

Round table discussion – Swahili and Turkish  
October 16, 2009

1. Who sponsors education in the country you represent?

Turkish (T) – Government  
Turkey

Swahili (S) – Government  
East Africa and other African countries

United States (US) – Government

2. How are teachers perceived in your society? (Respect for teachers)

T – Teachers are respected and esteemed

S – Teachers are models and are highly respected

US – Teachers do not get much respect; very challenging positions especially in high schools and universities and in urban areas; very challenging to get support for language teachers

3. Is education equally available to all?

T – Yes

S – Yes, in elementary school; by secondary school, students are taught in all English curriculum, hence many students fail and only the elite can continue with higher education. This is especially in Tanzania.

US – Yes

4. Is academic success highly valued?

T – Yes, also depends on family expectations

S – Yes

US – Not as much – discussion followed on demise of culture and students' exaltation of sports stars, etc. Students think they can make more dollars selling drugs (one example given)

5. Number of male vs female educators

T – More female educators in lower grades; Male educators are more present in high schools and universities

S – Same as above

US – Same as above

6. Are teachers held in higher or lower regards

T – Higher

S – Higher

US – Lower

7. Beliefs about learning

A. Are students viewed as empty vessels to be filled with knowledge vs

B. Creative individuals to be helped to develop

T – Mainly A

S – Mainly A

US – Both A and B

8. Classroom is teacher fronted vs student centered

T – Teacher dominated but this has been changing in the last 5 years

S – Mainly teacher dominated

US – Depends on location, social and financial status

9. What topics or activities are taboo in your country?

T – Sex, although they have now added sex education classes in the past few years

S – Sex

US – No sex, no religion, no politics

(Both T and S/African countries can discuss religion)

Questions to address:

How can culture be integrated in the language classroom using the target language?

(Language and culture are closely intertwined; can not be separated)