

Multilingualism and Language Use Patterns: Students Attitude towards Kiswahili in Garissa Town, Kenya

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Abstract

This study investigated language attitudes of secondary school learners of Somali descent toward Kiswahili and their patterns of language use in various domains in a multilingual context as evidenced in Garissa Town. The target population was secondary school students in public and private schools within Garissa town, Garissa County, Kenya. Field data was collected through questionnaires. A total of 100 respondents were involved in this study. This sample was obtained through simple random sampling technique. This study obtained quantitative data from respondents' responses to guided questionnaires in order to determine their attitude towards Kiswahili. Data was analysed descriptively and by way of tables. The findings reveal that secondary school students within Garissa town have a positive attitude toward Kiswahili. Somali language is mainly spoken at home. English is mainly spoken at school while Kiswahili is used for intercultural and interethnic communication.

Keywords: *Patterns of Language Use, Language Attitudes, Multilingualism, Kiswahili*

1. Introduction

An attitude is a disposition to respond favourably or unfavourably to an object, person, institution or event Ajzen (1988:4). A favourable attitude to language learning is a vital input in language achievement. This implies that attitude is a predisposing factor affecting the outcomes of education. In post-independent Kenya, the teaching and learning of Kiswahili has been affected by recommendations of various commissions. For example, the Ominde Commission of 1965 promoted the use of Kiswahili as a compulsory subject in primary schools in Kenya. The Mackay Commission of 1984 saw Kiswahili become a compulsory and examinable subject in primary and secondary schools in Kenya. With the launching of the 8-4-4 system of education in 1985, Kiswahili became a compulsory and examinable subject at primary and secondary school level in Kenya. The Koech Commission of 1999 proposed that Kiswahili should be one of the five compulsory subjects to be examined at the end of primary education. Kiswahili was also to be one of the three core subjects to be examined at the end of secondary education.

Nevertheless, inconsistent Kiswahili language policies have continued to prevail in post-independent Kenya. These inconsistencies have accentuated and contributed to negative attitudes towards teaching and learning of Kiswahili in educational institutions (Momanyi, 2009:129). Learners' attitude toward Kiswahili directly affects their performance and achievement in the subject. Garissa County has continued to perform dismally in Kiswahili in national examinations over the years (refer to Garissa County Education Report, 2014). However, the cause of poor performance in Kiswahili in national examinations remains unknown. This study is an initial attempt to find a solution to the problem. An investigation of language attitudes alongside an analysis of language use patterns among secondary school learners will provide insights in understanding this problem and feasibly propose the solution.

This study is mainly concerned with language use in the education domain in a multilingual context. The educational domain plays a critical role in shaping attitudes and influencing the outcomes of language maintenance and language shift (Baker, 1992:36). Good academic performance in languages is crucial for admission to colleges and institutions of higher learning and also for job placement. It is impossible to gain admission and employment without good competence in languages, which are Kiswahili and English. This study therefore attempts to address the problem of perennial poor academic performance in languages in national examinations in Garissa County. It is our humble belief that finding a lasting solution will go a long way in providing an equal footing for learners of Somali descents to compete favourably with their colleagues for competitive opportunities.

2. Language Issues in North-Eastern Kenya

According to Ethnologue, there are a total of 69 languages spoken in Kenya. Most languages spoken in Kenya belong to two broad language families: Niger Congo (Bantu branch) and Nilo-Saharan (Nilotic branch); spoken by the country's Bantu and Nilotic populations respectively. The Cushitic and Arab ethnic minorities speak languages belonging to the separate Afro-Asiatic family with Hindustani and British residents speaking languages from Indo-European family.

Kenya's various ethnic groups typically speak their mother tongues within their own communities. The two official languages, English and Kiswahili are used in varying degrees of proficiency for communication with other populations. English is widely spoken in commerce, schooling and government. Peri-urban and rural dwellers are less multilingual, with many in rural areas speaking only their native languages. The Bantu Swahili language is widely spoken as lingua franca.

