

## Multilingualism and Language Attitudes: Students Perceptions towards Kiswahili in Mtwara Region of Tanzania

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### Abstract

The role of language attitudes on language choice, development and policy in multilingual societies cannot be over emphasized (Adegbija, 1994; Batibo, 2005). Monolingual speakers have only one attitude towards their language because they have no other languages to compare it with. However, where speakers are bilingual or multilingual; there is a tendency to develop different attitudes to each of the languages used. These attitudes, whether positive or negative, will normally depend on the degree of symbolic or socio-economic value manifested by each language. Tanzania, a multilingual country with over 128 languages and with a bilingual language policy in education is therefore a fertile ground for studies on language attitudes. In recent years, there have been concerted efforts by various stake holders to propagate growth and development of English in Tanzania. English has been lauded as the essential language which links Tanzania to the rest of the world through technology, commerce and administration. Against this backdrop, this study sought to investigate students' attitudes towards Kiswahili so as to determine whether the shift to English had impacted students' attitude formation towards Kiswahili. This survey comprised of 340 students sampled from six selected schools of Mtwara Urban and Mtwara Rural districts. Results show that most Tanzanian students have favourable attitudes towards Kiswahili and the language's status among secondary school students has not diminished. Kiswahili remains the most preferred language of use in all major domains. This study proposes that the place and role of Kiswahili be further enhanced in the country by exploring its possible use as a medium of instruction at secondary school level. Further, the study proposes that local vernaculars, which face extinction due to language shift that has taken place, need drastic measures in order to preserve them.

**Keywords:** Multilingualism, Bilingual education, language attitudes, Kiswahili

### 1.0 Introduction: Tanzania's Linguistic Situation

Tanzania is a multilingual society. The precise number of languages spoken in the country is however, a subject which has not been conclusively agreed upon by language scholars. Polome and Hill (1980) acknowledged this fact by saying that "listing the languages of Tanzania is rather a difficult task." Angela Malnos (1969) cited in Polomé and Hill (1980) lists 102 Bantu languages and 15 non-Bantu languages, whereas other scholars have estimated that more than 120 local languages are spoken in the country (Legere, 1992; Roy-Campbell & Qorro, 1997). According to *Ethnologue*<sup>1</sup>, the number of individual languages listed for Tanzania is 129. However, Rugemalira and Muzale (2008) list 156 languages; while the Languages of Tanzania- LoT Project (2009), which is the most recent survey of the linguistic situation of Tanzania, estimates that the number stands at 164.

A number of reasons have been proposed for the current varying accounts on the prevailing linguistic situation in Tanzania. First, many of the languages of Tanzania are part of a dialect continuum (Polome and Hill, 1980; Legere, 2007). Partly, the LoT project was initiated to investigate this aspect. Secondly, drawing a distinction between a dialect and a language is not as straight forward bearing in mind that most these languages are quite similar (Petzell 2012). The third reason is that glossonyms used do not always correspond to the autonyms or the names used by the group of speakers themselves (Rugemalira and Muzale, 2008). The fourth reason that accounts for this variation is the fact that majority of the small languages are fragments of larger communities across the borders.

Typically, the languages spoken in the country are classified into local languages, which are variously grouped into Bantu and non-Bantu languages- Nilotic, Cushitic and Khoisan. Foreign languages spoken in the country include English, French, Arabic and Portuguese which are taught in a minority of schools. According to Rugemalira and Muzale (2008), of the 156 languages, the top 10 languages have a combined representation of 46% of the total populace speaking them. On the other hand, the bottom 50 languages are spoken by a mere 1%

<sup>1</sup> Ethnologue is a web-based catalogue of the languages of the world.

of the population. This state of affairs definitely paints a very serious scenario of language endangerment being faced by minority languages in the country.

The most striking feature, however, of the language situation in Tanzania is the widespread use of Kiswahili language. Kiswahili, a coastal Bantu language is understood and spoken by an estimated 95% of the population (Batibo, 1995) cited in Senkoro (2005). Kiswahili is the national and official language. It is the symbol of national unity and has aptly been described by Mazrui & Mazrui, (1995) as the expression of citizens "being Tanzanian." Kiswahili language is spoken in all major social and official domains such as courts, parliament, banks, places of worship, electronic and print media transport. All political speeches are made in Kiswahili. It is the lingua franca per se (Senkoro, 2005).

Local languages are used within the context of particular speech communities. They identify specific local cultures, ethnic groups, identity and location. These local languages are spoken only at home and are highly threatened by Kiswahili (Senkoro *ibid*). The local languages therefore have a narrow domain within which they are used, mostly within the context of family members. Their use is discouraged in public as it is perceived to be an affront to national unity (Petzell, 2012).

