



RESEARCH ARTICLE

THE INFLUENCE OF THE QUALITY OF KISWAHILI INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS ON THE PERFORMANCE OF BACHELOR OF EDUCATION (ARTS) UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI DISTANCE EDUCATION STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper was to investigate the influence of quality of Kiswahili instructional materials on the performance of Bachelor of Education (Arts) University of Nairobi distance education students. The paper sought to determine the quality of the instructional materials, also called modules, by looking at the content, the assessment procedures in the materials and the presentation style. The study used survey research design. A sample of 60 Kiswahili distance students and 6 Kiswahili lecturers from University of Nairobi participated in this study. Data was collected from the respondents using questionnaire for the students and interview schedules for the lecturers. A document analysis schedule for the instructional materials was also used to analyze the materials. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the quantitative data. Qualitative data was analyzed in themes based on the objectives of the study. The study revealed that the quality of Kiswahili instructional materials issued to the Bachelor of Education (Arts) distance education students was impaired by the inappropriateness of the content as there was a lot of content that was either irrelevant or partially relevant as compared to the course outlines the lecturers were using. Since the materials were developed in 1988, there is content that had been overtaken by time and was therefore outdated. This meant that such materials were not of value to students as they prepared for their examinations and therefore they had little influence on the performance of students. The study findings indicated that most of the lecturers used their own modified notes to teach the students and they set the examinations from the content in the notes hence majority of the students relied on the lecture notes and not the modules provided. This further indicated that there was little significance in the influence of modules on the performance of students. This paper recommends that Kiswahili instructional materials content should be reviewed and written in line with the current updated course outlines that most lecturers were using to teach and examine the students.

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INTRODUCTION

Distance education is recognized by educationists the world over as a mode of education which helps large numbers of learners to access quality education without being in the campus face to face with the lecturer (Koul and Jenkin, 1990). Through this mode of education, quality education is made accessible at very low costs to persons whose work and family responsibilities or even personal preferences would not allow them to attend college on a full time basis. It provides such persons with opportunities to take courses at their own time depending on their abilities and conveniences (Bowa, 2008). The period from 1970 to date has witnessed great development in the field of Distance Education worldwide. Most governments in the world like United Kingdom, U.S.A. and China are providing distance education and studying its role as a complement to conventional (on campus) education (Keegan, 1986). There are open mega Universities with

hundreds of thousands of students for example Open University of United Kingdoms, Indra Gandhi Open University, University of South Africa and African Virtual University (AVU) (Gakuo, 2006). In Africa, distance education is well established in among others University of South Africa and Open University of Tanzania. There are also African virtual university activities in some countries. African Virtual University (AVU) has programmes in Francophone and Anglophone Africa, and the African Council for Distance Education (ACDE) with membership of institutions all over Africa (Gakuo, 2006). According to Gakuo (2006), Kenya introduced B.Ed degree courses by Distance Education at the University of Nairobi in 1986. Prior to this, a number of commissions and reports had highlighted alternative modes of education provision. For example, the Omidé Report (Republic of Kenya, 1964) recommended the establishment of an advisory commission on this; the Gachathi Report (Republic of Kenya, 1976) emphasized the need for solving educational problems in large scale by diversifying education; the Macky Report (Republic of Kenya, 1981) and the

Kamunge Report (Republic of Kenya, 1988) included the use of distance education in their recommendations. The latest Government initiative as contained in Sessional paper No. 1 of 2005 (Republic of Kenya, 2005) has recommended the establishment of an open university and use of distance education in human resource development at all levels. The history of the practice of distance education in the country has been in all levels of education and provided by different institutions governed by their own institutional policies. Some of the major providers include: the Kenya Institute of Education, Egerton University, University of Nairobi (UoN), Kenya Methodist University, Strathmore University, African Medical Research Foundation (AMREF); Ministry of Health; Ministry of Agriculture; Ministry of Education under school based teacher development, among others. The distance education practice has made some impact on education and development: in the training of adult literacy teachers; primary school teacher; training of teachers in special education; cooperative practitioners; training of medical professionals; and primary school enrichment through the radio programmes and use of electronic modes. According to Bowa (2008), the flexibility of the programme has opened up opportunities for working people whose full time jobs and other personal commitments do not allow them to pursue further studies on a full-time basis. They can study at home using the study materials or modules provided by the institution.