The above scenario is reflected in Garissa town. The indigenous inhabitants of Garissa town are the Somali. The ethnic Somalis speak Somali language. The Somali language is also spoken in Somali, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Yemen and Somali diaspora. It is also spoken as an adoptive language by a few ethnic minority groups and individuals in these areas. In Garissa town the Somalis speak Somali language at home and in business transactions amongst themselves; but when interacting with other communities, who are the minority, Kiswahili and English language are used. In Garissa town, English and Kiswahili are spoken in school.

The ethnic Somalis are to a large extent, but not completely, coterminous with people speaking Somali as their first language. The total number of Somali speakers is unknown but current estimates range from 10-15 million (Tosco, 2012). The Somali language belongs to the East Cushitic branch of Cushitic, itself a major branching of Afro-Asiatic. Within East Cushitic Somali is usually classified within the Omo-Tana sub-branch (Tosco, 2012). Within Omo-Tana, Somali is particularly close to Rendille language of Northern Kenya and Boni language of the Somali-Kenya border; the three Eastern Omo-Tana languages were grouped together by Heine (1978). The other Omo-Tana languages are Dhaasanac and Aborel language of Eastern shores of Lake Turkana in Northern Kenya, and Baiso an isolated and endangered central (or Northern) Omo-Tana language spoken in the area of Lake Abaya in Southern Ethiopia.

The first scientific categorisation of Somali dialects was carried out by Enrico Cerrulli in 1919 (Lamberti, 1986:25). He categorised Somali into four dialect groups using the names of clan families. The first group is composed of the Isaaq group which is found in North-Western Somali and includes Issa and Gadabursi. The second group is the Daarood group which is the largest dialect group and is found in Ogaden in Ethiopia, and in the Bari, Nugaal and Mudug regions of Ethiopia. The third group is the Hawiye group which is found along the Coast from Hobbio and approximately 150km South of Mogadishu, as well as Shebelle valley. The last group is the Sab group which is found in the Upper Juba region and lower Shebelle.

Other attempts to classify the Somali dialects were made by Moreno (1955), Andrzejewski (1971) and Saeed (1982). However, the most elaborate classification of Somali dialects was made by Lamberti in the 1980s and published in German in 1986. Lamberti divides Somali dialects into five groups. The first group is Northern Somali which Lamberti further divided into Proper Northern Somali, Daarood and Lower Juba. The second group is Benaadir Somali which is divided into Abgaal, Ajuraan, Gaaljacal, Xamari and Bimaal. Most Benaadir-speakers belong to the Hawiye clan family. The third group is Ashraaf which has two varieties: the one spoken in the old part of Mogadishu, Shingaani, and the other one of the lower Shebelle, spoken further South in the town of Merka. The fourth group is Maay and the last one is Digil which has four dialects namely Tunni, Dabarre, Garre and Jiiddu.

In Kenya, it is primarily the Daarood dialects of Af-Aulihan and Af-Harti that are the most widespread, while the Af-Degodiya, Af-Ajuraan and Af-Garre are also used North-Eastern parts of Kenya. Northern Somali is the main

dialect and is highly intelligible to speakers of Benaadir Somali, but is considerably less intelligible to speakers of Af-Ashraaf dialect (Huttner 2013; UCLALMP, 2013). Northern Somali is the most prestigious dialect, and is the basis of standard Somali. It is frequently used by the political elite and poets. Over the years the Somali lexicon has been influenced by several languages (Huttner, 2013¹). Approximately 20% of Somali terms come from Arabic, especially those related to religion, government and education.

3 Area of Study

Garissa County is one of the three counties in the North Eastern region of Kenya. It covers an area of 44,174.1 Km² and lies between latitude 1^o 58'N and 2 S and longitude 38^o 34'E and 41^o 32' E. The county borders the Republic of Somalia to the east, Lamu County to the south, Tana River County to the west, Isiolo County to the North West and Wajir County to the north. Garissa County has six sub-counties which include: Fafi, Garissa, Ijara, Lagdera, Balambala and Dadaab. These correspond to constituencies in the County. The county has a total population of 699,534 consisting of 375,985 male and 323,549 female as at 2012 (Garissa County Integrated Development Plan, 2013). In the county, there are 191,837 children who are within the primary school going age. Of this, 54.8 per cent are boys while 45.2 per cent are girls. The primary school enrolment is however low for both gender but worse for the girl child. There is a total of 168,456 children who are within the secondary school going age. The secondary school age population for girls is 72,282 since most girls do not proceed to secondary school in the county due to early marriages. The county, therefore, needs to set aside some resources for campaigns to sensitize the community on the importance of the girl child education.

