was reluctant to write. His journal showed that he made postings of a sentence or two each time, demonstrating lack of motivation to write in Swahili. The journal also disappeared two weeks before the due date; after that he wrote two postings of two sentences each.

The children primarily wrote narratives postings for describing daily events, school, family and friends. Besides these topics, it was only Diana who wrote in a different genre. She wrote two poems, one about the beauty of a peacock and the other about children’s rights.

Table 10 illustrates the students’ Swahili writing performance analyzed from their journal postings. The Table shows that Kevin, Robert and Diana’s overall Swahili writing performance is lower compared to their performance in English suggesting that they experienced more challenge when writing in Swahili. Their performance also reveals that they are stronger English writers than Swahili writers. Victor demonstrated stronger writing performance in Swahili than in English suggesting that compared to the other
children, he has not yet lost his Swahili proficiency. Almost all the children scored higher in grammar than in any other category except for Sophia and Robert who had the same score in two categories.

Table 10

*Ratings of Swahili Writing*

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<th>Name</th>
<th>Grammar</th>
<th>Sentence Complexity</th>
<th>Rhetorical Style</th>
<th>Voice</th>
<th>Overall</th>
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*Note:* 5 - Advanced; 4 – Competent; 3 – Not completely competent; 2 - Developing competence; 1 – Beginner

**Grammar.** Mostly, the children used correct Swahili word order and tenses indicating Swahili syntax proficiency. However, occasionally some students’ writing displayed the influence of English word order. For example, in one of his posting, about a snow day, Robert used English word order when writing a compound word *snowman* in Swahili, where he wrote *snow mtu* [snow man]. The correct Swahili translation would be *mtu wa theluji* [person made of snow] because in the Swahili word order, the modifier is preceded by the noun. One of the reasons for lack of Swahili word knowledge is that there is no snow in East Africa, therefore, the word was not readily available for Robert. Diana also made a word order error. In one of her postings she wrote, “Niliamka asubuhi, nikaoga halafu *nikaenda na basi kwake*” [literally, I woke up in the morning took a
shower then went by bus to her place]. The unmarked Swahili word order would be “Niliamka asubuhi, nikaoga halafu nikaenda kwake kwa basi.” [I woke up in the morning took a shower then went to her place by bus].

However, Diana and Victor demonstrated competency in Swahili morphology knowledge. For example, once, from the noun *sherehe* [party/celebration] Diana conjugated the verb *kusherehekea* [to celebrate] in a sentence, “Wakati ilikuwa saa ya *kusherehekea*...” [When time came to celebrate …]. Although the other children had sometimes written about celebrating in their journals, they never used the verb. Victor demonstrated Swahili grammar proficiency when he used complex verbs that incorporated object marking, such as, *tuliviweka* [subject agreement +tense marker + object prefix+ verb stem] *hapo* [we left them (the books) there]; *anawaita*, (subject agreement +tense marker + object prefix+ verb stem) [she is calling them].

While all the children used correct punctuation, including periods, commas and capitalization, Sophia used more punctuation marks than the other children. In her writing she correctly used question marks and exclamation marks.

Spelling errors were common in Kevin and Robert’s writing. For example, Kevin wrote, “Leo shuleni tulifunditwa...” [Today at school we were taught …] The correct Swahili spelling would be tulifundishwa … [we were taught …]. In another posting Kevin wrote, *mngama* [animal] instead of *mnyama* [animal]. In this example, it seems that Kevin confused a velar nasal /ŋ/ [ng] and a palatalized nasal /n/ [ny]. Lack of Swahili spelling ability might be one of the reasons for Kevin’s reluctance to write in Swahili. Robert used interchangeably the velar consonants /c/, /ck/, /q/ and the Swahili /k/, as well as the English vowels /i/ for the Swahili vowel /e/.
Sentence complexity. The analysis illustrates that not all of the children were able to write complex sentences with varied conjunctions. But in varying degrees they used appropriate conjunctions such as: *na* [and], *lakini* [but], *halafu* [then/after that], *kwa sababu* [because], *kwa hivyo* [therefore].

Kevin used only the conjunction *na* [and] to join phrases while Robert often used *na* [and] and *halafu* [then/afterwards], for example, in his use of *halafu* [then] he wrote, “*Nilipofika nyumbani nikakula chakula halafu nilifagia nyumba* [When I got home I ate then I cleaned up the house]. Sophia is one of the students who used more varied conjunctions to connect phrases, indicating Swahili word knowledge and good writing skills. She used conjunctions such as, *na* [and/with]. For example, “*Nikitoka shule, nilimwambia mama na yeye alikuwa na furaha pia*” [When I got home from school I told my mother and she was happy too]. In her writing she also used *kwa sababu* [because]; *halafu* [then/after that]; and *kwa hivyo* [therefore].

Like the other children, Diana also used conjunctions correctly to join phrases and write compound or complex sentences, only her conjunctions did not vary. She used mostly, *kwa sababu* [because] and *halafu* [then/after that], for example, she wrote, “*Rafiki yangu alipiga simu akaniuuliza kama nataka kwenda kwa kanisa jioni. Nilikubali kwa sababu sikuwa na kitu ya kufanya. Nilioga, nikavaa nguo halafu nilingojea rafiki yangu kunichukuwa tuende kanisani* [My friend called to ask if I wanted to go to church in the evening. I agreed because I did not have anything special to do. I took shower, I got dressed, after that I waited for her to come and pick me up to go to church].

Like Sophia, Victor used varied conjunctions to write sentences of different structures, for example, in a posting he wrote about his auntie’s graduation, he said,
“Wakati wanaita majina mle ndani, tulichoka na tuliboeka sana kwa hivyo tulianza kusinzia kwa sababu tulingoja sana.” [When they were calling names, inside, we were very tired and bored therefore we were dozing off because we had waited for a long time]. In another example, he wrote about the day students at his school returned all the library books that they had checked out, “Kwa ukuta kulikuwa kumeandikwa masomo. Kama kitabu kilikuwa cha somo hilo tulikuwa tunaviweka hapo halafu tunarudi darasani” [On the wall they had written the subjects. If the book belonged to that subject we were supposed to put it there, and then we returned to class].

*Rhetorical style.* The students’ writing shows that each posting focused on one particular topic. Besides organization, there was not much evidence from some of the students on the use of other aspects of rhetorical style, such as elaboration of ideas, use of metaphorical language and word choice, suggesting lack of advanced Swahili competence. Particularly, Kevin and Robert showed the most incompetence in this category.

However, Sophia demonstrated knowledge of Swahili vocabulary by using varied and appropriate words in different contexts, making her postings engaging to her reader. In the following example, she wrote about her difficulty waking up in the morning, “Hii wiki hakukuwa na kitu cha kushangaza. Lakini nilipata shida kuamka kama kawaida, mama yangu inafaa kuniambia niamke kama mara saba kabla ya kutoka kwa kitanda … Hiyo ndiyo asubuhi yangu ya kawaida” [This week there wasn’t much. But as usual it was difficult to wake up in the morning. My mom has to ask me for about seven times before I could get out of bed … That is my usual morning].
Another example occurred when she again wrote about her sleeping routine. It seems that when she was writing this posting, she was almost ready to go to bed. In this posting she asked herself a question:

Nikimaliza kukula chakula yangu, ninacheza kwa computer. Kwa computer ninasikia muziki mengi kwa sababu ninapenda muziki sana. Ninalala usiku sana kwa sababu siwezi kulala mapema, sijuwi kwa nini? [my emphasis] Ninajitayarisha kwenda kwa kitanda kwa sababu kesho ni shule [After eating, I play on the computer. I listen to music on the computer because I like music very much. I sleep very late because I can’t go to bed early, I don’t know why? I am preparing to go to bed now because there is school tomorrow].

Sophia’s closing sentences in most of her postings seemed to bring a particular effect to the reader as illustrated below from one of her postings when she was bored because school was out:

Tulipatiwa yearbook yetu. Niliona picha yangu kwa hicho kitabu mara ya tano. Niliambia marafiki wangu waandike kwa hicho kitabu kwa hivyo nisiwasahau. Leo ndiyo tulifunga shule na hakuna kitu cha kufanya. Nataka kwenda shule tena [my emphasis] [We were given our yearbook. I saw my picture five times. I told my friends to write on my book so that I don’t forget them. We closed school today and there is nothing much to do. I want to go to school again]

On one occasion, Diana used repetition that brought an effect to her reader. She wrote about dining out during her friend’s birthday celebration, “Tulikwenda kwa mkahawa, tukakula, tukakula mpaka tumbo yangu karibu kupasuka [We went to a restaurant and we ate, and ate, until my stomach was almost bursting]. Diana’s choice of words illustrate that they had eaten a lot of food.

One of the rhetorical aspects that Victor used in his writing was the use of varied words. Like Sophia, Victor often demonstrated knowledge of Swahili vocabulary by using words appropriately in different contexts. For example, in a posting he made after visiting Indiana Beach, he created an imagery of an Indian Ocean beach at Mombasa in Kenya, he wrote:
Baba yangu alipotuambia kuwa tutaenda Indian Beach nilifurahi sana kwa sababu ingekuwa mara yangu ya kwanza kwenda huko. Nilifikiria ni mahali penye maji mengi sana kama yale ya bahari kule Mombasa. Kule beach ya Mombasa utaona maji mpaka mwisho mbali kabisa, na utaona mawimbi mengine madogo na wakati mwingine mawimbi makubwa. Loo! Sasa tulipofika Indiana Beach nilishangaa nilipoona kuwa kuna vitu vingi sana.” [When my father told us we were going to Indiana Beach I was very happy because it would be my first time to go there. I thought it was a place with lots water like that on the ocean at Mombasa. At Mombasa beach you will see water until the end of the horizon; you will also see small and big waves. Alas! When we got to Indiana Beach I was surprised to see a lot of different things].

**Voice.** The children wrote mostly about their personal experiences, therefore, they wrote in the first person narrative and expressed their ideas and thoughts. For example, in one of his postings, Robert expressed his surprise when he found that his father had bought a new car. He described the type of car, the number of seats and the positions:

Baba yangu alinunua gari Wednesday. Gari yake ni Toyota Sienna-Van. Iko na viketi saba. Viketi mbili mbele. Viketi mtile middle na viketi tatu nyuma. Tulienda kanisa tukaona ako, na ako na gari mpya! [My father bought a car on Wednesday. His car is a Toyota Sienna-Van. It has seven seats. Two seats in the front. Two seats in the middle and three seats in the back. We had gone to church and we saw him there, we saw him in a new car!]

Sophia expressed her feelings in a number of her postings. When she wrote about a winter day, she expressed her happiness using the adverbial phrase *nilikuwa na furaha sana* [I was very happy] more than once:

Hii wiki, *nilikuwa na furaha sana* kwa sababu hakukuwa na shule kwa siku mbili! Kila mtu kwa shule yangu *alikuwa na furaha mingi* pia. Siku ya kwanza, hakukuwa na shule kwa hivyo nililala mpaka mchana. Siku laini kitu nilipenda. Nilikuwa ninaona televisheni alafu ikasema hakuna shule Wednesday. Sasa *nilifurahi* kwa sababu niweza kulala mpaka mchana … Alafu, tukavaa nguo za kwenda nje kwa sababu tuliikuwa tunaenda kwa mlima ku-sled. *Nilikuwa na furaha sana.* Tuliuja nyumbani tukiwa na baridi kali kwa mwili yetu. Tulikunywa cocoa moto. Leo, *nilikuwa na furaha sana sana* [This week I was very happy because there was no school for two days! Everbody at my school was very happy too. The first day there was no school I slept until noon. I did not do anything that I liked. I watched television then it said there will be no school on Wednesday. I was happy because I will sleep until noon. … Then, I put clothes for outdoor because we were going to the hill to sled. I was very happy. We were
very cold when we got back home. We drank hot cocoa. Today, I was very very happy]

As the excerpt above shows, in the last sentence Sophia did not only write *nilifurahi sana* [I was very happy] she also repeated *sana* [much/a lot] to express the strength of her feelings. The sentence translates as, “I was very very happy.”

In some of her postings, Diana expressed her feelings about issues. In the sentence below taken from one of her postings she expressed anxiety due to the amount of homework she had to complete, “Leo nimetoka shule na nimechoka sana. Niko na kazi ya shule mingi, sitafikiria nitamaliza” [I am back from school and very tired. I have a lot of homework; I don’t think I will be able to do it all].

Victor demonstrated the ability to express emotions. In one of his postings he expressed his sadness in the words he used and an exclamation mark when he knew his locker padlock was going to be broken, and it will never function again, he wrote,

Tulikuwa tunatakikana kurudisha vifuri kwa walimu. Mimi nilikuwa na kifuri changu mwenyewe. Kama ningepewa na mwalimu angeweza kukifungua na kifunguo. Sasa siku hiyo nambari yake ilikuwa na nguo zangu ndani. Sasa itakuja kukatwa sitaweza kukitumia tena! [We were supposed to return our padlocks to the teachers. I had my own padlock. If I had used one given by the teacher she could have opened it anytime with her key. Then one day the code numbers I used could not open the padlock. I had my clothes in the locker. Now the padlock will be broken and I won’t be able to use it again!]

In another example, Victor’s voice was present through his surprise when he compared school practices in Kenya and the US. He wrote about how he was allowed to re-do his math problems if he wanted to get a better grade, something that his teacher in Kenya would not have allowed:

mawili tu singeenda mpaka D na singerudia [We were watching a video during the math class and the teacher was calling students one by one to tell them their test grades. I got a D because I did not follow instructions on the questions. She wanted me to work on the two problems again, I could not believe it. I got an A. If I had gotten two problems wrong in Kenya that would not have dropped my grade to D and I would not have been allowed to re-work the problems].

**Linguistic transfer.** The analysis illustrates that at varying degrees, all the children transferred some aspects of English language into Swahili, phonology and lexicon, at times, demonstrating limitations in Swahili writing competency. Kevin and Robert’s writing demonstrated the most English features in their writing indicating a high influence of English in their Swahili. Kevin and Robert’s writing demonstrated spelling confusions. Spelling confusions had also been reported by the children’s Swahili teacher, Mrs. Kiondo. For example, Kevin wrote (in the examples non Swahili features are italicized), “Leo tulienda Minnesota kuona unkle yangu. Wakati nilienda enje nilyona mngama ule alycwawa ameumia” [Today we went to Minnesota to visit with my uncle. When I went outside I saw an injured animal]. In the word enje [outside], the italicized /e/ is written as /i/ in Swahili. The /ly/ in the words nilyona [I saw] and alycwawa [it was] are written as /li/ in Swahili. Also, the /c/ in alycwawa [it was] is /k/ in Swahili. There was an interchange of Swahili /li/ for English /ly/ and Swahili /k/ for the English /c/. In another example, he wrote, “Wakati toolyenda nyumbani kutoka shuleni nilyenda ku-watch TV [When we went back home from school I went to watch TV]. Kevin wrote /oo/ the spelling for English long vowel /u/, and again /ly/ for the Swahili /li/. The correct Swahili sentence would be “Wakati tulienda nyumbani kutoka shuleni nilienda kutazama TV.”

The analysis shows that not all of Robert’s spelling confusion errors were similar to those demonstrated in Kevin’s writing. For example, Robert used /q/ for Swahili /k/:
Tulipomaliza tulienda qwa park kutembea. Tuliona maji na miti. Tulienda qwa Crystal Lake Park. Tulienda qwa bridge alafu tukaenda qwa gari kwenda qwa nyumba. Wakati tulipo-drive gari itilugonga. Police walicuga wakasema gari yetu itapelekwa qwa junk yard. [We walked by the bridge and then we went to the car. When we were driving home, a car hit our car. The police came and they said our car will be towed to the junk yard].

Both /q/ and /k/ are velar consonants; however, Swahili does not have /q/ in its alphabet. He also used English /g/ for the Swahili /j/, for example, in walicuga [they came] instead of the correct Swahili form walikuja [they came]. Like Kevin, Robert also used the English /c/ for the Swahili /k/. However, it seems that he was not systematic, since, at times he used /ck/ for the Swahili /k/ for example when he wrote, “snow mtu ilianguckta” [the snow man fell] and “halafu nickaenda nyumbani” [then I went home] and in other times he used /c/ for Swahili /k/. When I asked Robert about this he explained that sometimes he was not sure which one was correct when he wrote Swahili, “Saa zingine sijui ipi ni Kiswahili, Kiingereza kinakuja na ninaandika [Sometimes I don’t know which one is Swahili and English comes easily, so I write].

Similar to Kevin, Robert also confused Swahili vowel /e/ and /i/. An example occurred when he wrote about himself and his siblings’ schooling for the coming school year. The italicized /e/ in Meme, ipete and meyezi were supposed to be written in Swahili as Mimi, ipite and miezi. Notice that the word miezi means months in Swahili but it seems that Robert wanted to write miaka [years], in addition, he used an English plural marker /s/ on meyezis [months]:

Meme nitafurahi kuenda 5th grade, qwa sababu nitaenda middle school after 5th grade ipete. Joy ataenda pre-school. Joy atakuwa 3 meyezi. Diana atakuwa in grade 8. Ataenda Brooke Middle School. Frank ataenda grade 4. Pengine atakuwa qwa darasa ya Ms. T. or Mrs. N. Ataenda Vine Elementary School [I will be happy to go to 5th grade because after 5th grade I will go to middle school. Joy will start pre-school. Joy will be 3 years old. Diana will be in 8th grade. She goes to

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Brooke Middle School. Frank will be in 4th grade, may be he will be in Ms. T. or Mrs.N. class. He goes to Vine Elementary School.

The analysis also shows that the children incorporated English words in their Swahili writing. The code switching and code mixing were prevalent in Kevin, Robert and Diana’s Swahili reading comprehension tasks, and were also present in their Swahili writing. It was less observed in Sophia and Victor’s writing. At times code mixing affected the Swahili order, particularly in Kevin and Robert’s writing, but on other occasions, English was incorporated, following the Swahili grammar rules, demonstrating Swahili grammar proficiency. For example, it is possible that Robert did not know the Swahili word for snow and sledding because there is no snow in Kenya, but he would know to say saa 3 [three hours] instead of 3 hours:

Weekend ilipita nilicheza kwa snow. Nilicheza mccho unaitwa snow ball fight. Mimi nilitupa snow nyingi. Tulipomaliza nitengeza snow mutu nikachupa teke kichwa ya snow mutu iliangucka. Alafu nickaenda sledding chini ya International Village hill na kina Sophia. Tulicheza uko kwa 3 hours. Tulipomaliza tulienda nyumbani tukaoga [Last weekend we played with snow. I played a game called snow ball fight. I threw a lot of snow. Then I made a snowman, I threw a kick and the snowman’s head fell off. Then I went sledding at the International Village hill with Sophia. We played for three hours. When we finished we went home, and we took shower]

On a few occasions Sophia also used English words in her postings. For example, when she wrote about the summer camp she attended, “Hii wiki nilienda camp ya basketball. Nilikuwa na furaha sana kwa sababu nilipata rafiki wengine. Niliona marafiki wangu wa shule pia. Sijui nitakuwa ninafanya nini after basketball camp [This week I attended basketball camp. I was very happy because I got some more friends. I also saw my friends from school. I don’t know what I will do when the basketball camp ends].

This is the only place where Sophia’s writing included in an English phrase, after
basketball camp. In the three other postings where Sophia used English features, she only used individual words.

Besides Kevin and Robert, Diana too, code mixed often in her writing. In one of the examples, she wrote, “Tuko karibu kufunga shule. Leo tulisafisha locker zetu. Tulifanya mitihani ya end of the year. Nita-miss 7th grade sababu ilikuwa fun. Ilikuwa grade muzuri sana” [We are nearing the end of the school year. Today we cleaned up our lockers. We took our end of the year tests. I will miss 7th grade because it was fun. It was a good grade]. In another posting, she wrote, “Rafiki yangu alini-invite kwenda kumu-visit sababu anaenda back to Ghana. Niliamka asubuhi nikaoga halafu nikaenda na basi kwake. Tulicheza, tukaenda movies and we went to McDonalds” [My friend had invited me to visit with her because she was going back to Ghana. I woke up in the morning then I took a shower, and went to her house. We played, went to the movies and went to McDonalds].

Like Sophia, there was only occasional language mixing in Victor’s writing. For example, when he wrote about his daily events he wrote, “Nilikuwa nikibaki nyumbani na babu, nyanya na cousin yangu. Pia na ndugu yangu mdogo” [I used to stay home with my grandfather, grandmother and my cousin, as well as my younger brother]. I wondered why Victor used the English word cousin instead of the Swahili word mpwa because as a kinship word it is a high frequency word.

The children’s writing also demonstrated occasional instances of literal translation from English. For example Sophia literally translated an English verb announce into Swahili, a situation that created a semantic mismatch:
Wiki hii tulifanya ISAT test yetu. Lakini leo hatukuwa na shule. Nililala mpaka mchana kwa sababu siwezi kuaambu. Jana mimi na mama yangu tulienda shule yangu kuongea na mwalimu mwangu. Alisema nimefanya vizuri kwa darasa. Tulikuja nyumbani alafu tukakula chakula na kujitangaza kulala [This week we took our ISAT. Today there was no school. I slept until noon because I could not wake up in the morning. Yesterday my mom and I went to my school to talk with my teacher. She said I am doing well in class. We came home, I had a meal and then I announced myself to go to bed]

The Swahili verb *kutangaza* which Sophia used in her writing means to announce or to advertise. Sophia needed to write *tukaagana nikaenda kulala* [I said goodbye to them and went to bed]. However, Sophia’s use of the verb *kujitangaza* demonstrates her competence in Swahili morphology. She incorporated a Swahili reflexive morpheme –ji-[*ku-ji-tangaza*] and therefore constructed a complex verb.

**Summary.** On the English reading, all of the children performed better on the comprehension questions than on the retelling for both genres; that is, their performance on the comprehension questions was not reflected in their retellings. However, across genres, all of the students showed a better performance on the narrative task than on the expository task. It also appears that although students sometimes comprehended the text, they lacked productive proficiency in English.

Further analysis demonstrates that Kevin performed higher than Robert on the narrative task but it seems that both children had difficulties showing comprehension on textually implicit questions. When they were retelling the narrative text, both children provided incomplete information by leaving out some important information from the
text. Kevin also performed well on the expository text compared to Robert on the comprehension questions and retelling. However, on the expository retelling, both children provided main ideas without the supporting ideas; moreover, they did not use key words from the text.

Among the middle school children, Sophia scored highest on the narrative and expository tasks than Diana and Victor. Findings also show that she was the strongest reader among all five children. Meanwhile, Victor seemed to have problems comprehending English texts; for example, when he was retelling the narrative text he admitted that he did not understand some parts of the story. Compared to the other children, it was Diana who often provided distorted information when responding to comprehension questions. It is not clear whether she did not pay attention during the reading or she did not comprehend the text. Like the elementary school children, Kevin and Robert, the middle school children also experienced an overall low performance on the expository task in English, probably due to unfamiliar words.