Performance of the students in distance education depends very much on the quality of study materials provided to them. Since students learn at a distance separated from the lecturer and the institutions by distance and time, instructional media are used to reach them. Apart from the modern technology like computer, print media is widely used. Print is the major foundation of distance education worldwide and the basis from which all other delivery systems have evolved over time. The first distance delivered courses were offered by correspondence study. Print materials were sent to students by mail. While technological developments have added to the repertoire of tools available to the distance educator, printed materials continue to be significant components of performance in all distance education programmes. Availability of Kiswahili instructional materials however, is a concern at the University of Nairobi. Bowa (2008) explains that analysis of provision of course books showed that majority of the students are not issued with the materials. This, according to Mboroki (2007), means that most students use borrowed materials or rely mainly on the face to face tuition sessions for interactive learning experience. Mboroki (2007) explains that this shortfall in provision of the study materials is partly because the books are issued only to students who have paid full fees and partly because the production of materials does not match the demand for the materials. Bowa (2008) says that lack of instructional materials is a serious problem in a distance learning programme which relies heavily on the print medium. Their absence could mean that learners are not able to obtain structured instructions for the better part of their studies and this may affect the quality of learning and thereby academic performance of learners. The shortcomings could affect performance. Indeed, Bowa (2008) observes that performance of learners in external degree programme has been a concern as reflected in assessment records of assignments, tests and exams. In some cases the failure rates in Kiswahili examinations for instance, are as

high as 36% as illustrated in the following extract: The rationale for choosing University of Nairobi is that according to Odumbe & Kamau (1986), and Odumbe (1992), University of Nairobi has offered Bachelor of Education by distance education since 1986 when the first group of 600 students was admitted to the Bachelor of Education (Arts) Course from all regions of Kenya. Since then, the student population has risen gradually to over 4000.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Since the universities in Kenya opened their doors to the adult public by introducing distance education programmes, there has been an increase in enrolment of students in the University of Nairobi. This has given rise to the demand for instructional materials (Bowa, 2008). However, University of Nairobi has been reprinting the same materials that were developed in 1988, which is more than twenty years ago and issuing to the students who join the distance education B.Ed (Arts) programme. Given the fact that Kiswahili is a dynamic language and a lot of scholarly work and research has been done to develop it in the last twenty years (Kiango, 2005), the quality and relevance of modules which were written years ago and are the ones still in use is a concern. The research was necessitated by this concern.

### **Objectives of the Study**

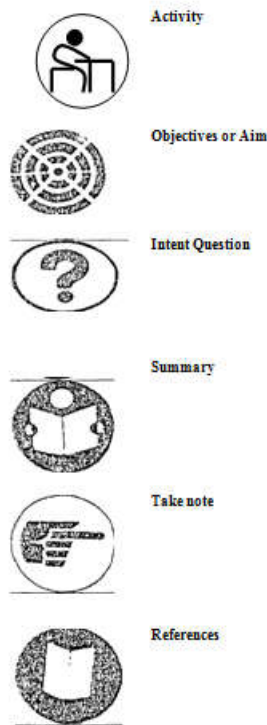
The main purpose of the study was to investigate the influence of the quality of Kiswahili instructional materials on the performance of Bachelor of Education (Arts) University of Nairobi distance education students. Specific objectives of this study were: To examine the content in the Kiswahili instructional study materials used by B.Ed (Arts) distance education students at the University of Nairobi. To examine how the assessment procedures in the instructional study materials are applied by the students to enhance performance at the University of Nairobi. To assess presentation style of instructional study materials in enhancing performance of students at the University of Nairobi.

### **Literature Review**

This section critically reviews literature related to this study in areas of print media as a teacher, quality of instructional materials, performance in distance education and Kiswahili content in the instructional materials.

#### **Print Media as a Teacher**

Bowa (2008) states that print media has emerged as the backbone of distance education at the University of Nairobi (despite the development of technology including online in distance education world wide). The students rely on print study materials for their own study. Ngechu (2007) states that teaching and learning is mediated. The teacher uses instructional materials to transmit content prepared by him or herself. In distance education, the instructional media are equivalent to classroom teachers. Ngechu (2007) states that there is no difference in learning between classroom teacher and distance education teacher. The only difference may be due to quality of course development and delivery technologies used. Wanjala (2007) suggests that print media



**Quality of Instructional Materials**

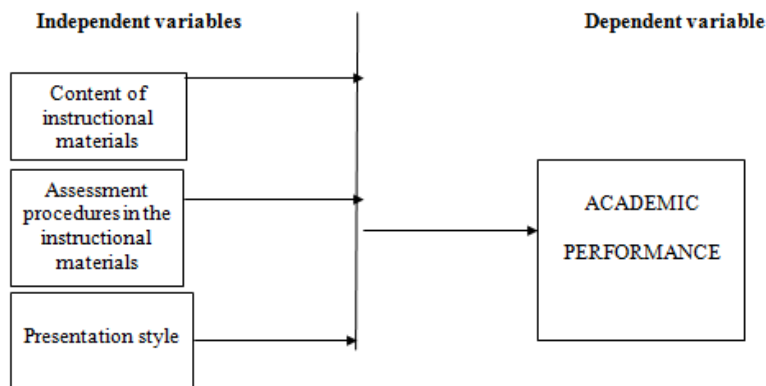
Evans & Darlyl (1995) say the objective of (a distance) institution ... is the production of successful students... Students will not easily achieve success if course materials are of poor quality. They say quality is a fundamental issue in distance education. They claimed that writers seldom took a comprehensive view of the whole enterprise, tending instead to focus on a particular aspect of distance education. Much of the emphasis was still on outputs, such as number of graduates produced. Evans and Daryl (1995) elaborates that over the years, many writers focused on better course design of instructional materials, the use of improved communication technologies and more sophisticated use of print materials. They also discuss the difficult of applying quality control measures in distance teaching universities because of the concepts of academic freedom and professional autonomy. They argue that these concepts in effect mean self regulation, as judgments about the value and worth of distance education courses are made by those who also design and teach them. Bowa (2008) says that print media is the most widely used instructional material in Kenya and particularly at the University of Nairobi. He continues to say that print materials take a long time to produce but they are worth the effort. In Kenya, since learners are not quite able to access broadcasts or internet easily, print materials are used in distance education. The performance of the student is therefore dependent on what

Fig. 1. Symbols used in modules lectures

**Table 1: Pass and failure rates of a section of Kiswahili students in External Degree Programme**

Group	No. of students	No. Of Candidates	Pass	Fail	%Pass	%fail
Part VI April 2000 Intake	67	66	55	11	83	17
Part IV April 2001 intake	107	105	76	29	72	28
Part III: Dec 2001 intake	135	135	87	48	64	36

Source: Bowa (2008)



Source: Interrelatedness of the Study Variables as perceived by the researchers

**Figure 2: Features of Instructional materials in relation to performance**

should communicate to the learner and give instructions as teacher does by making it be in the form of lecture series and using symbols to draw the attention of learners. The following is a list of the symbols Wanjala (2007) suggests should be used in the text and what they stand for: Kiswahili instructional materials used by the University of Nairobi as teachers of the learners need to have similar symbols to communicate more effectively to the learners.

They gather from the print materials. Lack of quality materials is likely to have negative influence on performance while quality in the materials will enhance students' performance. To ensure quality, materials are prepared by a course team. The instructional materials used at the University of Nairobi's School of Continuing and Distance Education for B.Ed (Arts) students are course books in form of printed lecture notes commonly known as unit books or modules. According to Bowa (2008), the learner is expected to interact with the study

materials to have a learning experience. Content of the material is therefore an important element of the quality. Other instructional materials quality issues that the study focuses on include the assessment procedures for self evaluation and interaction and the general presentation of content. According to Dick & Carey (1996), modules (instructional materials) require the learner to interact actively with the content rather than read passively. The learners are asked to perform various tasks and receive feedback.

### Kiswahili Content in the Instructional Materials

According to Kiango (2005), Kiswahili as a language has undergone much development. Therefore the content of Kiswahili instructional materials becomes a concern. A module like *Modern Swahili Literary Texts* discusses texts that were used in the University twenty years ago such as *Uasi*, *Zinduko*, *Rosa Mistika*, *Ukame* among others while the ones in current use at the University are not dealt with. Students presumably have to depend on face to face lecture notes. A perusal through another Unit book, *Mbinu za kufundishia Kiswahili* exposes other shortcomings that undermine the quality of the material. For instance, the sample lesson plan given on page 92 and apparently meant to train teachers is not in tandem with current trends in teaching. For example the objective is stated as : Kufikia mwisho wa kipindi wanafunzi wataweza kutunga sentensi wakitumia kundi la ji-ma. (By the end of the lesson the learners will be able to make sentences using ji-ma class).