Garissa town is the capital of Garissa County, Kenya. It is situated in the former North Eastern Province. Garissa is located at 0^o 27'25''S and 39^o 39'30''E. According to the 2009 census, Garissa Township has a total population of 116,953 (60, 469 male and 56,484 female) with a density of 173 persons per km² (ref Garissa County Integrated Development Report, 2013). Garissa town has 21 secondary schools with a total enrolment of 6,580 students with 4,774 boys and 1,806 girls. This represents four per cent of the secondary school age population. The teacher student ratio stands at 1:36. The secondary school net enrolment rate is 3.50 per cent and the completion rate is 77 per cent. Most of Garissa's inhabitants are Somalis. These are further sub-divided into clans, with the Ogaden sub-clan of the Somali Daarood especially well represented. There are also a small number of other minority ethnic groups commonly referred to as corner tribes. Garissa is the market centre and commercial hub of Garissa County. According to Interpol, the city is also one of the safer areas in the larger Eastern Greater lakes region.

Garissa town is a business hub for North Eastern Kenya. Major Banks in Garissa include: Gulf African Bank, The Postbank and First Community Bank. Other banks with branches in the town include Barclays Bank, Equity Bank, Kenya Commercial Bank of Kenya and Cooperative Bank of Kenya. As the capital of Garissa County, Garissa is the seat of the County Government of Garissa as well as the County Assembly. Garissa landscape is mostly arid, desert terrain. The City lies along the Tana River, and has a very high warm/hot climate due to low elevation and distance away from the cooler coastal areas. The day time temperature typically rises above 33^oC (91^oF), everyday but returns to a mild temperature at night. In Garissa town, there are several primary schools, both public and private. There are also secondary schools, tertiary colleges and one Public University.

4. Methodology

This study covered Garissa town in North Eastern Kenya. This area was selected because of its cosmopolitan nature. Garissa town attracts a large number of primary and secondary schools and also tertiary institutions. Purposive sampling was used to select 3 Girls secondary schools, 3 Boys secondary schools and 4 mixed schools. This implies that a total of 10 schools were selected out of the 21 schools within Garissa town. Random sampling aided the selection of 10 respondents from each of the schools in order to have a total of 100 respondents. This means that 50 male students and 50 female students were involved in the study. A total of 100 close ended questionnaires were administered to the respondents.

5. Discussion of Research Findings

This section presents a discussion of research findings. It is basically divided into two subsections. The first one presents findings on respondent's attitudes towards Kiswahili while the second one looks at their language use

¹ Refer to Erica Huttner's article on Somali language. This article is available online and can be accessed on www.the-linguafile.com/2013/10/language-profile-Somali.html

patterns.

5.1 Language Attitudes

In order to determine their attitude toward Kiswahili, respondents were presented with a questionnaire having 29 statements which were either positive or negative. However, they were not informed about the nature of the statements. For every statement they were supposed to indicate by ticking whether they agreed strongly, they simply agreed, they were not sure, they disagreed or they disagreed strongly. Out of the 29 statements, 18 were positive while 11 were negative.

Out of the 18 statements which were in favour of Kiswahili, 14 were accepted while 4 were rejected (refer to table 2). The 4 positive statements which were rejected required respondents to indicate whether students should speak Kiswahili at all time while in school; whether they would choose teaching Kiswahili as a career; whether students should be compelled to speak Kiswahili while at school and finally whether Kiswahili is an international language. Out of the 11 negative statements (against Kiswahili), 3 were accepted while 8 were rejected by respondents (refer to table 2). The three negative statements which were accepted required respondents to specify whether most students do not read Kiswahili newspapers and magazines; whether examination results discourage students from taking interest in Kiswahili and whether Kiswahili is demanding and requires speakers to be competent.