Analysis of the children’s English writing from school demonstrates that Sophia and Kevin were the strongest English writers, attaining a competent level, while the other three children, Robert, Diana and Victor performed below the competent level. All the children except for Sophia exhibited grammatical errors. Homophone confusions were present in Robert and Victor’s writing. Otherwise, at varying degrees, all of the children demonstrated the ability to write compound sentences and demonstrated rhetorical style and voice in their writing. On one occasion, Kevin demonstrated an orthography transfer from Swahili when he wrote *bin* as he would have written it in Swahili instead of the English orthography *been*. 
In contrast to the performance on the English comprehension tasks, with the exception of Victor, the children’s performance was low on the Swahili tasks. This suggests that English is the stronger language for Kevin, Robert, Sophia and Diana. However, Sophia’s case shows that she is also a strong reader in Swahili, suggesting that she is becoming a balanced bi-literate. Victor is the one who performed the highest on the Swahili tasks, suggesting that he has not yet lost his Swahili proficiency.

Similar to the performance on the English tasks, the performance on the two genres in Swahili tasks shows a better performance on the narrative than on the expository. All of the students exhibited the most comprehension on the Swahili textually explicit questions than on the textually implicit and scriptally implicit questions, suggesting low level comprehension. But findings also show that on some occasions, students used their background knowledge to answer some of the comprehension questions. While expository tasks seemed to be difficult for all the children, the findings show that Kevin and Robert experienced the lowest comprehension. Both of them admitted unfamiliarity with some of the Swahili vocabulary. On the expository retelling, all students provided mostly the main ideas, leaving out the supporting ideas, and often, not using the key Swahili words from the text.

Another finding on the Swahili reading tasks is the use of code switching and code mixing. Among the children, code switching and code mixing were prevalent in Kevin, Robert and Diana’s comprehension question responses and retellings. Children may have used code switching and code mixing because they were comfortable discussing in English, or they used translation as a bilingual reading strategy because they lacked Swahili productive proficiency.
Regarding Swahili writing, Sophia and Victor’s performance show that they are strong Swahili writers compared to Kevin, Robert and Diana. While Sophia performed almost at competent level, Victor’s score shows that he performed above the competent level. Kevin, Robert and Diana’s demonstrate lower performance compared to their performance in English writing. However, Robert did well in Swahili writing than Kevin although Kevin was one year older and had more Swahili literacy instruction in Kenya compared to Robert.

The length of children’s Swahili postings in their journals differed from child to child; from two sentences to half a page. Diana made more postings than the other children, but besides Kevin who was reluctant to write, her postings were the shortest. Sophia and Victor’s postings were the longest. Primarily, they wrote narrative postings for describing their daily events. It was only Diana who wrote in a different genre; she wrote two poems.

Analysis also shows that mostly, children used correct Swahili word order and tenses indicating Swahili syntax proficiency. However, Kevin and Robert’s writing demonstrated spelling errors. Although all of the students used conjuctions to write compound sentences, it was Sophia and Victor who demonstrated the most use of varied conjuctions in their writing. Besides organization of information in their writing, there was not much evidence of rhetorical style in students writing. Kevin and Robert demonstrated the most incompetence in this category. Sophia and Victor demonstrated knowledge of Swahili vocabulary and use of appropriate words in different contexts, but only once Diana demonstrated rhetorical style in her writing by using repetition.
In terms of voice, the children wrote mostly about their personal experiences; therefore they wrote in the first person narrative. While Sophia and Victor’s voice were often present in their writing, with the other children, it sometimes occurred. Kevin is the one student who did not write much, therefore, the voice aspect was missing in his writing.

Robert and Diana also code switched and code mixed a lot on Swahili writing suggesting that they were more comfortable writing in English, or they lacked productive proficiency. Code switching and code mixing were less observed in Sophia and Victor’s performance. In Kevin’s case, there was evidence of code mixing in the little writing he submitted.
Chapter 5
Summary, Discussion and Implications

Summary

Guided by sociocognitive and sociocultural theories of language and literacy, the purpose of this study was to investigate home and school contexts in relation to facilitating or holding back the development of bilingualism and biliteracy in the children studied. Two research questions guided the data collection and analysis for this study:

1. What are the factors at home and school that support Swahili speaking children’s bilingual and biliteracy development or contribute to their Swahili literacy attrition or loss?

2. How well do Swahili students comprehend and write narrative and expository texts in English and Swahili?

Five Swahili speaking students who came to the US at different ages, their families and teachers participated in the study. I collected data for six months using qualitative methods, including classroom and home observations; and student, parent and teacher interviews. Through student and parent interviews and home observations, I was able to obtain parents’ and children’s perspectives and experiences with bilingualism and biliteracy. Teachers provided data on their curriculum, materials and student participation in literacy activities. To understand children’s strengths and weaknesses in reading and writing English, I collected children’s literacy assessments from school and English writing samples from their classes. In addition, I conducted English reading tasks with them. For the Swahili reading and writing data, I conducted Swahili reading tasks with the children and they kept a Swahili journal throughout the study. After typing the interviews and my notes, I shared data draft scripts with some parents and I incorporated
their feedback in the final drafts. The data from all sources were analyzed using the constant comparison method (Miles and Huberman, 1994). The findings were compared and contrasted within and across cases and categories and emerging themes were identified. Major themes identified included: maintenance of Kenyan culture; speaking Swahili as part of the Kenyan culture; varied opportunities for Swahili literacy practices at home; school influences on English and Swahili literacy development; and students’ literacy strengths in reading and writing English and Swahili.

To better explore the relationship between students’ bilingual and biliteracy performance and home and school contexts, I have decided to first discuss their literacy performance in the two languages, from a sociocognitive perspective, and then use a sociocultural perspective to discuss how home and school contexts relate to their bilingualism and biliteracy.

Discussion of the Findings

**State of children’s English and Swahili literacy**

*Varied performance in English literacy.* The fourth-grade findings on the WIDA English language proficiency (WIDA), and the Illinois Measures of Annual Growth in English demonstrate Kevin to be a stronger reader and writer in English than Robert. A similar difference was found on the English reading tasks performed at home. However, both of them performed tasks from the same passages but Kevin was one year older than Robert. In addition Kevin had exited from ESL after three years of schooling in the US while Robert was still attending ESL after three years. Although there was only one year age difference between Kevin and Robert when they first came to the US, the
difference is seen in their English literacy performance. Collier’s (1987) analysis of the relationship between English language learners’ age of arrival and proficiency in English, showed that immigrant children who came to the US at the age of 5-7 years old, needed more years than those who arrived at ages 8-11 who needed between 5-7 years of US instruction to attain native English speaking norms on academic measures. Collier (1987) maintained that children who were 5-7 years old needed more time because they did not have much native language instruction in their home countries that could help facilitate the learning of English.

Kevin and Robert’s age falls within the category of 5-7 years of arrival. Considering this age group’s English attainment characteristics, Kevin has done well in English reading. It is possible that the different performances between Kevin and Robert can be attributed to their background and the amount of Swahili and English instruction they received in Kenya before they came to the US. Kevin had the whole 1st and half of 2nd grade Swahili instruction compared to Robert who had almost all 1st grade Swahili instruction. In addition, Kevin lived in a big city where he had more exposure to English than Robert, who lived in a small city. Both of Kevin’s parents were graduate students at the time of the study which was not the case of Robert’s parents.

Although Sophia and Diana’s age of arrival falls within the category of 8-11 years old at arrival, where students attain L2 faster, findings reveal differences between Sophia and Diana. Sophia’s school performance and the literacy tasks performed at home show that she is a strong reader and writer in English. Also, she did not need ESL when she first came to the US. Sophia’s high English performance indicates the importance of recognizing individual variability in students’ L2 accomplishment and differences in
instruction. Also, some immigrant children may receive high quality instruction in their home countries. Sophia’s case also suggests that maintenance of Swahili in the home (oral and literate) has not hindered her English. This is the same as Kevin’s oral emphasis on Swahili in the home and his English development and literacy development.

During the study, it was Diana’s fourth year in ESL program. Her English literacy performance on the English language proficiency test and IMAGE show that she was making good progress in English literacy and was close to being exited from ESL. In terms of Collier’s findings, and Cummin’s, Diana was within the time frame of 5-7 years of US instruction needed for English language learners to attain native English speaking norms on academic measures. Victor, the recent arrival from Kenya came when he was 12 years old and had been in the US for 5 months during the study. Although he had Swahili and English literacy instruction in Kenya, findings from the study illustrate that his English proficiency shows that he is struggling.

A closer look at the children’s reading comprehension tasks in English conducted at home show that for all five students there were differences in reading and comprehending narrative and expository texts. Kevin’s performance on the narrative comprehension tasks shows that he is a strong reader. However, his performance was low on the narrative retelling and expository tasks. Robert performed lower than Kevin on all tasks except on narrative retelling. Diana’s performance on the narrative comprehension questions was low compared to that of all other students. Sophia’s reading task performance shows that she is a strong reader in all tasks and genres except for expository retelling. Victor performed better on the narrative comprehension questions than on the narrative retelling. His performance was the lowest on the expository
retelling. Overall, the reading performance illustrates that all of the students experienced
difficulty on the retelling tasks. Compared to comprehension questions, retelling is more
of a productive language measure and sometimes students are not familiar with the task.
Research suggests that students need to become familiar with retelling by learning
retelling strategies and practicing (Duke, 2004; Morrow, 1989). In addition, students’
performance was much lower on the expository retelling. Most of the time students
recalled only the main ideas. Earlier research findings (Grabe, 2004; Slater & Graves,
1989) have shown that some types of texts, such as, informative texts, are difficult for
students to comprehend because they require the reader’s extra attention to the
vocabulary and the genre. Particularly, Slater and Graves (1989) found that when
retelling, main ideas in informational texts are more memorable than supporting ideas.

Previous research has also shown that in L2 texts, students encounter unknown
vocabulary, which is a big factor affecting their comprehension and production (García,
1991; Gregory 1996; Saville-Troike, 1984). This finding is consistent with the findings of
this study. For example, Victor admitted that he did not understand some parts of the
narrative text. Kevin, Robert and Diana’s performance may also have been affected by
unfamiliar vocabulary.

The analysis across reading and writing shows that students who performed
higher in English reading comprehension, Kevin and Sophia also demonstrated good
English writing proficiency. Besides their overall performance, a number of weaknesses
were found in Kevin, Robert, Diana and Victor’s English writing that relate to findings in
previous research (Valdés, 1999) on bilingual children’s writing. For example, in their
writing they missed articles or used incorrect ones; they exhibited difficulty with
capitalization and punctuation, incorrect spelling and difficulty in distinguishing homophones. Students attending ESL programs, Robert, Diana and Victor, demonstrated the most errors in their writing. Sophia’s writing did not show any of these errors. Some of the errors found in children’s writing could be attributed to Swahili interference. Researchers have found that in English language learners, L2 oral proficiency can predict L2 writing achievement (Carlisle & Beeman, 2000; Valdés, 1999). The findings of this study show that Sophia and Kevin who had good English vocabulary were also able to perform well in other writing categories such as sentence complexity and rhetorical style.

**Swahili was more challenging than English.** In this study, findings show that students experienced less reading comprehension in L1 texts than L2 indicating more proficiency in L2 than L1. Except for Victor, who performed the highest on all Swahili tasks, the other four children performed lower in Swahili reading than in English indicating that English is their stronger language. Victor’s Swahili proficiency may be attributed to his age and length of residency in Kenya.