According to K.I.E. (2002), this is outdated in two ways; First, we no longer state...wanafunzi waweze.... (learners should). The current trend is...mwanafunzi aweze (learner should....). secondly, Kundi ji-ma (ji-ma class) is no longer used in the secondary school syllabus. It is now taught as ngeli ya li-ya and ya-ya (li-ya and ya-ya class of nouns). Considering all these shortcomings it is why when University of Nairobi uses Kiswahili print materials that were written twenty years ago such as *Modern Swahili Literary Texts of 1988*, *Mbinu za Kufundishia Kiswahili of 1988*, it draws concern on their suitability and quality of the instructional materials, a research issue for this paper.

### Conceptual Framework

Ngechu (2006) states that a conceptual framework is an explanation of relationships among several factors that have been identified as important to the problem. In this conceptual framework interrelated factors that feed into the quality of instructional materials are:

- (i) Content
- (ii) Assessment procedures and learner interaction.
- (iii) Presentation

These components are interrelated. For example, content is the one assessed in the assessment activities and it is the one being presented as instructions in the materials. If the learner perceives the material to be of high quality he/she will study it seriously leading to desirable academic performance. The independent variable here is quality of instructional material and its components such as content, assessment procedures and presentation and the dependent variable is performance.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

This study was conducted using survey research design. Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) define survey as an attempt to collect data from members of a population in order to determine the current status with respect to one or more variables. The rationale behind the selection of the survey research design was that it would help the researcher collect information from a large number of students through questionnaires dispatched and returned during the face to face sessions when the external degree students come to campus. The design is also reliable as it is quantitative in character. More so, the research itself was a survey in nature as it involves moving around collecting data from a large population using questionnaire.

### Target Population

According to Sommer (1986) target population is defined as the entire group of population in a category. The research was done among University of Nairobi B.Ed (Arts) distance education Kiswahili students and Kiswahili lecturers. The lecturers are the content experts. According to statistics there were about 600 students taking Kiswahili in distance education and 6 lecturers handling Kiswahili in the programme. The total target population for this study was 606. Kiswahili Instructional materials (modules) were also targeted for document analysis.

### Sample Size and Sampling Procedures

The sample size was determined using Kerlinger (1983) suggestion that a minimum sample size of 10% of the population is a good enough representation. For the purpose of this study a 10% of the target students were selected to participate. That means 60 students were sampled. These students were drawn from Part III and Part VI. These are students in their Year 2 and Year 3 respectively. There were 30 students representing Part III and 30 representing Part VI. For lecturers however, purposive sampling was used whereby all the 6 lecturers were interviewed. A total sample of 66 respondents was therefore targeted.

### Research Instruments

The study used questionnaire, interview schedule and Document analysis schedule. Questionnaire was for students. Questionnaires would also enable the researcher quantify responses for analytical purposes (Best, 1986). The items in the questionnaire were based on the objectives of the study and sought information on areas such as content, assessment procedures, availability of modules and user friendliness in relation to performance. There was an interview schedule for the lecturers, which mainly sought the opinion of the lecturers on the content of the instructional materials. The lecturers were important in this study as they were the content experts and therefore best suited to comment on the content of the materials. Document analysis schedule for Kiswahili instructional study materials sought to get basic information like title, author, publisher and year of publication of the materials. This was followed by information on content,

assessment procedures and quality of production of the study materials.

### Data Analysis Techniques

Analysis of the data was started by checking gathered raw data for accuracy, usefulness and completeness. Quantitative data was analyzed through descriptive statistics like percentages and frequencies to enable conclusions be drawn. The researchers went through all the responses given by the students and the lecturers and calculated the percentages of those who selected each choice in the objective questions. The percentages were represented in charts or tables for ease of interpretation. The figures generated showed what resources the students favoured and what they felt about the quality of the instructional materials. They also showed what the lecturers said about the relevance of the content and assessment procedures in the material. Qualitative data were analyzed by organizing the data from interview schedule and other open ended items into subtopics or themes as per the research objectives and detailed description given in form of words. Analysis was done with the aid of a computer programme. Data were presented by use of tables and figures while frequencies (f) and percentages (%) were used to analyse the data.