In order to determine the attitude of respondents towards Kiswahili, quantitative data was analysed by calculating percentages based on the Likert scale. For the response ‘strongly agree,’ the respondents were awarded 5 points; for ‘agree’ they were awarded 4 points; the response ‘not sure’ was awarded 3 points; ‘disagree’ was awarded 2 points while ‘strongly disagree’ was awarded 1 point for positive statements. The procedure was reversed for negative statements. Percentages for every response were then calculated as shown in the table 1 below:

Table 1

| STATEMENT | FREQUENCY | TOTAL | PERCENTAGE |
|------------------------|-----------|-------|------------|
| STRONGLY AGREE (SA) | 737 x 5 | 3685 | 36% |
| AGREE (A) | 1053 x 4 | 4212 | 42% |
| NOT SURE (NS) | 287 x 3 | 861 | 9% |
| DISAGREE (D) | 529 x 2 | 1058 | 10% |
| STRONGLY DISAGREE (SD) | 294 x 1 | 294 | 3% |
| TOTAL | | 10110 | 100 |

From table 1 above, research findings indicate that 78% of the respondents have a positive attitude towards Kiswahili. This can be worked out by summing the percentage of the respondents who strongly agreed (36%) with that of the respondents who agreed (42%). On the contrary, 13% of the respondents have a negative attitude towards Kiswahili. This can be calculated by adding the percentage of the respondents who strongly disagreed (3%) to that of the respondents who disagreed (10%). The respondents who have a neutral attitude towards Kiswahili are only 9%. The respondents’ attitudinal disposition to individual statements are summarised in table 2 as shown below:

Table 2

| STATEMENT | NATURE OF STATEMENT | ACCEPTED (SA/A) | NEUTRAL (NS) | REJECTED (D/SD) |
|---|---------------------|-----------------|--------------|-----------------|
| 1. Kiswahili language is easy to learn | Positive | 69% (N=69) | 0% (N=0) | 31% (N=31) |
| 2. Students should speak Kiswahili at all time while in school | Positive | 33% (N=33) | 6% (N=6) | 61% (N=61) |
| 3. I like reading short stories written in Kiswahili | Positive | 78% (N=78) | 11% (N=11) | 11% (N=11) |
| 4. Students understand concepts better when they are articulated in Kiswahili | Positive | 86% (N=86) | 8% (N=8) | 6% (N=6) |
| 5. Kiswahili is important for economic development of Kenya | Positive | 90% (N=90) | 8% (N=8) | 2% (N=2) |
| 6. Kiswahili lessons are interesting and exciting | Positive | 69% (N=69) | 14% (N=14) | 17% (N=17) |
| 7. Most students do not read Kiswahili magazines and newspapers | Negative | 47% (N=47) | 22% (N=22) | 15% (N=15) |
| 8. I find it difficult to speak fluent Kiswahili inspite of doing practice | Negative | 37% (N=37) | 14% (N=14) | 49% (N=49) |
| 9. I dislike Kiswahili because my fellow students laugh at me at the slightest mistakes committed | Negative | 23% (N=23) | 3% (N=3) | 74% (N=74) |
| 10. Kiswahili examination results discourage students from taking interest in Kiswahili | Negative | 44% (N=44) | 17% (N=17) | 39% (N=39) |
| 11. If I were to become a teacher, I would choose to teach Kiswahili | Positive | 31% (N=31) | 24% (N=24) | 19% (N=19) |
| 12. Students should be compelled to speak Kiswahili at all time | Positive | 37% (N=37) | 6% (N=6) | 57% (N=57) |
| 13. I don't feel inferior whenever I speak Kiswahili | Positive | 58% (N=58) | 10% (N=6) | 32% (N=32) |
| 14. I enjoy watching Kiswahili programs and films | Positive | 78% (N=78) | 7% (N=7) | 15% (N=15) |
| 15. Whenever I speak Kiswahili, I feel I am a very important person | Positive | 74% (N=74) | 8% (N=8) | 18% (N=18) |
| 16. I wish to be very eloquent in spoken Kiswahili | Positive | 85% (N=85) | 10% (N=10) | 5% (N=5) |
| 17. Kiswahili language is demanding and requires speakers to be competent | Negative | 75% (N=75) | 5% (N=5) | 20% (N=20) |
| 18. I don't like listening to Kiswahili music | Negative | 17% (N=17) | 6% (N=6) | 77% (N=77) |