Kevin performed better on the reading tasks compared to Robert indicating advantages from his strong oral Swahili proficiency. Although Kevin and Robert had Swahili instruction at school, they experienced less comprehension than the older children. This could be related to the fact that their Swahili reading proficiency was not yet developed before they left Kenya and their Swahili instruction at their school was less challenging for their grade levels. Sophia performed fairly well in Swahili reading tasks compared to Diana who actually had one year more of Swahili instruction in Kenya than Sophia. The differences between Sophia and Diana’s proficiencies could correspond to the extent of home support for Swahili reading in Sophia’s home.
I further found that on the Swahili reading tasks, the performance of the four students, Kevin, Robert, Diana and Sophia was low on the narrative texts and much lower in the expository text, on the retelling task. As was the case on the English reading tasks, it seems that it was easier for the children to comprehend narrative tasks than the expository tasks. Regarding expository texts, the informational content might have been difficult for the children due to lack of knowledge of the informational text structure (Grabe, 2004; Slater & Graves, 1989) or the vocabulary in the content (García, 1991).

Another aspect found in the children’s Swahili reading was the use of code switching and code mixing in students’ responses in the comprehension tasks. I found less evidence of code switching and code mixing in Sophia and Victor’s tasks. Researchers, Jiménez et al. (1996) have found that L2 readers use reading strategies such as code switching when reading in their weaker language. García (1998) found that strategy use across languages seemed to depend on the genre of the text rather than on the language. Although children’s use of code switching and code mixing relates to García’s finding, because students’ use of code switching and mixing was found mostly when they performed expository text tasks rather than narrative tasks, the findings of this study are a little different. I found that language and genre matter when reading in a weaker language. Kevin, Robert and Diana code mixed the most indicating less exposure to vocabulary used in informational texts. Although Kevin and Robert received Swahili instruction at school, the reading involved mostly narrative texts.

In terms of Swahili writing, the findings demonstrate that students who came to the US in 3rd and 4th grades were better Swahili writers than those who came to the US at 1st and 2nd grade. Although Kevin performed better in Swahili reading than Robert, in
Swahili writing, Robert performed better than Kevin. This finding may be due to other factors but also Kevin’s lack of motivation to write in Swahili. Although Robert lacked opportunities, he seemed to be a motivated writer compared to Kevin and was a regular attendee in the Swahili class. Kevin and Robert’s findings are consistent with McCarthey, Guo & Cummins (2005) findings. They found that Mandarin speaking students who came to the US in 2nd, 3rd and 4th grade demonstrated L1 loss. Previous research has also shown that when children are not provided with reading or writing opportunities in their L1 in the context of learning L2, they risk losing their L1 (Hinton, 1999; Kouritzin, 1999; Pacini-Ketchabaw, Bernard & Freire, 2001).

Research has also indicated that the lexicon and grammatical system are the areas most affected in L1 loss (Anderson, 2004). In other words, reduction in frequency of use of the language and the domains of use, results in narrowing of the lexicon that is actually produced during conversations or writing. Findings of this study demonstrate that all students, even those who made an overall low performance on Swahili writing, like Kevin and Robert, scored better in grammar, indicating maintenance of their grammar proficiency. But findings show that incompetence in vocabulary may have negatively affected the students’ Swahili writing skills.

Kevin and Robert’s writing demonstrated spelling confusion by incorporating English orthography in Swahili words. According to earlier research (Edelsky, 1982; Edelsky & Gilbert, 1985; Valdés, 1999), this finding is not uncommon in children writing in two languages. In Edelsky’s (1982) study, students were using their L1 Spanish orthography when writing English. The bilingual Spanish-English speaking first, second and third graders she studied had Spanish instruction first before English instruction.
Edelsky (1982) concluded that what a young writer knows about writing in the first language forms the basis of new hypotheses rather than interferes with another. Although Swahili is the students’ L1, it seems that English was Kevin and Robert’s stronger language, hence the application of English orthography in their Swahili writing.

Edelsky (1982) observed that in her findings, children code switched more when writing in Spanish. This was also true for the Swahili speaking children’s writing. Although Kevin wrote very little, he incorporated a few English words in his writing. Robert and Diana code switched and code mixed between Swahili and English more than Sophia and Victor. I found no evidence of code switching or code mixing with Swahili in students’ English writing.

Victor demonstrated fairly good performance on Swahili writing skills compared to the other children indicating he was still maintaining his Swahili proficiency. Among the other children, it was Sophia who made a fairly better performance than Diana who came at 4th grade. Sophia’s Swahili writing performance corresponds to her English performance; this may indicate her ability to transfer writing skills between languages. Compared with the other children, Sophia had relatively more home support for Swahili literacy.

The findings demonstrate that between the two languages, except for Victor and Sophia, students demonstrated higher performance in writing English than Swahili suggesting they had stronger language skills in English than Swahili.

**Maintenance of strong cultural identities as Kenyans.** The interview and observational data illustrate that all parents were keen to maintain visible aspects of Kenyan culture, except for language, in Robert and Diana’s cases. The parents were
convinced that it was important for their children to grow up as Kenyans by identifying themselves with the Kenyan culture, especially because they were eventually planning to return to Kenya. Cultural practices in the families were seen on how families decorated their homes, the food they ate, clothing and customs. Yet, research findings show that although families might maintain home country cultural identity through such practices, other factors, such as parents’ and children’s attitudes can pull children to English monolingualism (Hornberger, 1992).

According to Ogbu’s (1992) categorization of voluntary/involuntary immigrants, the parents of the participating children in this study are in the category of voluntary immigrants because they chose to come to the US to further their educations. Although the children did not choose on their own to come to the US, their attitude toward the new country did not seem to be as negative as those of involuntary immigrants, who were brought to the US against their will. Ogbu’s study noted that, often, voluntary immigrants tend to continue to maintain their home country culture in a new country, as opposed to the involuntary minorities. He cited an example of the Punjabi Indians who continued their beliefs and practices in Valleyside, California. For example, they spoke Punjabi, their language, and brought with them their distinctive way of raising their children including teaching children how to make decisions and how to manage money. Research has shown that immigrant children who continue to maintain home country culture tend to maintain positive attitudes toward schooling, because they do not perceive learning and attitudes and behaviors required for school success as threatening their own culture, language and identities (Ogbru, 1992). Other studies on immigrant children (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001) also maintain that children who develop transcultural
identities, that is, an adaptive style between adversarial and ethnic flight, “achieve bicultural and bilingual competencies that become an integral part of their self” (p.113). Findings on the children studied demonstrate positive attitudes toward their new schools in the US and fairly good progress on English literacy.

However, interview data show that not all of the children enjoyed all of the cultural aspects practiced in their homes. For example, among the children, it was only Victor who did not mind listening to Swahili or Kenyan music. Kevin, Robert, Diana and Sophia maintained that they did not prefer the Swahili music partly because they did not understand the lyrics; also they liked hip-hop, rap and rhythm and blues music. Although the children did not understand the lyrics in the Swahili music because of their reduced Swahili language proficiency, the preference for Western music can also be explained by the fact that each generation has its own music preferences in its own time (Smith, 1994). In a survey on Americans musical preferences across different birth cohorts, Smith (1994) observed that different cohorts had different musical preferences. Victor’s preference for Kenyan music could be due to his status as a recent arrival from Kenya who had not yet been much exposed to his new environment.

_Home language use: Struggling to maintain Swahili._ According to the parents, the children were proficient Swahili speakers when they first came to the US, and the findings demonstrate that Swahili, to a varied extent was spoken in the children’s homes. During the interviews, all of the children identified themselves as Swahili speakers and they all reported that they liked to speak Swahili. Particularly, Kevin stated that he liked to speak Swahili because the language identified him with his home country, Kenya. Kevin’s language identity perception might have been prompted by the language use in
his home, where Swahili was the main language spoken by his family. Also, he had visited Kenya for four weeks, a few months before the study. Making trips to their homeland is one of the factors found to be important to connect immigrants, particularly children, with their home language (Hinton, 1999).

Also, all of the parents interviewed indicated a desire to continue to use Swahili in their homes because they did not want their children to lose the language. However, it was clear that there were differences in the extent to which the children were exposed to Swahili in each home. The findings show four types of Swahili use situations. There was Kevin’s home where parents emphasized oral Swahili in the home and Swahili was the main language spoken. In Robert and Diana’s home, parents did not make much effort to encourage the use of oral Swahili and Swahili was spoken minimally. The family experienced English use dominance and both Robert and Diana admitted language loss. In Sophia’s case, the parent emphasized the use of oral Swahili but the child was not very enthusiastic, yet had to speak the language because her parent wanted her to do so. In Victor’s home Swahili speaking was encouraged and Swahili was spoken almost exclusively.

Another language behavior observed in all families was the use of code switching and code mixing. Researchers (Bokamba, 1988; Kachru, 1978; McClure, 1977) agree that code switching is a sign of bilingual identity, and a communicative behavior among bilinguals. Code switching refers to the mixing of various linguistic units such as morphemes, words, modifiers, phrases, clauses and sentences primarily from two participating grammatical systems across sentence boundaries within a speech event. Code switching is therefore inter-sentential. Code mixing, on the other hand, refers to the
mixing of various linguistic units, such as morphemes, words, modifiers, phrases, and sentences primarily from two participating grammatical systems within a sentence; therefore, code mixing is intra-sentential (Ritchie & Bathia, 1996). In each of the homes code switching and code mixing were practiced but to varying degrees. This language behavior was observed more in Robert and Diana’s home. In all of the homes, parents code switched and code mixed when they talked to their children or to their spouses. Likewise, children code switched and code mixed between Swahili and English. At times the matrix, or the host language in the code switching and mixing situation was Swahili, and English was the embedded or guest language, and at other times the matrix language was English. Code mixed words into Swahili from English were nouns, verbs and adjectives. Interestingly, children knew the Swahili grammar rules hence their interactions were comprehensible. This language competence suggests that children had access to both language systems when they were thinking and speaking.

The findings illustrate that all of the children typically did not seize opportunities to speak the Swahili language outside their homes with other Swahili speaking children at school, in the community or at play. Although children were friends or attended the same school or classroom, they did not speak Swahili to one another. One explanation is that the children thought speaking Swahili in public might cause them to be viewed as having limited English proficiency (Hornberger, 1992; Pennycook, 2001).

A preference for English among African children was also found in Arua and Magocha’s (2000) study. The study conducted in Botswana found that the majority of the children in their study preferred to speak the school languages, Setswana and English, at school, home and playground rather than the minority languages spoken by their
parents. The researchers also found that the children were more proficient in the preferred languages, Setswana and English, than in the minority languages of their parents.

Another aspect I observed in this study is that except for the Swahili instruction program that Kevin and Robert were attending at Vine Elementary School, there were no programs that supported children’s Swahili development. Researchers have observed that besides parental input, a broader linguistic input such as interactions in the larger community is an important factor for the development of children’s L1 (Hornberger, 1992; Kravin, 1992; Schwarzer, 2001). In a study of his Finnish-English child, Kravin found that over time, the child’s speech in Finnish did not show any increase or decrease, and attributed the stagnation to the English dominance in the environment around the child. In relation to community support, findings from Schwarzer (2001) demonstrated that, the interactions that his daughter experienced in the larger community of Hebrew, Spanish and English speakers played a major role in his daughter’s development of the languages.