### Data Analysis and Presentation

Data was analyzed thematically as per the study objectives. Data was presented using tables and figures while discussions were made by use of frequencies (f) and percentages (%). The presentations were done based on the research objectives.

### Response Rate

Questionnaire completion rate is the proportion of the sample that participated as intended in all the research procedures. The response rates are presented in Table 2. In this study, out of the sampled 30 Part III students, all of them (100%) returned the questionnaires. Out of the sampled 30 Part VI students, all of them (100%) returned the questionnaires. All the 6 lecturers (100%) participated in the study. The return rates were therefore 100% and hence deemed very adequate for the study.

### Influence of quality of Kiswahili Instructional Materials on the Performance

The study sought to establish the influence of quality of Kiswahili instructional materials on the performance of Bachelor of Education (Arts) in the University of Nairobi distance education students. The study focused on the following areas as its study variables: content of the Kiswahili instructional materials, assessment procedures in the instructional materials and user friendliness of the presentation style. This section presents the findings based on these themes.

### Content of the Kiswahili Instructional Materials

To find out if the content in the Kiswahili instructional study materials was assessed when evaluating the performance of distance education Kiswahili students, the respondents were expected to respond to various items that sought to establish

the extent to which the content of the instructional study materials was assessed during evaluation. For instance, the students were asked to indicate whether their exams tested the content in the module. The findings are presented in Table 3. Findings revealed that majority of the students (75%) stated that the examinations they did rarely tested the content in the instructional materials. Only 25% reported that examinations sometimes tested the content. The findings therefore implied students respondents were of the opinion that students relied on Kiswahili lecture notes given during the face to face sessions by the lecturers. The students were further asked to indicate what they relied on mostly for their performance. The findings are presented in Table 4.

Findings presented in Table 4.3 indicated that majority of the students (77%) used Kiswahili lecture notes. Only a few students (18%) indicated that they used Kiswahili tex books. 2% Part III and 3% Part VI students indicated that they used Kiswahili Modules. The findings indicated Kiswahili modules were very rarely used in the preparation for exams. The lecturer respondents were asked to indicate whether they used Kiswahili units books when teaching. Their findings are presented in Table 5. Data on the lecturers' responses as presented in Table 4.4 on whether they used modules when teaching indicated that majority of them (67%) did not use the instructional materials issued to the students. Only 33% indicated that they used. They further said that instead they used their own notes which they updated from time to time. Asked whether the instructional materials (modules) were relevant to the needs of their students. Findings revealed that most of the lecturers (66%) did not find the instructional materials (modules) relevant to the needs of their students. Only 1 lecturer (17%) indicated that the content of the modules was relevant while the same number were not decided in the item. They further explained that not all the content was given enough coverage and that much of the content needed to be reviewed. These findings are presented in Table 6.

Findings from the document analysis revealed that only about 31% of the instructional materials had relevant content. The document analysis of the modules issued to students compared to the course outlines given by the lecturers revealed that 23% of the modules were partially relevant and 23% were not relevant at all. Another 23% could not be accounted for as there were no modules available. This information is presented in Table 7. The study revealed that there were disparities between the content of the modules and course outlines the lecturers used in the cases where the modules were either not relevant or partially relevant. For example in BSW 102 (*Theory of Swahili usage and textual analysis*) the table of content in the instructional material (module) had the following topics: *Madhumuni ya Kozi, Utangulizi, Uchambuzi wa ushairi, Uchambuzi wa lugha Katika ushairi, Lugha na umbo katika shairi, Lugha na mtindo katika shairi, Somo la 5, Somo la 6, Somo la 7, Uchambuzi wa riwaya, Uchambuzi wa drama, Uchambuzi wa makala ya michezo, Somo la 11, Uchambuzi wa makala ya hotuba*. The document analysis revealed a sharp contrast between table of content and the course outline in current use which had the following sections: *Theory of Swahili Usage (Swahili Usage & Textual Analysis)*. The Matini had *Ufafanuzi wa matini. Sifa za maumbo. Sifa za kimatumizi*. The *Sifa za maumbo* comprised