| STATEMENT | NATURE OF STATEMENT | ACCEPTED (SA/A) | NEUTRAL (NS) | REJECTED (D/SD) |
|--|---------------------|-----------------|--------------|-----------------|
| 19. Kiswahili should not be used in offices or places of work | Negative | 7% (N=7) | 11% (N=11) | 82% (N=82) |
| 20. Kiswahili is not important and therefore should not be taught in schools | Negative | 6% (N=6) | 6% (N=6) | 88% (N=88) |
| 21. My parents and friends appreciate me more when I speak to them in Kiswahili | Positive | 54% (N=54) | 25% (N=25) | 21% (N=21) |
| 22. When I speak Kiswahili it is a sign that I am educated | Positive | 53% (N=53) | 5% (N=5) | 33% (N=33) |
| 23. Kiswahili should not be a compulsory subject in school | Negative | 27% (N=27) | 8% (N=8) | 65% (N=65) |
| 24. Apart from radio stations using only Kiswahili, stations that use vernacular languages should be started | Positive | 56% (N=56) | 12% (N=12) | 32% (N=32) |
| 25. Kiswahili is now an international language | Positive | 19% (N=19) | 4% (N=4) | 77% (N=77) |
| 26. If Kiswahili was to become an optional subject, I would not study it | Negative | 29% (N=29) | 13% (N=13) | 58% (N=58) |
| 27. Kiswahili should be used as an official language of the East African Community | Positive | 55% (N=55) | 11% (N=11) | 34% (N=34) |
| 28. My teacher of Kiswahili makes me to like Kiswahili language subject | Positive | 80% (N=80) | 8% (N=8) | 12% (N=12) |
| 29. I think anyone who has studied Kiswahili at University level is not well educated like the rest | Negative | 3% (N=3) | 5% (N=5) | 92% (N=92) |

5.1.1 Students Attitude to Individual Questionnaire Statements

An analysis of research findings on respondents' responses to individual questionnaire items reveal varied attitudinal dispositions to the statements asked. In the first place, respondents were asked whether Kiswahili is easy to learn. The rationale behind this statement was that Kiswahili and Somali, the respondents' first language, belong to different language groups and might therefore pose challenges to learners of Somali descent. Kiswahili is basically a Bantu language while Somali is Cushitic. However, 69 % (N=69) of the respondents affirmed that Kiswahili is actually easy to learn. On the contrary, 31% (N=31) of the respondents involved in the study rejected this statement. From these findings it is evident that majority of secondary school learners (69%, N=69) find it easy to learn Kiswahili. A positive attitude towards a language influences the learners' readiness to learn that language (Adegbiya, 1994). The Somali learners' positive attitude towards Kiswahili should be utilised by their teachers when teaching the language. This will go a long way in improving performance in Kiswahili at the national level.

Schools in Kenya have introduced language policies that are meant to promote the use of Kiswahili and English as a way of improving performance. In line with this, schools in Garissa town have policies that insist on the use of English and Kiswahili within the school at all times. However, some students deliberately flout this policy when speaking to their colleagues. Research findings reveal that 7% (N=7) of the respondents use Somali at all times when in school, 8% (N=8) use Kiswahili while 40% (N=40) use English at all times (refer to table 3). Respondents were asked whether students should speak Kiswahili at all time while in school. Their responses were as follows: 33% (N=33) accepted this statement while 61% (N=66) rejected it. This implies that while students have a positive attitude towards Kiswahili they still have a problem in using it within the school. Students should be encouraged and motivated and not compelled to use Kiswahili in school. Any policy for language, at the school level or in the system of education, has to take account of the attitude of those likely to be affected. In the long run no policy will succeed which does not do one of three things: conform to the expressed attitudes of those involved, persuade those who express negative attitudes about the rightness of the policy; or seek to remove the causes of disagreement (Lewis, 1981:262). It is important to note that knowledge about attitudes is fundamental to the formulation of a policy as well as success in its implementation.