I found that most of the Swahili speakers in the community did not support children’s use of Swahili. For example, the children’s families often came together with other Swahili speaking families and friends for social events, but English was the dominant language used in interactions. The extensive use of English among Kenyan adults in the community may be explained by the status that the language carries in Kenya (Mule, 1999; Pennycook, 1998). Although Swahili is the national language and a language of wider communication in Kenya, English is viewed as a prestigious language used among the educated people.
Therefore, as in the case of the Puerto Rican and Cambodian children in Hornberger’s (1992) study, while cultural traditions and customs were practiced and maintained in the homes, maintaining the home language, Swahili, was not seen as part of the cultural identity in the community.

Home literacy practices: Important role of the school language. In three of the four homes, there were limited opportunities for children’s Swahili literacy practices even though some parents, such as Kevin’s, had expressed a desire for their children to become bi-literate in English and Swahili. Similar to the finding on oral language use, literacy activities in the children’s homes, except in Sophia’s home, seemed to demonstrate the important role of the school language (Reese, Goldenberg and Saunders, 2006).

The main literacy activities that children engaged in at home related to completing class work, which was all in English. All of the parents provided support by assisting their children with homework, whether reading or writing. Other than class work, children reported that they engaged in independent reading, writing electronic mail and browsing the Internet. Except for Victor, with the support of their parents, children were members of the local libraries where they had access to books and other materials for independent reading. Sophia was the one student whose motivation for reading led her, during one summer, to participate in a reading competition organized by one of the local libraries.

Although all of the parents perceived biliteracy to be important for their children, it seems that among them, there was a lack of commitment for support of Swahili literacy. This finding might explain students’ performance on the Swahili literacy tasks. All of the parents reported busy schedules. Swahili literacy practices were non-existent in
Kevin’s home; although, both parents were Swahili instructors at the local university, and Swahili materials were available in his home. The findings show Kevin’s interest in Swahili reading, when his mother read Swahili to his younger sister, but he was not encouraged and supported to engage in Swahili literacy activities. One reason that Kevin’s mother gave for not encouraging her son’s Swahili literacy practices was that there was no Swahili homework that could have pushed her and her husband to provide support. Hornberger (1992) described a similar situation with Khmer speaking children whose parents did not encourage Khmer language use, but emphasized English acquisition.

In Robert and Diana’s cases, the parents provided only minimal Swahili literacy support, before and after Robert started participating in the Swahili program at Vine Elementary school. Victor’s father did not find it necessary for Victor to engage in Swahili literacy activities that would help him maintain or increase his Swahili proficiency because he thought that the Swahili proficiency that his son already had was sufficient. Sophia is the one student who had more Swahili literacy support because of her mother’s commitment to Sophia’s biliteracy development, but such support was not consistent.

It appears that except for Sophia’s parent, the other parents found great benefit in focusing more on English than on Swahili literacy because they knew that eventually, their children’s educational success in the US depended on it. Also, upon their return to Kenya, the children would need English because it is the language used in higher education (Mule, 1999).
By focusing their support on English language and literacy, it seems that parents were responding to the hegemonic role of English globally (Pennycook, 1998) in Kenya, as well as in the US. Also, it appears that some parents did not realize the adverse effects that the emphasis on English literacy had on their children’s Swahili proficiency and ability to become bilingual and biliterate. For example, Robert and Diana’s mother only became aware during the study that it was important for her to support her children’s Swahili maintenance. In addition, it might have helped if they had known that their children would not have been harmed if they had continued to develop their Swahili at the same time they were developing English. Such knowledge would have helped the parents to support their children’s biliteracy development.

It also seems that there is an attitude among some parents that their children will learn Swahili later when they get back to Kenya. This finding is consistent with that of Camlibel (2005) who found that parents of the Turkish students she studied emphasized English support while the children were in the US. They were positive that their children would learn Turkish when they went back to Turkey. But this view does not consider other factors, such as, their children’s cultural identity.

**School influences on literacy development**

*Effectively teaching ESL students.* The findings indicate that the ESL contexts at Vine Elementary School and Brooke Middle School facilitated the English language and literacy development of the children. Thomas and Collier (1995) observed that one of the characteristics of effective instruction for English language learners is respect for children’s native languages and their cultures. Findings from this study show that both ESL teachers, Ms. Ramos and Mr. Tangen, had allowed students to use their native
languages when appropriate in the classrooms. Research also has found that often English language learners use their native language with their peers to check meaning or to ask for help. For example, often, in Ms. Ramos’s classroom, the Congolese, Chinese and Korean students spoke their native languages during class when discussing classroom activities. Unfortunately as the only Swahili speaking student in the class, Robert could not benefit from the use of his L1 with other L1 speakers. In Diana and Victor’s ESL classroom, Chinese and Spanish speaking children always used their native language, but Diana and Victor, who were the only Swahili speaking children in their classroom, did not make use of the opportunity to speak Swahili between themselves. It seems that there was a gender issue between Diana and Victor. Mostly, Diana interacted and engaged in group work with her African girlfriends from Ghana, and Victor indicated that he would have spoken Swahili with Diana if she had been a boy. Victor was the only African boy in the class.

The focus of the curriculum in the two classrooms differed. Ms. Ramos taught content based ESL and literacy using thematic units, in which she integrated listening, speaking, reading and writing. Ms. Ramos’s curriculum is consistent with ESL instructional recommendations. The literature recommends the use of thematic units because it is a technique that is effective in helping English language learners to acquire content and the related language (García 2003; Thomas & Collier, 1995). Mr. Tangen’s ESL instruction focused on literacy by integrating vocabulary, reading and writing activities.

Classroom observations reveal that both ESL teachers emphasized independent reading and book reports, but while Ms. Ramos required that her students write book
reports after reading, in Mr. Tangen’s class students did not have to write book reports. This practice denied Diana and Victor a writing opportunity that could have enhanced their English writing skills. One observation made from Diana and Victor’s classroom is that Mr. Tangen engaged students in process writing that combined different strategies (Valdés, 1999). His students received feedback on grammar and English writing conventions, and shared their work with their peers. This practice helped them improve their drafts before they published them.

The findings also show that both Ms. Ramos and Mr. Tangen used reading materials with multicultural themes in their classrooms to help students become familiar with various cultures. Also, in their recommendations for book selections for young English language learners, García and Bauer (2004) note that books that include characters, events or settings that a student can personally identify with, can enhance student discussion during reading.

Vocabulary instruction during reading was also provided in both ESL classrooms. I observed the teachers reminding students to use reading comprehension strategies when they needed to solve comprehension problems. Research on reading comprehension on both monolingual and bilingual readers has reported the importance of using reading strategies for text comprehension (Jiménez, 1997). However, the difference between Ms. Ramos and Mr. Tangen is that although their students were reminded most of the time to use reading comprehension strategies, I did not see Mr. Tangen demonstrate them in class and implement guided practice.

In both classes, instruction was conducted as a whole class and also in small groups. It seems that the teachers used the small reading groups to get to know how their
students approached and interpreted texts (García, 2003). In Ms. Ramos’s class, small groups were also used for students to conduct research on their projects. During the study, she taught a thematic unit on insects, and students worked on insect research to prepare for the insect museum. In the whole class situation, teachers invited students to speak when they raised their hands, or by being picked by the teacher. Robert and Diana, who had been in ESL programs for the past three years, were active participants in their respective ESL classrooms; they raised their hands to respond and ask questions and participated effectively in group work. Victor, on the other hand, was reluctant to participate in group work; he always preferred to work alone, and during whole class instruction he participated only when he was called upon, but he completed all his reading and writing work. It seems that Victor’s participation might have been adversely affected by his limited English proficiency.

**Addressing English language learner literacy needs in a mainstream classroom.**

The mainstream classrooms gave students opportunities to develop their English language skills. Ms. Brent, Kevin’s teacher, integrated a variety of reading and writing activities. She taught vocabulary and provided guided practice on reading comprehension strategies. Students read in a whole class setting and in small groups. Students also had guided reading sessions. Although she did not plan to use any particular reading about East Africa, the African region from which Kevin originates, in her curriculum due to her class population that was mostly African Americans, she often selected reading materials with African and African American themes. It seems that this was one way she used to help her students connect with their histories while learning literacy.
The difference between Ms. Brent and Mr. Enodd, Sophia’s teacher, is that Mr. Enodd’s class had a student population from diverse backgrounds. Findings demonstrate that he chose to implement practices that enhanced multiculturalism in his classroom. For example, the basic text book for the class, which contained thematic units and readings from different genres, was a multicultural book which emphasized cultural pluralism; hence, it served the diverse students in his class well. Mr. Enodd, Sophia’s English teacher, focused his instruction on grammar, reading comprehension and English writing skills. Most of the time students worked in groups to complete reading or writing assignments.

When writing, at times students were allowed to choose their own topics, but Ms. Brent did not encourage Kevin or other international students to write on topics that would reflect their cultural backgrounds. But the observation data have shown that she tapped students’ background knowledge before reading, and Kevin often shared what he knew about his country and culture. Like Ms. Brent, Mr. Enodd allowed students to choose their own topics, but according to Mr. Enodd, Sophia did not choose to write on any topic related to Kenya.

Also, Ms. Brent and Mr. Enodd had different ways of encouraging student participation during literacy activities. Kevin was an active participant in Ms. Brent’s class and during Ms. Li’s guided reading sessions. He raised his hand and used his oral language competence to respond to questions; but Ms. Brent often picked him and other students to participate even if they did not raise their hands. In contrast, Mr. Enodd did not pick any student who did not volunteer to speak in class, and often, it was the same students talking. Sophia did not raise her hand to participate, not because she lacked oral
English proficiency but probably because she was shy. Mr. Enodd did not even know that Sophia was an international student. Sophia’s strong ability in English literacy was reflected in her English comprehension tasks.

*Small efforts to nurture students’ Swahili language and literacy in a school setting.* According to literature on non native English speaking children (Baker, 1996; Collier, 1995; Crawford, 1999), it was an ideal practice for the Swahili speaking students to get Swahili instruction in a school environment while developing their English. But like the Spanish language teacher, Rebeca, in García and Lopez-Velásquez’s (2003) study, the three Swahili teachers started the program without established standards or curriculum objectives. Also, since the class was taught by a different teacher on each of the three days of instruction, coordinating instruction and reviewing students’ learning proved to be challenging. Another aspect is that although all three teachers were Swahili speakers, only two of them had a background in teaching language.

Given that students’ Swahili proficiency levels differed, the class progressed slowly. Kevin had 1st and half of 2nd grade Swahili instruction and Robert had almost all of 1st grade Swahili literacy instruction in Kenya before they came to the US, but the other three students in the class were beginners. Also, as the home observation data demonstrated, the experiences of the children’s Swahili use at home were different. This situation meant that teachers could not meet the needs of every child in the class. However, the findings from the Swahili tasks indicate that Robert must have benefited from the program. It seems that Kevin did not benefit from the program because he stopped attending class.
Swahili literacy instruction focused on vocabulary instruction and reading comprehension rather than writing. According to García and Bauer (2004) children get interested when they read culturally relevant materials that they can relate to. This was true in Kevin and Robert when they started reading authentic Swahili materials from Kenya whose purchase was made possible by the multicultural director at their school. The reading passages that students read were mostly narrative. In addition, the findings reveal that students did not write much. Their writing was limited to filling in blanks in a sentence or providing missing agreement prefixes in nouns, verbs, and adjectives, on worksheets but writing researchers (e.g., Valdés, 1999) argue that students can be encouraged to write in the language even if they will make errors. The emphasis in the Swahili instructional program seems to be reflected in Kevin and Robert’s performance on the Swahili reading and writing tasks. For example, due to lack of writing opportunities in their Swahili class, when writing in Swahili, Kevin and Robert may have transferred what they knew about English writing to Swahili writing.