**Table 2: Distribution of Interviewees and their percentages**

Category of Respondents	f	%
Lecturers	6	10
Part III Students	30	45
Part VI Students	30	45
Total	66	100

**Table 3: Students' response to whether their exams tested the content in the modules**

Category of Respondents	Always		Sometimes		Rarely		Total	
	F	%	F	%	f	%	f	%
Part III	0	0	7	12	23	38	30	50
Part VI	0	0	8	13	22	37	30	50
Total	0	0	15	25	45	75	60	100

**Table 4: Contribution of materials to students' performance**

Category of Respondents	Kiswahili Modules		Kiswahili textbooks		Kiswahili Lecture notes		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	f	%
Part III	1	2	5	8	24	40	30	50
Part VI	2	3	6	10	22	36	30	50
Total	3	5	11	18	46	77	60	100

**Table 5: Lecturers' response to whether they use the modules when teaching**

Response	F	(%)
Yes	2	33
No	4	67
Total	6	100

**Table 6: Lecturers' response to whether the content of modules is relevant**

Response	F	(%)
Yes	1	17
No	4	66
Neither Yes nor No	1	17
Total	6	100

**Table 7: Relevance of instructional materials to current course outlines**

Course	Relevant	Partially Relevant	Not relevant	Not available
BSW 101	√			
BSW 103	√			
BSW 102			√	
BSW 104		√		
BSW 201			√	
BSW 203				√
BSW 202	√			
BSW 204				√
BSW 210		√		
BSW301		√		
BSW 303			√	
BSW 306	√			
BSW308				√
Total	4	3	3	3
%	31	23	23	23

**Table 8: Students' rate of answering assessment questions from the Modules**

Category of Respondents	Always		Sometimes		Rarely		Total	
	F	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Part III	5	8.5	11	18	14	23	30	50
Part VI	5	8.5	10	17	15	25	30	50
Total	10	17	21	35	29	48	60	100

*Mshikamano/Upatanisho and Muala, Vijengo. The Sifa za Kimatumizi* comprised *Malengo/dhamira na madhumuni, Habari/ujumbe, maudhui, yaliyomo, Uhusika na hali, Mwandishi/mzungumzaji, Hadhira, Mfumo wa lugha, Mada and Mazingira/muktadha*. Through the interview with

lecturers, the study revealed that in courses like BSW 303 and BSW 201 the lecturers advised the students not to bother using the modules given. This was because they were not in tandem with current needs of students. For instance in BSW 201, *Modern Swahili literary texts*, the literary texts dealt with are

**Table 9: Response to whether the presentation style of the materials was learner friendly**

Category of respondents	Yes		No		Total	
	F	%	f	%	f	%
Part III students	16	24	14	21	30	45
Part VI students	19	29	11	17	30	45
Lecturers	4	6	2	3	6	10
Total	39	59	27	41	66	100

like *Ukame, Rosa Mistika, Zinduko, Uasi, Wingu Jeusi, Malenga wa Vumba, Malenga wa Mvita* among others. The study found out that the literary texts that have been in use in current years are different from the ones in the module. They are texts like *Safari ya Usiku, Nguvu ya Sala, Kifo Kisimani, Bara Jingine, Maua KwenyeJua la Asubuhi, Chembe cha Moyo, Shamba la Wanyama* among others which have been published recently. The study revealed that in some modules though the core information was there, it was not given enough coverage. For example, in BSW 104, *language skills in Kiswahili*, the core topics are: Mawasiliano, Ufahamu, Mtungo and Tafsiiri. However, in the lecturers' current course outline there was an additional topic namely uakifishaji. At the same time, the topic Mtungo (Composition) was covered in greater details in the lecturers' outline than in the module. For instance, the module just gave the basic information about Mtungo while the lecturers' outline was enriched with other important issues in the topic such as aina za insha (types of compositions) and uandishi wa barua (letter writing). The shortcoming weakens the quality of the content in the module and impairs its influence.

In BSW 210, *Kiswahili Methods*, the module gave examples of content taught in secondary schools by referring to *Kiswahili syllabus for K.C.S.E. K.I.E. March 1985*. Since then the syllabus has been revised. The current secondary school syllabus was written in the year 2002. In lecture one the module discussed Kiswahili in the new 8-4-4 system of education. The study found out that the 8-4-4 system was no longer new as information on the ground indicate that it started in 1980's and the first national examination in the system was done in 1985. This was long before majority of the students in the system were born. Further analysis of documents revealed that the scheme of work format suggested on page 120 of BSW 210 module had many disparities with the one in current use by the targeted students as they go for teaching practice. It had eight columns which contained; *Mwezi, Juma, Kipindi, Maudhui, Madhumuni, Mazoezi, Vitabu na vifaa and Maoni*. The one in use has seven columns which contained *Wiki, Somo, Mada kuu/mada ndogo, Shabaha, Mazoezi ya kujifunzia, Asilia/vifaa and Maoni*. In BSW 301, *Swahili structure: phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics*, the study revealed that the instructional material quality was undermined by use of technical terms in language that were outdated. For example, majina for nouns on page 33 instead of Nomino as used today and Vibadala for pronouns on page 35 instead of Viwakilishi.

Use of the term Sifa on page 43 and Viashiria on page 44 was misleading. Sifa is currently taught as a type of Vivumishi (Adjectives) but the module presented Sifa as adjective itself. Viashiria are also another type of Vivumishi. This did not come out clearly in the module further undermining the quality and subsequently its influence as students disregarded it on realizing those weaknesses and 77% opted to rely on

lecture notes for their performance while 18% of them relied on Kiswahili text books and only 5% of the students used Kiswahili modules in preparation for examination as the study revealed. All these shortcomings undermine the quality of the instructional materials' content and lessen their influence on performance of students as they preferred to use the lecture notes in preparation for their examinations as the study revealed. The study therefore found out that the quality of the instructional materials was quite impaired by the irrelevance of the content and had little influence on the performance of students as questions were rarely (75%) set from the materials. Only 25% sometimes came from the materials. Most students (77%) tended to rely on lecture notes for their performance in examinations as majority of the lecturers (67%) did not use the modules and would set examination questions from the lecture notes they gave during the face to face sessions according to the findings of the study.

#### **Assessment Procedures in the Kiswahili Instructional Materials**

The study further sought to establish the frequency in which the self-evaluation questions in the Kiswahili instructional materials were answered by the students. For example, the students were asked to indicate the rate of answering assessment questions in the modules. The responses are presented in Table 8. Data in Table 8 indicate that 48% of the students rarely answered the questions given in the Kiswahili instructional materials. 35% of them sometimes answered and only 17% of the students always answered the assessment questions. The high rate of those who rarely answered can be attributed to the fact that there were instructional materials with irrelevant content meaning that even the self evaluation questions and activities were also irrelevant. When the respondents were asked how the questions in the study materials contributed to their performance most of them said that the questions were of little significance as they rarely featured in the main examinations. When lecturers' opinion on the assessment questions in the modules was sought however, most of them felt that the questions were okay in the light of the work covered. This was to say that based on the content covered, the questions were alright. This means that they only failed to be of significance when the content covered was itself not relevant. The influence of the assessment questions on performance of the students in Kiswahili therefore depended on the content tested and if the same content was tested in the main examinations.

#### **User Friendliness of the Presentation Style**

The study sought to establish the extent to which the Kiswahili instructional materials were user friendly in terms of presentation style. The respondents were therefore asked whether they found the study materials learner friendly. Their responses are presented in the following Table 9. The study

findings indicated that most of the respondents (59%) found the presentation style user friendly against 41% who did not find the material presentation user friendly. When the lecturer respondents were asked for comments, they said that the content was presented in form of lectures to the students and the language was to the level of the target group. The materials were written in an easy-to-read language which was good enough for a student studying alone through distance learning mode. However, the 41% who felt the presentation style was not learner friendly said that it lacked some aspects of distance study materials. For example, distance learning materials are written in an interactive language as if it were a lecturer addressing a student. For instance, a unit could open with the following words: "welcome to unit 1. In this unit you are going to learn about..." This kind of language was lacking in the materials thereby making them of less quality as distance study materials. The document analysis of the module aimed at finding out if the presentation style followed the format of distance study modules. According to Bowa (2005), the following steps are followed when writing a lecture for distance education modules:

1. Lecture objectives are stated
2. Lecture outline is given
3. Lecture introduction
4. The topic and subtopic (heading scheme)
5. Lecture body (important features of the lecture body include: Language, Style of presentation, Illustrations, Symbols, Intext questions, Summary and References)

A document analysis of the modules revealed that these features were not always considered when developing the Kiswahili modules provided to the students. The study findings showed that though the presentation style involved an introduction and revision questions, a summary was not always given. Summaries are useful in enabling a student have a quick look at the main points in a unit or a lecture.