Reading abilities vary widely among children, youth and adults. Appropriate training at school level can easily develop reading abilities of learners. The language teacher plays a major role in developing these skills (Palani, 2012:94). Teachers of language can determine their learners' attitude to reading in a particular language before embarking on a programme to motivate them and inculcate positive reading skills and habits in them. In the present study, respondents were asked whether they like reading Kiswahili short stories. Research findings reveal that 78% (N=78) of the respondents affirmed that they liked reading short stories written in Kiswahili while 11% (N=11) were of contrary opinion. A second statement related to reading sought to find out whether students do not read Kiswahili magazines and newspapers. 47% (N=47) of the respondents accepted this statement, 22% (N=22) were not sure while 31% (N=31) rejected it. From these findings we can deduce that students read books written in Kiswahili for academic purposes. Kiswahili literature syllabus for secondary schools in Kenya requires students to read set books covering the novel, play and short stories. Secondary school students are therefore compelled to read an anthology of Swahili short stories. Reading Kiswahili magazines and newspapers mainly for current affairs and leisure is still low in secondary schools.

Kiswahili plays an important role in East Africa as a tool for co-operation, trade and integration. Regional trade blocks have reinforced themselves for purposes of strengthening their competitiveness in the global market. Kiswahili is the language of trade across borders within the East African region where it fosters socio-economic relationships within the region. It is basically the language of the East African Community and has been proposed to be the language of African Union (Momanyi, 2009:129). Respondents were presented with two

statements on the role of Kiswahili regionally and internationally in order to determine their attitude towards its use in performing its function. With regard to the use of Kiswahili as the language of East African Co-operation, 55% (N=55) of the respondents accepted this statement, 11% (N=11) were not sure while 34% (N=34) rejected it. On the contrary, when asked whether Kiswahili has attained international status, 19% (N=19) of the respondents agreed with the statement, 4% (N=4) were not sure while 77% (N=77) rejected the statement. This implies that most of the respondents agree that Kiswahili is a regional language but it is yet to attain international status.

The objectives of secondary school Kiswahili curriculum in Kenya are to enhance what was learnt at primary school level; enable learners to achieve a lasting ability to listen, speak, read and write in Kiswahili; enable them to be creative, analytic and able to express themselves in Kiswahili (Kenya Institute of Education, 2002). In line with these objectives, this study sought to find out whether respondents found it difficult to speak fluent Kiswahili. Findings show that 37% of the respondents agree with the statement while 49% rejected it. When asked whether they are discouraged to speak Kiswahili because of the negative feedback they receive from fellow students when they make slight mistakes, 23% affirmed the statement while 74% rejected it. This means that majority of the students would like to learn Kiswahili by speaking it and they are not discouraged by negative feedback. 54% of the respondents agreed that their parents and colleagues appreciated them when they spoke Kiswahili while 21% were of contrary opinion.