**Subtractive bilingualism and biliteracy.** The home contexts implemented Swahili literacy subtractive contexts for Kevin, Robert, Diana and Victor. However, even without the Swahili literacy support, because of his age, Victor may be able to offset the loss of Swahili. On the other hand, the school contexts implemented subtractive bilingualism and biliteracy for Diana, Sophia and Victor.

With the efforts of their Swahili speaking parents, additive bilingualism and biliteracy contexts were provided for Kevin and Robert from Fall 2006. Although the program started because parents wanted their children to develop and maintain Swahili proficiency, there was a discontinuity between Swahili teacher efforts at school and home
efforts. It appears that parents were satisfied only if their children had Swahili literacy instruction at school because they did not seem to consider it as their responsibility at home. Parents studied in Weisberg and Ortiz (2000), who were planning to return to their home countries after their graduate studies were also concerned about their children’s losing their native languages. But instead of putting all the responsibility on the school personnel to provide their children with their educational needs, they also took action. They schooled their children in their native languages using a variety of activities including songs, games and academic tutorials.

Researchers have discussed the importance of focusing on L1 learning issues for minority language students (Hinton, 1999; Hornberger, 1992; Kouritzin, 1999; Lambert, 1975; Pennycook, 2001; Wong-Fillmore, 1991). In her study, Wong-Fillmore (1991) found as a result of early learning of English in preschool programs, children lost their abilities to speak their L1 and communication patterns and family relationships were adversely affected. The situation had a major impact especially in those families in which the language lost was the only language that the parents spoke.

Regarding students in the present study, they may also encounter problems when they return to Kenya, such as identity issues. For example, although findings show that parents are making efforts to maintain visible cultural practices in their homes, if children’s Swahili is not maintained and developed, they will not be able to communicate with extended family members who do not speak Swahili, such as, the grandparents (Kouritzin, 1999; Wong-Fillmore, 1991). Also, they will be speaking “American English,” which academically is an advantage, but socially such English may be a cause for them to be marginalized by others who speak “African English.” In addition, it is an
educational policy in Kenyan public schools for students to pass a Swahili test on national examinations. Depending on their age, when they return to Kenya, for them to receive their high school diploma they will have to pass the Swahili test taken at the end of high school education. This will be a problem if children’s Swahili literacy development is not addressed.

**Implications for Education and Research**

**Educational implications.** There was a general idea among some parents in this study that the language of school was more important than the home language, hence the emphasis on English. While they also indicated the desire for their children to speak and write in Swahili due to the role of the language in their home country, some of them did not make efforts to support the language because of various reasons including that they were busy as graduate students or mothers. However, parents need to understand that maintaining L1 proficiency in an environment of L2 that is a language of the school is not an easy task. Parents who are also researchers interested in their children’s bilingualism and biliteracy, have also found it challenging, but have indicated that any effort can make a difference (Schwarzer, 2001).

Despite the parents’ efforts, educators need to recognize that we cannot rely only on the home for the development of students’ L1 (Hornberger, 1992). The reason being that the support provided by parents might not have the same effect on L1 literacy as school literacy instruction may have. In her continua framework, Hornberger (1992) emphasizes that “the more the contexts of student learning allow bi-literate learners to draw on all points of all nine continua, the greater are the chances for full bi-literate
development” (p.199). Although Kevin and Robert could have received better Swahili instruction, what they received was important for them, especially because they were in the lower grades. Acquiring oral and literacy abilities in their L1 enhanced their additive bilingualism and biliteracy. According to Wong Fillmore (1991), additive bilingualism and biliteracy are important for students in lower grades because that is the age at which they are vulnerable to L1 loss. Schools need to provide quality language literacy instruction.

In addition, it seems important for schools to effectively implement L1 provision policies for English language learners. For example, it is imperative to know what home languages their new students speak. Although at one time there were more than five Swahili speaking students at the elementary school where some of the students in the present study attended, students were not provided with Swahili instruction (five was the requisite number for L1 classes). It appears that the school did not know that Swahili and Kiswahili, the names of the home language that parents gave, were the same language. As a result, Swahili instruction only occurred when the parents volunteered to teach their children at school.

During reading tasks, to varied degrees, all children translated when performing Swahili tasks and code switched and code mixed. This is a positive feature that displays the structural knowledge that the children have in the two languages. When parents are reading with the children, it seems important that they are aware of the role of L1 in their children’s bilingual and biliteracy development. Children’s reading also exhibited the need for them to get opportunities not only to read narrative texts but also to read
informational materials so that they could get opportunities to interact with academic content vocabulary.

In the area of instruction, it was observed in the ESL classrooms that teachers used groups for different literacy activities. At times, grouping helped students of the same linguistic background to use their L1 for learning. However, it seems difficult for teachers to assist students in this way when one student is the only speaker of a particular L1 in the class, as it was in Robert’s case.

Findings have shown that students’ writing did not portray their cultural backgrounds. When students are allowed to choose their writing topics, teachers can invite non native speakers of English to write about their home countries and cultural background. This will assure students that such topics are allowed in school work and will enhance their pride in their heritage (Pennycook, 2001).

**Research implications.** The findings of this study indicate that children are either losing or not increasing their oral and written Swahili proficiency. Further research is needed to investigate the situation of people in similar situations when they return to their home country. For example, we need to understand what happens to them if they do not have Swahili oral and written proficiencies. Does this lack of Swahili proficiency affect their Kenyan identity and relations with extended family members (Hinton, 1999; Kuoritzin, 1999), as well as their work possibilities?

The current study was a onetime measure that studied students who have been schooled in the US for different numbers of years. Qualitative longitudinal research is needed that could reveal what happens to students’ L1 proficiency over time, especially the proficiency of those students who like Diana, Sophia and Victor do not receive any
L1 instruction in a school setting. Such research could measure children’s L1 proficiency when they first come to the US and their proficiency in the following years. Such a study would reveal how much L1 proficiency is maintained and the factors involved.

In addition, the present study focused only on a Swahili student sample from one contextual background, that is, Kenya; it would have been interesting to study Swahili speaking students from different African countries, such as such as Tanzania, where children also speak Swahili as their primary language, and the language is also used in the school curriculum. While parents in this study were graduate students, another study could examine experiences of families of parents with different educational and socio economic backgrounds.

Limitations of the Study

This study may be limited by several aspects. First, it is based on a small group of students identified through purposeful sampling, and, therefore the findings are not generalizable to a larger Swahili student population in the US. Although the findings provide insight into the language and literacy experiences of the Swahili speaking students studied and their families within home and school contexts, they do not cover other Swahili speaking families from countries with different sociolinguistic and political contexts as compared to Kenya.

Since one of the purposes for home observations was to capture language use and patterns of interactions in the families, I had proposed that home observations would be audio- recorded. However, during data collection audio- recording was not possible due to the way I was perceived in the children’s homes. Children recognized me as a family
friend, therefore, during my observational visits they assumed that I was visiting with their parents and they did not consider themselves as part of my visit. As a result audio-recording language use and interactions in the homes was not successful. This aspect might have adversely affected the way I documented how families interacted culturally. In other words, it was not possible for me to observe whether children were using patterns of interaction from Kenya or were using other patterns of interaction at home and school.

Second, only two of the five students studied had an opportunity to receive Swahili instruction at their school. Moreover, the time when the Swahili program was established did not make it possible for its inclusion into the research design for this study. Although I was able to get data from one of the program teachers, and the children, the study would have been made richer by inclusion of additional data, particularly, from class observation.

Third, one of the data sources for the study was children’s reading tasks. During retelling tasks, students were not invited to choose a language they preferred to use. Researchers have reported that Spanish-English bilingual students demonstrated enhanced comprehension of English texts when they are allowed to use Spanish to retell or explain what they have read in English (García, 1991, 1998; Jimenez et al, 1996). Allowing students to use a language of their choice might have provided the study with different findings.

Finally, although I know that the children had Swahili and English instruction in Kenya, I did not have data for exactly how much instruction the children had in each of
the languages. This information would have been helpful to understand further the differences between Kevin and Robert’s strengths in English literacy.
References


Appendix A

Sample Teacher Interview Questions

*Student English literacy development and curriculum*

1. How well does the child read in English? What are the child’s strengths and weaknesses?
2. How well does the child write in English? What are the child’s strengths and weaknesses?
3. When you plan your literacy instruction, what are your objectives?
4. What materials and/or activities do you use for instruction that may help children relate to their native language or knowledge and experiences?
5. What are the literacy practices or behavior patterns that Swahili student(s) demonstrate that identifies them with Swahili language and knowledge, if any?
6. What are students allowed to read when choosing reading books?
7. What are students allowed to write for their classroom work?
8. During my classroom observations I noticed that students read a book on … Why did you select that particular book?
9. I observed a student relating the information he/she was presenting with he/his home culture. How often does this happen? And in what other learning contexts?
Appendix B

Sample Student Interview Questions

Student Interview 1

Identity: Reader and writer in English and Swahili

1. How do you see yourself as an English reader?
2. How do you see yourself as a Swahili reader?
3. How do you see yourself as an English writer?
4. How do you see yourself as a Swahili writer?
5. When do you read English?
6. When do you read Swahili?
7. What types of books do you read at school? At home?
8. What types of things do you write about English at school? At home?
9. What types of things do you write about Swahili? At home?
10. What language(s) do you know well? A little bit?
11. What literacy activities do you participate in outside school?

Student Interview 2

Language use, preferences and attitudes

1. What is your attitude toward Swahili language?
2. What is your attitude toward English language?
3. What language do you prefer to write in?
4. What language do you prefer to read in?
5. What language do you speak with your parents?
6. What language do you speak with your sibling(s)?
7. What language do you speak with other children who speak Swahili?
8. What language do you speak with people coming to your house who speak Swahili and English?
9. What type of music do you like?
10. What functions in the community do you attend?
Appendix C

Sample Parent Interview Questions

Parent Interview 1

Child’s literacy history

1. Please tell me about the languages that were spoken in your family that your child was exposed to in Kenya.
2. Which language did your child speak first when she/he was young?
3. To whom did your child speak Swahili back in your country?
4. When was your child introduced to Swahili reading? Who was involved in teaching her/him to read?
5. How was she taught to read?
6. When and where was she/he introduced to writing Swahili?
7. Before now, what books or other written materials could she/he read?
8. How did you rate your child’s Swahili reading ability level when you left Kenya?
9. How did you rate your child’s Swahili writing ability level when you left Kenya?
10. What grade was your child in when you left your country?
11. To whom does your child speak Swahili now?
12. How well is your child’s Swahili reading now?
13. How well is your child’s Swahili writing now?
14. What other languages besides Swahili and English does your child speak?
15. What role does Swahili play in your home country?
16. What is the language preferred in your home, here in the US?
17. What are your language perspectives?
18. How often do you teach your child in Swahili?
19. What are the activities that you do with your child when you are teaching her/him Swahili
Parent Interview 2

Child’s English literacy, biliteracy practice and language attitudes

1. When did your child start speaking English?
2. When did your child start reading English
3. When did your child start writing English?
4. How do you describe your child’s reading and writing ability in English before she/he came to the US?
5. How well does your child read in English now? What are your child’s strengths and weaknesses?
6. How well does your child write in English now? What are your child’s strengths and weaknesses?
7. What are the language programs that your child is attending at her school?
8. What types of reading books does your child bring from school? Are these classroom readings, books recommended by the classroom teacher or your child’s own choice from the school library? Or other?
9. How often do you teach your child in English?
10. What are the activities that you do with your child when you are teaching her/him in English?
11. What are literacy activities that your child participates in outside school?
12. What have the school personnel told you about your child’s reading in English? Writing in English? Oral development in English? Overall school performance?
13. Which language is predominantly used by your child?
   a. at home
   b. with peers?
13. What language do you prefer your child to use at home?
14. Which language is your child’s most proficient?
15. How do proficiencies compare across languages?
16. How often do you teach your child reading in Swahili?
17. How often do you teach your child writing in Swahili?
18. At present is your child able to communicate with people/relatives back in Kenya in their language(s)?
19. How is home (Kenyan) culture maintained in the home?
20. How is home (Kenyan) culture maintained in the community?
Appendix D

Sample Reading Texts, Retelling Templates and Student Retellings


Waste to Energy

As landfill sites fill up, people have to find alternative ways of getting rid of their garbage. One way is to burn the garbage in special ovens called incinerators.

