Native Language Companion: The Multilingual Platform

Agwa, Bradley (School: Kanga High School)
Aloo, Jim (School: Kanga High School)

Electronic gadgets used in ICT today, are dedicated to doing a lot of business and providing healthcare services amongst other services in rural and urban areas worldwide. These devices use official languages like English in communicating with users. However, research done in a mixture of ten rural and urban setups in Kenya shows that the rural population, standing at over 70% of the entire country's population, prefer using mother-toungue in their daily activities including interactions in official and non-official places. This raises the question of how effective communication between these devices and the users is. If the answer is NO, then is it possible to enable electronic devices to communicate to people in native language? This project attempts to investigate the extent of native language speaking (dependent) in urban and rural setups (independent) in Kenya vis a vis official languages (control) and the extent of use of e-gadgets by the rural folk using empirical observation and interviews, amongst other methods, which has prompted the development of a multilingual platform branded NATIVE LANGUAGE COMPANION which can support any native language. It illustrates how a variety of electronic devices like ATMs, Internet terminals, and phones can use the platform. Development of a multilingual system has proven to be an intriguing and complex task worldwide due to challenges arising from differences in lexicons, phonetics, grammar etc thereby remaining an unresolved emerging issue. Therefore, NLC prototype should be seen as a breakthrough that has established an all-inclusive and effective communication approach for e-gadgets.

Awards Won: