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Speaker: **Dr. Margaret Njeru, Riara University**

Topic: ***Language Loss and Loss of Identity: The Cry of the Youth***

Date: **Thursday, March 25th, 2021**

Time: **12:00 – 1:30 PM (EST)**

Place: **Zoom Webinar: [Register Here](#)**

All Are Welcome!

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Margaret Njeru is currently a Senior Lecturer and Head of the Department of Education at Riara University, Nairobi, Kenya. She holds a PhD. in Elementary Education (Language and Literacy Development) from the College of Education at University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. Dr. Njeru has taught at several universities in Kenya and abroad including Riara University, Kenya Methodist University and Egerton University, all in Kenya; University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, U.S., and Kampala International University (Dar-es-salaam campus).

She has published several articles and chapters in the areas of Language and Pedagogy in Education. Currently, Dr. Njeru is conducting a research on Language loss and its impact among children and the youth in Kenyan urban areas. Her book chapter, 'Mobile Open-Access Revolutionizing Learning among University Students in Kenya: The Role of the Smartphone' in the publication *Empowering Learners With Mobile Open-Access Learning Initiatives* (ed.Mills, Michael & Wake, Donna (2017)) was among chapters selected by the IGI Global Editorial team to feature in the K-12 Online Learning E-Book Collection in the U.S. in 2020. This action was in response to the Covid-19 outbreak and the necessitated online learning across the globe.

ABOUT THE TALK

Language loss, the process whereby an individual loses the ability to use a particular language, often their native Mother tongue, instead adopting another language as their primary mode of communication, has been documented widely. While in rare cases adults may experience language loss, it is children who are often the victims of this phenomenon. Many factors can play a role in language loss. When speakers of a language associate the knowledge of a particular language with social, economic and political benefits for instance, they may desire to acquire it and pay less attention to their native language. More so, parents may desire to pass on to their children the 'beneficial' language only, thereby contributing to the loss of the Mother tongue among the next generation. Many immigrants, including those from Africa, in North America and Britain for instance have experienced this phenomenon whereby children born and raised there grow up speaking English, the dominant language, only. Language loss is however not just being experienced by children growing up as immigrants abroad. In Kenya, and especially in the main urban areas like Nairobi and Mombasa, there are generations of children who have grown up speaking English and Kiswahili only, without their parents' native languages like Gikuyu, Dholuo and Kamba among the many others. This paper explores reactions by these young people who now feel robbed of their identity.