Burning Garbage

Garbage is made up of materials that release energy when they are burned, such as paper and plastic. This means that garbage can be used as a fuel. First, the garbage is sorted so that all the valuable and recyclable material is removed—for example, metal and glass. Then the rest of the waste can be burned in the incinerator.

Eco Thought

One garbage can full of ordinary household garbage can generate as much electricity as a bag of coal.
Heating Up

The temperature inside the incinerator needs to reach about 1,830°F (1,000 °C). If the temperature is too low, poisonous fumes can pollute the air. The heat energy given off by the burning garbage is used to generate electricity or to heat local homes and businesses. The small amount of waste left in the ovens can be used as a filler in road building.

Some of the huge amounts of garbage can be compressed into little blocks known as refuse derived fuel (RDF) pellets. These pellets are sold as a fuel for burning on fires and in boilers.

Producing Biogas

The rotting wastes in landfill sites produce methane gas. On a much smaller scale, methane can be produced from human, animal, and food wastes. The organic wastes are dumped in an underground pit, where they decay. As they do this, they release gases, including methane gas, just as in landfill sites. This gas, called biogas, can be piped to homes to be used as a fuel for heating water and cooking.

On the Ground

Farm animals produce a lot of waste in the form of droppings and manure. Some of this can be composted and used as a natural fertilizer on the fields. Animal waste can also be dried and burned in special power stations to produce electricity. This way, farm waste becomes a useful fuel.
**Dirty Water**

Many factories use water. Some of them are built by rivers or on the coast where they can get a good supply of water. Farmers need water to irrigate their crops. Once factories and farmers have used the water, they empty it into rivers and seas.

**Eco Thought**

A disused mine near the River Coquet, Northumberland, in northern England, is slowly filling with water. The water is contaminated with mining waste. Within a year or so the water will start to spill out into the river. Now money will have to be spent to prevent the pollution by pumping out the contaminated water and treating it.

**Thermal Pollution**

Power stations use cold water to cool the steam. Many other industries use water for cooling, too. When it is finished with, the water is warm, and is emptied into rivers or back into the sea. Warm water contains much less oxygen than cold water. This means that aquatic life, especially fish, cannot get enough oxygen to survive. Adding warm water to rivers and seas is called thermal pollution.
**Harmful Wastes**

Industrial and farm wastes, sewage, and slurry (thick liquid wastes) are emptied into rivers and seas. Some waste contains poisons, such as pesticides and oil. Bacteria in the water feed on sewage and slurry. As they feed, they use up oxygen, so the water cannot support much other life.

**Killer Weed**

Fertilizers and sewage contain nutrients that encourage the growth of tiny plants called algae. As the algae multiply, they cover the surface of the river like a blanket, blocking sunlight from the plants below and causing them to die.

**Stopping Pollution**

In developed countries, there are strict laws controlling water quality. Environmental agencies sample the water, and they can fine companies that pollute it. Dirty rivers and polluted beaches are becoming a thing of the past. Unfortunately, it is much more difficult to monitor seawater and to prevent people from dumping waste far out at sea.

*Filthy foam washed up on the beach is a tell-tale sign that this seawater is polluted.*

*A huge tanker is loaded with nuclear waste to be dumped at sea.*
Template for Retelling of the English Expository Text (4th and 5th grades)

Main idea 1: Landfills get filled up and alternative ways have to be found to get rid of the garbage

Supporting idea 1: One way of getting rid of garbage at the landfills sites is to burn it in incinerators
Supporting idea 2: Garbage is sorted out before burning to remove valuables and recyclable material
Supporting idea 3: A sorting machine separates out the different kinds of garbage

Main idea 2: Garbage produces heat energy

Supporting idea 1: Rotting garbage in landfill sites produce biogas
Supporting idea 2: Biogas can be piped to homes to be used as fuel
Supporting idea 3: Heat energy given off by burning garbage is used to generate electricity to heat local homes and businesses
Supporting idea 4: Small amounts of waste left in ovens after burning garbage can be used as a filler in road construction

Main idea 3: Industrial and farm waste water emptied rivers and seas is bad for the survival of aquatic life

Supporting idea 1: Sometimes factories and farmers empty polluted water into river and seas
Supporting idea 2: Warm water contains less oxygen and fish cannot get enough oxygen to survive. Adding water to rivers and seas is called thermal pollution
Supporting idea 3: Fertilizers and sewage from industries and farm contain nutrient that encourage the growth of algae in rivers
Supporting idea 4: Algae cover the surface of river and block sunlight from plants in water and cause them to die
Text: Malaika Aliyevaa Viatu and Victor and Diana’s Retellings:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Text</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hapo zamani katika kijiji kulikuwa na wakulima wawili, Tanko na Gumi. Tanko alipenda kula maboga. Aliyaotesha kando ya nyumba yake. Yalipokua, yalitanda kwenyewe paa la nyumba yake. Lakini Tanko alikuwa mkulima mwivu. Alishindwa kumwagilia maji maboga yake. Mara maboga yaliuka. Gumi, jirani wa Tanko alikuwa mkulima mzuri. Alifanya kazi sana kwenyewe shamba lake. Daima alimwagilia maji maboga yake wakati wa Daima alimwagilia maji maboga yake wakati wa kiangazi. Tanko aliungoja usiku wa giza nene. Usiku hao alinyatia kuelekea kwenye nyumba ya Gumi na akaanza kupanda juu ya paa lakini makuti juu ya nyumba yaliuka makuukuu.</td>
<td>Long time ago in a village there were two farmers, Tanko and Gumi. Tanko liked to eat pumpkins. He grew them beside his house. When they grew up, they spread on his roof. But Tanko was a lazy farmer. He did not water his garden. Soon after that the pumpkins dried up. Gumi, Tanko’s neighbor was a hard working farmer. He worked hard on his garden. He always watered his pumpkins during the dry season. Tanko became envious of Gumi’s pumpkins so he planned to steal one. He waited for a dark night. On a dark night he slowly climbed on Gumi’s roof to get a pumpkin but the grass on the thatched roof was old.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Victor</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zamani kulikuwa na mtu anaitwa Tanko. Alikuwa mwivu. Alikuwa ananipenda maboga lakini hakuwa anaenda shambani. Na jirani yake Gumi alikuwa anaenda shambani na maboga yake yaliuka mazuri. Sasa siku moja maboga ya Tanko yakakauka na hakuwa na maboga. Akataka aende kwa Gumi kuiba moja.</td>
<td>Long ago, there was a person called Tanko. He was lazy, he liked to eat pumpkins but he not take good care of his garden. His neighbor, Gumi, was a good farmer; he took good care of his garden and his pumpkins looked good. One day all Tanko’s pumpkins dried up so he planned to steal one from Gumi.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Diana</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gumi alikuwa mtu anafanya kazi nzuri alikuwa na shamba yenye maboga. Halafu alikuwa na Rafiki anaitwa Tanko. Hakukuwa mtu mwenye anafanya kazi nzuri. Halafu siku moja Gumi na Adiza mke wake walikuwa wamela la halafu Tanko alikuwa, alikuwa jealos of Gumi.</td>
<td>Gumi was a hard working man, he had a pumpkin garden. Then he had a friend named Tanko. He was not a hard working man. Then one day Gumi and Adiza were sleeping then Tanko came, he was jealous of Gumi.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Text</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wakati Tanko alipopanda juu, paa liliana kubomoka na ailinguka ndani ya nyumba ya Gumi. Gumi na mke wake Adiza waliskia kishindo, na wakaamka. Waligopa sana na wakapiga kelele kwa nguvu. Tanko alikuwa aamenguka kutoza paa na kuangulia juu ya kitanda chao. ‘Saidia! Saidia!’ Walipiga kelele kwa hofu. Waliweza kuona umbo la mtu chini ya kitanda chao. Kulikuwa na giza nene ndani ya nyumba.</td>
<td>When Tanko was climbing to the top, the roof disintegrated and he fell inside Gumi’s house. Gumi and his wife heard a crash and they woke up. They were scared and they screamed. Tanko had fallen from the roof and landed in their bed. ‘Help! Help!’ They screamed in fear. They were able to see a shape of a person under their bed. It was very dark in the house.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Victor
Tanko aakaanguka juu ya kitanda cha Gumi na Adiza.

Diana

Text
Lakini angetorokaje?

Diana

Text
When he went to steal pumpkins he missed the tree he was holding so he fell down. The roof disintegrated and Tanko landed on Gumi and Adiza’s bed.

Then one day he climbed on Gumi’s roof. Then when he was up on the the roof, he fell and landed inside Gumi’s house. Then he woke up Gumi and Adiza.

But how was he going to escape?
Suddenly he got an idea. He pretended to be an angel. ‘God bless you and your wife’, he said. ‘I am an angel sent by God. Close your eyes otherwise you will be blinded.’ He did not want Gumi to put the light on to see his face. Gumi and Adiza closed their eyes. ‘God sent me here,’ Tanko said. ‘He wants me to bring you to him.’ Gumi and Adiza cried in fear. ‘Please help us,’ Gumi said. ‘We are young and our children are very young. How are they going to live without us?’ They started praying to God to save them.

Then he asked Gumi and Adiza to close their eyes. Then he said he was an angel and has been sent by God to get them.

Then Tanko pretended that he was an angel. He told them he had come to get them to stay with God. Then Gumi and Adiza pleaded with him not to take them because they have young children and cannot live without their parents.

Tanko was silent for a long time. Then he spoke very slowly. ‘I will ask God to spare your life,’ he said in a deep voice, ‘if you give me all your money you have in the house.’ Tanko had a bag that he was going to use to carry the pumpkin. ‘I want you to put all your money in this bag,’ he said. When I say ‘start’, you can open your eyes. You must collect all your money. If you won’t get all the money I will take you to God.’ Tanko hid himself under the bed. Then he said loudly, ‘start’. Gumi and Adiza put all their money in Tanko’s bag. Tanko grabbed the bag and ran to the door. ‘God has spared

**Victor**


**Diana**


**Text**


**Victor**

Halafu kesho wake Gumi akaenda kwa rafiki yake Sumo akamwambia mambo yametokea usiku. Halafu Sumo akacheka, akacheka, akacheka.

**Diana**

No retelling

**Text**

‘Huyu ni malaika wa ajabu,’ alisema Sumo. ‘Alikuja nyumbani kwenu bila mabawa yoyote. Angalia hazi nyayo,’ alisema Sumo. ‘Huyu malaika anavaa viatu. Anavaa viatu vilivyotengenezwa kwa matairi ya gari ‘your life,’ he said loudly. ‘Kneel down and thank him for his mercy.’ Tanko ran outside the house. Gumi and Adiza knelt down to thank God. They were happy to be alive.

He told them if they don’t want to be taken to God, when he says ‘start’ they should put all their money in the bag he gave them. Then ran and hid under Gumi and Adiza’s bed, he said ‘start’. Gumi and Adiza got all their money and put it in the bag he gave them. He got the bag with the money and ran away.