Table 3

| STATEMENT | SA | A | NS | D | SD | Remark |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----------|
| 1. Kiswahili language is easy to learn | 37% | 32% | 0% | 25% | 6% | Accepted |
| 2. Students should speak Kiswahili at all time while in school | 5% | 28% | 6% | 42% | 19% | Rejected |
| 3. I like reading short stories written in Kiswahili | 9% | 69% | 11% | 5% | 6% | Accepted |
| 4. Students understand concepts better when they are articulated in Kiswahili | 23% | 63% | 8% | 5% | 1% | Accepted |
| 5. Kiswahili is important for economic development of Kenya | 33% | 57% | 8% | 2% | 0% | Accepted |
| 6. Kiswahili lessons are interesting and exciting | 10% | 59% | 14% | 17% | 0% | Accepted |
| 7. Most students do not read Kiswahili magazines and newspapers | 12% | 35% | 22% | 15% | 16% | Rejected |
| 8. I find it difficult to speak fluent Kiswahili in spite of doing practice | 3% | 34% | 14% | 29% | 20% | Accepted |
| 9. I dislike Kiswahili because my fellow students laugh at me at the slightest mistakes committed | 3% | 20% | 3% | 42% | 32% | Rejected |
| 10. Kiswahili examination results discourage students from taking interest in Kiswahili | 19% | 25% | 17% | 14% | 25% | Accepted |
| 11. If I were to become a teacher, I would choose to teach Kiswahili | 7% | 24% | 24% | 19% | 26% | Rejected |
| 12. Students should be compelled to speak Kiswahili at all time | 2% | 35% | 6% | 36% | 21% | Rejected |
| 13. I don't feel inferior whenever I speak Kiswahili | 13% | 45% | 10% | 23% | 9% | Accepted |
| 14. I enjoy watching Kiswahili programs and films | 17% | 61% | 7% | 13% | 2% | Accepted |
| 15. Whenever I speak Kiswahili, I feel I am a very important person | 14% | 60% | 8% | 12% | 6% | Accepted |
| 16. I wish to be very eloquent in spoken Kiswahili | 35% | 50% | 10% | 5% | 0% | Accepted |
| 17. Kiswahili language is demanding and requires speakers to be competent | 28% | 47% | 5% | 8% | 12% | Accepted |
| 18. I don't like listening to Kiswahili music | 5% | 12% | 6% | 33% | 44% | Rejected |
| 19. Kiswahili should not be used in offices or places of work | 2% | 5% | 11% | 19% | 63% | Rejected |
| 20. Kiswahili is not important and therefore should not be taught in schools | 1% | 5% | 6% | 21% | 67% | Rejected |
| 21. My parents and friends appreciate me more when I speak to them in Kiswahili | 16% | 38% | 25% | 14% | 7% | Accepted |
| 22. When I speak Kiswahili it is a sign that I | 27% | 36% | 5% | 22% | 10% | Accepted |

| STATEMENT | SA | A | NS | D | SD | Remark |
|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----------|
| am educated | | | | | | |
| 23. Kiswahili should not be a compulsory subject in school | 5% | 22% | 8% | 21% | 44% | Rejected |
| 24. Apart from radio stations using only Kiswahili, stations that use vernacular languages should be started | 5% | 51% | 12% | 12% | 20% | Accepted |
| 25. Kiswahili is now an international language | 12% | 7% | 4% | 19% | 58% | Rejected |
| 26. If Kiswahili was to become an optional subject, I would not study it | 10% | 19% | 13% | 29% | 29% | Rejected |
| 27. Kiswahili should be used as an official language of the East African Community | 17% | 38% | 11% | 25% | 9% | Accepted |
| 28. My teacher of Kiswahili makes me to like Kiswahili language subject | 38% | 42% | 8% | 8% | 4% | Accepted |
| 29. I think anyone who has studied Kiswahili at University level is not well educated like the rest | 2% | 1% | 5% | 27% | 65% | Rejected |

5.2 Patterns of Language Use

This section discusses language use patterns of secondary school students of Somali descent within Garissa town. The term ‘language use pattern’ is used to describe a phenomenon in which members of a community use different languages or speech varieties in different social situations referred to as domains (Duan, 2004:12).

The proponent of the concept of domains is Joshua Fishman. Fishman proposed this concept as a way of looking at language choice (Fasold, 1984:183). Fishman (1967) defines domains as institutional contexts in which one language variety is more likely to be appropriate than another. Examples of different types of domains include school, family, friendship, neighbourhood, market, work, government and religion.

Domain analysis was the main method used to collect and analyse data with regard to language use patterns in this study. Language use pattern in two domains, that is the school and home domain are examined in this section. Multilingualism is a common phenomenon among secondary school students of Somali descent in Garissa Town. Most of them speak three or four languages namely: Somali, Arabic, English and Kiswahili (refer to table 5 and table 6). They therefore use different languages in different domains as discussed in subsequent subsections.

5.2.1 Language Use Pattern in Family/Home and School Domain

An analysis of language use pattern at the home and family domain demonstrates strong Somali language maintenance and language vitality (refer to table 4 and table 6). Research findings in table 4 reveal that 100% (N=100) of the respondents use Somali language to communicate with their parents at home. There is a slight drop in the number of respondents who use Somali language to communicate with their siblings at home, that is, 95% (N=95). All respondents involved in the study affirmed that they used Somali language to communicate with their friends at home. However, due to the language policy at school that restricts the use of Somali language within the school, only 25% (N=25) of the respondents use the language to communicate with their colleagues. When asked how frequent they use Somali language at school, only 7% (N=7) of the respondents acknowledged speaking the language daily while in school. Conversely, 100% (N=100) of the respondents agreed that they speak Somali on daily basis while at home (refer to table 5).