In the lecture body, the modules did not have symbols to assist the students. Wanjala (2007) suggests that symbols should be used in module lectures to indicate the following: Activity, Objectives, Intext questions, Summary, Important notes and References. These shortcomings in the presentation style make someone going through the instructional materials get the impression that they are not up to standard as they do not meet all the requirements of distance education modules. This weakens the quality of the materials further as they fail to offer students some necessary guidance which would help them study well and perform better.

## SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

Data on the Content of the Kiswahili instructional materials revealed that the quality of the content in the Kiswahili instructional materials issued to distance education students for study was undermined by the fact that there was a lot of content that was outdated and therefore no longer relevant to the current needs of the students. It was also revealed that that 23% of the modules had irrelevant content and another 23% had partially relevant content as revealed in the document analysis. The influence of the instructional materials on performance of the students was equally impaired by the fact that the examinations they sat rarely tested the content in the modules as 75% of the student respondents indicated. This

means that the Kiswahili modules were of little significance to the performance of students for the reason that the quality of the content was wanting. Data on the assessment procedures in the instructional materials showed that many of the students (48%) rarely answered the self assessment questions in the modules, 35% of them sometimes answered and only 17% always answered the questions. The high rate of those who rarely answered was attributed to the fact that the quality of the content was wanting making the questions based on the content turn out to be of less value to the students. The influence of the assessment questions to the performance of students was further undermined by the fact that the questions rarely featured in the main examinations as most of the lecturers (67%) used their own notes to teach and therefore set examinations from the same notes. Findings of the user friendliness of the presentation style showed that 59% of the respondents found the instructional materials presentation style user friendly. The language was to the level of the targeted learners. However, the quality of the presentation and influence on the performance was hampered by lack of summary notes for quick revision and by lack of symbols to guide students through the lectures in the modules. Therefore, lack of quality materials has negative influence on performance while quality in the material enhances a students' performance in Kiswahili studies.

## Conclusion

Based on the findings it was concluded that the quality of the Kiswahili instructional materials was wanting. This was because the content was found to be either irrelevant or partially relevant in a number of the modules. The assessment questions in Kiswahili modules seemed to be okay in the light of the chapters covered but were found to be of little influence on the performance of students where the content tested was not relevant or was not going to be examined in the main examinations or in continuous assessments tests. The study further concluded that the presentation style was learner friendly in terms of language use but failed to involve symbols to guide students and summary notes which could be useful when students were preparing to sit for examinations. This reduced the influence of the instructional materials on performance of students as they opted for lecture notes which had summarized notes. Therefore, performance of students in Kiswahili was not influenced by the print instructional materials issued to them. The study found out that the students mainly relied on lecture notes given to them during the face to face sessions.

## Recommendations

In the light of the findings and conclusions of the study, it is recommended that:

- i. A review of the Kiswahili instructional materials issued to the students was necessary to include recent developments in Kiswahili and modern approaches in teaching/learning process. The content in the materials should always be in line with the course outlines the lecturers were using when teaching and setting examinations.
- ii. Regular revision of literary based Kiswahili modules like BSW 201, *Modern Swahili literary texts*, module should be done as the literary texts recommended to



students as set books in the course changed regularly as new ones came into the market and were found better in meeting the needs of the time.

- iii. Lecturers teaching the various Kiswahili courses should be involved in the development and revision of the instructional materials. This would make the materials be in tandem with the lectures that are given during the face to face sessions thereby increasing the value of the materials and subsequently enhancing their quality. This would eventually make the material have a positive influence on the performance of the students.
- iv. The content should be adequate and all topics given enough coverage. The self assessment questions in the modules should be modified and be in tandem with the questions set in the main examinations and in the Continuous Assessment Tests (CATs). The presentation style should include summary notes and symbols to guide learners through the modules.

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