Then Tanko asked them to give him their money and he will not take them with him. Gumi and Adiza got out of bed to get their money and gave it all to Tanko. Then Tanko was hiding under the bed. Then he got out when Gumi and Adiza came back. Tanko asked them to close their eyes. Then he stole their money and ran out to his house.

The following morning Gumi explained to his best friend Sumo about the angel. Sumo was a wise man. He did not believe that angels take people’s money. ‘I don’t believe,’ he said. ‘I would like to see the whole on your roof. It must have been a heavy angel.’ Sumo went to Gumi’s house. He inspected the whole on the roof. Then he looked at the sand beside the house. He saw foot prints on the sand. He bent down to look at the foot prints carefully. Sumo started laughing. He laughed until his eyes were full of tears.

Then the following morning Gumi went to his friend Sumo to explain to him what happened last night. Then Sumo laughed and laughed and and laughed.

‘This is a strange angel,’ said Sumo. ‘He came to your house without his wings. Look at this,’ Sumo said. ‘This angel wears sandals. He wears sandals made from old tires. I don’t believe that an angel

**Victor**


**Diana**

No retelling

**Text**


**Victor**

Mkuu wa kijiji akakula juu ya malaika DU. Sasa mfalme akasema watatafuta mtu mwenye viatu vina alama DU. Sasa mfalme akawaambia watoto wake wawili wacheke kila mtu wa kijiji. Kila mtu akakula wa kijiji akasema huu ni mihani rahisi. Akasema kila mtu apite mbele yake. Huyu mkuu alikuwa anaangalia alama za viatu. Kila mtu came your house last night. I think this is just a thief.’ Gumi looked at the foot prints on the sand. He looked at one and then the other. ‘It is true,’ he said. ‘These are prints from an old tire. This thief uses old tires to make his sandals. But what do we do now? Many villagers use old tires to make sandals.’ Sumo said, ‘Look carefully. Do you see letters DU on the right foot? We need to look for the person wearing that sandal with letters DU on the right foot. If we get that sandal, then we will get the thief.’ Gumi and Sumo went to the village leader to explain to him about the angel who asked for money.

Sumo asked, this angel had no wings, he was walking? He saw foot prints, one was marked with letters DU. Then Gumi and Sumo went to report to the village leader.

The village leader listened attentively. Then he went to Gumi’s house to look at the foot prints. He saw the letters DU on the sand. He smiled, ‘I know what to do,’ he said. ‘We will call a meeting of all villagers. Then we will ask them to walk in front of us. It will not take us long to identify the angel who wore sandals. The village leader sent his three children to get all the villagers to his place. Tanko was among the last group of people to arrive. Then the village leader talked to the people. ‘I want all men to walk on the sand in front of me.’ One by one the men passed in front of their leader. Meanwhile the village leader was looking at their foot prints. When Tanko’s turn came, suddenly the village leader noticed the mark DU on the sand. He at once knew that Tanko was the thief.

The village went to see the footprints. He said we will look for the person wearing sandals with this mark. Then he asked his two sons to call everybody from the village to his place. Then he said this is an easy test. He asked everyone to pass in front of him on the sand. The village leader was looking at their foot prints.
Everyone passed and Tanko was the last person. When he was walking on the sand, the village leader saw the mark DU on his foot prints.

‘Last night,’ he explained to the villagers, ‘an angel fell inside Gumi’s roof. But it was an angel who had no wings. This angel stole all Gumi’s money.’ ‘I don’t understand,’ Tanko said nervously. ‘What has that to do with me.’ You are the angel with no wings,’ said the village leader. Look at your foot prints. Do you see the DU? We found those prints outside Gumi’s house. You are not an angel. You are the thief.’

The village leader asked his elder son to get his bicycle and go get the police. He said, ‘Tell the police we have caught a thief. A thief who pretended to be an angel.’ When the police heard about this they arrived immediately. They searched Tanko’s house. They found the money he stole in a box. The money was still in the bag with the pumpkin. The police arrested Tanko. He did not eat pumpkins for a long time. You are not given a pumpkin in a prison.

Then he explained to the villagers what had happened. Then Tanko was arrested. The village leader asked his son to get on his bicycle to get the police. Money was returned to the owners. Then the police arrested Tanko and took his to the prison. He did not eat pumpkins.
Template for Retelling of the Swahili Narrative Text (7th Graders)

Setting
a) Zamani katika kijiji
b) Wakulima wawili Tanko mkulima mvivu na Gumi mkulima hodari walikuwa majirani
c) Watu wengine, Adiza mke wa Gumi, Sumo rafiki wa Gumi na mkuu wa kijiji
d) Wana kijiji wengine

Theme
Tanko alitaka kuiba boga moja kutoka katika paa la nyumba ya Gumi na aliipojaribu kupanda juu ya paa aliangukia ndani. Alijifanya kuwa yeye ni malaika ametumwa na Mungu kuja kwachukua Gumi na Adiza. Alitaka apewe fedha ili asiwachukue. Baada ya kupewa fedha zote alikimbia

Plot episodes
a) Tanko alitumbikia katika paa povu la nyumba ya Gumi na aliangukia kitandani kwa Gumi na Adiza
b) Tanko alisema yeye ni malaika ametumwa na Mungu kwachukua. Atawaacha iwapo watampa fedha zao zote
c) Baada ya kupewa fedha Tanko alikimbia
d) Rafiki wa Gumi Sumo alikuja nyumbani kwa Gumi kufanya uchunguzi, hakuamini hadithi ya malaika

Resolution
a) Mkuu wa kijiji aliwakusanya watu wote wa kijiji na kutaka kuona nyayo za viatu vyao katika mehanga
b) Nyayo za viatu vya Tanko zilifanana na nyayo zilizoachwa katika matope nje ya nyumba ya Gumi. Tanko alikamatwa na askari

Sequence
Student retells the story in structural order: setting, theme, plot episodes and resolution
Appendix E

World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment Consortium (WIDA) Performance Definitions

Adapted from: www.wida.us/standards/RG_PerformanceDefinitions.pdf

At the given level of English language proficiency, English language learners will process, understand, produce or use:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Performance</th>
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</table>
| 6 - Reaching | • specialized or technical language reflective of the content areas at grade level  
• a variety of sentence lengths of varying linguistic complexity in extended oral or written discourse as required by the specified grade level  
• oral or written communication in English comparable to proficient English peers |
| 5 - Bridging | • specialized or technical language of the content areas  
• a variety of sentence lengths of varying linguistic complexity in extended oral or written discourse, including stories, essays or reports  
• oral or written language approaching comparability to that of proficient English peers when presented with grade level material |
| 4 - Expanding | • specific and some technical language of content areas  
• a variety of sentence lengths of varying linguistic complexity in oral discourse or multiple, related sentences or paragraphs  
• oral or written language with minimal phonological, syntactic or semantic errors that do not impede the overall meaning of the communication when presented with oral or written connected discourse with sensory, graphic or interactive support |
| 3 - Developing | • general and some specific language of the content areas  
• expanded sentences in oral interaction or written paragraphs  
• oral or written language with phonological, syntactic or semantic errors that may impede the communication, but retain much of its meaning, when presented with oral or written, narrative or expository description with sensory, graphic or interactive support |
| 2 - Beginning | • general language related to the content areas  
• phrases or short sentences  
• oral or written language with phonological, syntactic, or semantic errors that often impede the meaning of the communication when presented with one to multiple-step commands, directions, questions, or a series of statements with sensory, graphic or interactive support |
| 1 - Entering | • pictorial or graphic representation of the language of the content areas  
• words, phrases or chunks of language when presented with one-step commands, directions, WH-, choice or yes/no questions, or statements with sensory, graphic or interactive support |
Appendix F

Writing Scoring Rubric

Adapted from McCarthey, S., Guo, Y. & Cummins, S. (2005)

Grammar/Punctuation
Score of 5 – Advanced
The student uses language conventions such as capitalization and punctuation appropriately. The student uses more than basic punctuation including commas, semicolons, colons, question marks and exclamation marks. The student capitalizes proper nouns as well as the first word in a sentence consistently. The student’s writing exhibits subject-verb agreement.

Score of 4 – Competent
The student uses language conventions such as punctuation appropriately. The student’s writing exhibits subject-verb agreement.

Score of 3 – Not completely competent
The student uses basic language conventions appropriately and exhibits correct use of subject-verb agreement most of the time. Errors do not interfere with the reader’s comprehension of the text.

Score of 2 – Developing competence
The student uses capitalization and punctuation inconsistently. Lack of subject agreement may interfere with reader’s comprehension of the text.

Score of 1 – Beginner
The student does not use capitalization and punctuation. Lack of subject–verb agreement interferes with reader’s comprehension of the text.

Sentence Complexity
Score of 5 – Advanced
Student uses a variety of types of sentences including simple, compound, and complex (one independent clause and one or more dependent clauses) sentences

Score of 4 – Competent
Student frequently uses sentences of varying lengths and structure that may include simple, compound, and/or complex (one independent and one or more dependent clauses) sentences.

Score of 3 – Not completely competent
Student uses simple sentences correctly. There is some attempt at varying length and structure.
Score of 2 – Developing competence
The student uses run-on sentences or sentence fragments that may interfere with the reader’s comprehension.

Score of 1 – Beginner
The student’s lack of sentence structure interferes with the reader’s comprehension.

Rhetorical Style
Score of 5 – Advanced
The student demonstrates clear organization including beginning, middle, and ending with an effective introduction and conclusion. Major points or events are appropriately paragraphed. There is a clear flow (coherence) and logic to the order of events (narrative) or points given (expository).

The student develops the points or main events in the paper thoroughly with relevant support and elaboration. This may include details, personal reactions, anecdotes, and/or quotes/dialogue. The writer also includes second order ideas, giving an explanation of the importance/value of the examples/evidence given.

Score of 4 – Competent
The student has clear organization with an effective introduction and conclusion. Major points or events are appropriately paragraphed. There is adequate flow and logic to the student’s writing. The student includes adequate support and elaboration, but there is not a rich use of different types of details.

Score of 3 – Not completely competent
The student has attempted organization with a beginning, middle with an ending with an introduction and conclusion. Most points or events are appropriately paragraphed. There may not be a perfect flow or logic to the text, but the reader is still able to understand the student’s meaning. The student includes basic information and some support and elaboration for points or events.

Score of 2 – Developing competence
There is general lack of focus. There are some difficulties with flow that interfere with the reader’s ability to understand the text. The student includes basic information with little or no support and elaboration.

Score of 1 – Beginner
There is no organization or focus. There is no elaboration.

Voice
Score of 5 – Advanced
There is a distinctive, personal tone - a writer’s voice is present. The student uses a rich variety of descriptive and lively language (including figurative language: hyperbole, metaphor, personification, simile), precise verbs, and varied sentence structure to maintain the reader’s engagement.
Score of 4 – Competent
There is a distinctive, personal tone – a writer’s voice is present. The student frequently uses descriptive and lively language (including figurative language: hyperbole, metaphor, personification, simile), precise verbs, and varied sentence structure to maintain the reader’s engagement.

Score of 3 – Not completely competent
There is personal tone – a writer’s voice is present. There is evidence of descriptive and lively language (including figurative language: hyperbole, metaphor, personification, simile), precise verbs, and varied sentence structure to maintain the reader’s engagement.

Score of 2 – Developing competence
There is little evidence of the writer’s voice. Student tends to summarize or retell without using descriptive or figurative language. There is lack of variety in sentence structure.
Score of 1 – Beginner
There is no evidence of the writer’s voice.