Table 4

| Which language do you use to communicate with the following: | Somali | English | Kiswahili | Other |
|--|--------|---------|-----------|-------|
| Parents | 100% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| Bothers/sisters | 95% | 5% | 0% | 0% |
| Friends at school | 25% | 57% | 18% | 0% |
| Friends at home | 100% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| Teachers at school | 0% | 77% | 23% | 0% |
| Visitors at home | 77% | 5% | 18% | 0% |
| Strangers seeking assistance | 5% | 15% | 80% | 0% |

Kiswahili is evidently the language of interethnic communication. Findings reveal that 80% (N=80) of the respondents use Kiswahili to communicate with members of other ethnic groups possibly seeking assistance. Only 23% (N=23) of the respondents use Kiswahili to communicate with their teachers. The most probable

explanation for this trend is the language policy at the school level which emphasizes the use of English as opposed to Kiswahili for all formal and informal communication. This is evident from research findings summarized in table 5 which indicate that 40% (N=40) of the respondents speak English daily while in school compared to 8% (N=8) who speak Kiswahili. Though Somali students have a positive attitude towards Kiswahili, the school policy on language use limits its use within the school.

Table 5

| How often do you speak the following languages when at school: | Daily | Specifically | Occasionally | Not at All |
|--|-------|--------------|--------------|------------|
| Somali | 7% | 15% | 51% | 27% |
| Kiswahili | 8% | 35% | 57% | 0% |
| English | 40% | 35% | 25% | 0% |
| Arabic | 5% | 20% | 53% | 22% |

Secondary school students of Somali descent have contact with Arabic at two levels; at school and in religious schools. Most schools offer Arabic as an examinable subject though on optional basis. However, for those students who attend religious schools, Arabic is offered on compulsory basis. Arabic is mainly used as the language of religion. This is evident from research findings which show that 78% (N=78) of the respondents communicate in Arabic at home mainly when attending religious teachings and functions.

Choices people make in regard to language use reflect trends toward either language maintenance or language shift (Boehm, 1997:64). Research findings reveal that secondary school students of Somali descent choose to use Somali language to communicate with their family members and friends at all times when they are at home. While in school, they have the option of using either English or Kiswahili depending on the school policy. However, some of them contravene this rule and use Somali language within the school. Conclusively, it is evident that speakers of Somali language at secondary school level maintain their language at all costs. This is in line with the observation of Fase et al (1992) who assert that it has been commonly found that when the mother tongue of a minority language remains dominant in communication within the ethnic group, it can be said that the mother tongue is being maintained.

Table 6

| How often do you speak the following languages while at home: | Daily | Specifically | Occasionally | Not at All |
|---|-------|--------------|--------------|------------|
| Somali | 100% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| Kiswahili | 5% | 34% | 60% | 1% |
| English | 5% | 33% | 57% | 5% |
| Arabic | 3% | 15% | 50% | 32% |

6. Conclusion

It is evident from the foregoing that Somali language plays a key role in informal and interpersonal day to day interactions of secondary school students of Somali origin in Garissa town. Kiswahili plays a nationalistic function in the lives of Somali students; it is basically used for interacting with people from different ethnic communities. This implies that Kiswahili is the language of intercultural or interethnic communication in Garissa town. Research findings reveal that intercultural or interethnic communication in markets, social gatherings and even in residential areas is enhanced through the use of Kiswahili for day to day interactions. Kiswahili is therefore a link language or a lingua franca in Garissa town. Kiswahili is the language of wider communication in this multilingual context. However, English tends to compete with Kiswahili in playing these roles though to a limited extent. Negative attitude towards Kiswahili is not to be blamed for poor performance in Kiswahili in national examination in Garissa town. Further research in areas of methodology, teaching resources and manpower requirements needs to be carried out in order to determine the exact cause of the problem.

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