English, the second official language of the nation was introduced by colonial masters, the British. The British rulers promoted the language as a medium of instruction in schools and as a language that was to help in administration, just like they did in their colonies across Africa. Two decades ago, only 5% of the Tanzanian population was able to speak English as the second or third language (Schiemed, 1989) cited in Senkoro (2005). This situation doesn't seem to have changed two decades later, going by the very low numbers of people who voluntarily speak English as a medium of communication. Commenting on the state of English language in Tanzania, Malekela (2006) says it would be considered arrogance of the highest order if Tanzanians were to visit a home of other Tanzanians who speak English rather than Kiswahili or the vernacular to their children. Likewise, Tanzanians who have been abroad with their families would only temporarily use English or any other foreign language before their children pick up Kiswahili or a vernacular language.

Today, English is the language for international relations and diplomacy, foreign trade and the highly educated, a comparatively small group of the elite of the nation. It has been argued that English is equated with good quality education while Kiswahili is said to be the language of 'Education for Self-Reliance (ESR)', 'Ujamaa', politics, adult literacy, poor quality education and poverty (Neke, 2003). The language situation in Tanzania can thus be summarized as existing in a triglossic relationship; where Kiswahili and English play the high and medium roles while the local languages are at the lower end (Bamgbose, 1991).

## **2.0 Language Policy for Education in Tanzania**

Tanzania is one of the few African nations that have tried to promote one of its local languages as a medium of instruction. Faced with the choice to make between a local and undeveloped vernacular and the more developed language of their colonial masters, English, the Tanzanian leaders adopted a bilingual policy that has taken steps to implement a local vernacular as a medium of instruction in public schools. Though this is a commendable step that was aimed at developing a local language, Kiswahili, the language policy in education in Tanzania as a whole can however be described in the words of Brock-Utne and Holmarsdottir (2003), as confusing, contradictory and ambiguous.

Unlike many African countries, Tanzania opted quite early to intensify and extend the use of an indigenous language as a *lingua franca* in the social and political realms. The country's 1962 constitution, which has since been amended more than 13 times, only mentions Kiswahili and English as the official languages.

The official language in education policy is spelt out by the *Education and Training Policy*. The policy recognizes Kiswahili as the medium of instruction in all public pre-primary and primary schools. Accordingly, English is taught as a compulsory subject at these levels of education. English is introduced as a subject in the third year of primary school. It is expected that at the end of the seven year cycle of primary education (which in actual sense gives a pupil only four years to have grasped the language), pupils would have attained sufficient oral and written proficiency to handle the rigours of English as the medium instruction in secondary and post-secondary education. With the exception of teaching other approved languages, English is identified as the medium of instruction at secondary, advanced and tertiary levels of education. Kiswahili is a compulsory subject up to ordinary level, though it is taught as a subject up to university level (Ministry of Education and Culture, 1995).

This notwithstanding, in another policy document, Policy on Culture (*Sera ya Utamaduni*), the Government through the Ministry of Education and Culture sought to clarify its position on the place and role of different languages in the formal education system (United Republic of Tanzania, 1997). Section 3.4.1 of the government document speaks about the design and implementation of a special program to ensure the use of Kiswahili as a medium of instruction in education and training at all levels. The policy provides for teaching of English as a compulsory subject at pre-primary, primary and secondary levels and that it is to be encouraged in higher education. It also stresses the need to strengthen the teaching of English. We find this to be contradictory and

discordant to the initial position spelt out by the Ministry in 1995, which clearly spells out the languages of instruction at the three levels of education in the country.

Adding to the foregoing contradicting positions, Sa Eleuthere (2007:6) cites the Tanzania national website's more categorical stand point on the issue of language policy in education thus;

The main feature of Tanzania's education system is the bilingual policy, which requires children to learn both Kiswahili and English. English is essential, as it is the language which links Tanzania and the rest of the world through technology, commerce and also administration. The learning of Kiswahili enables Tanzania's students to keep in touch with their cultural values and heritage. English is taught as compulsory subject in the primary education whereas at post primary education is the medium of instruction. With regard to Kiswahili, it is the medium of instruction at primary education while at tertiary education it is taught as compulsory subject at secondary education and as option at tertiary education.

In practice, however, English has virtually ceased to be a viable medium of instruction in the education system as a whole (Criper & Dodd, 1984). Kiswahili is the *de facto* medium of instruction and language of communication at all levels of education. More often than not, post primary school students and teachers switch to the more familiar language: Kiswahili, for clarifications and free lively discussions (Roy-Campbell *et al.*, 1997). On the other hand, parents of school going children, majority of who themselves are least schooled in English view acquisition of English by their children as a gateway from the grind of agricultural life and into the wider world where English, seen as the language of science and technology is the only assured highway (Maw, 1989) cited in Neke (2003). Similar statements from politicians and other government functionaries continue to perpetuate and reinforce this view of English making it a universal characteristic of the language but its implementation seems to have been left only to what are now called *English medium schools* and international academies that are situated in major urban cities.

In spite of the government's policy on culture of 1997, which sought to clarify the government's position on the place of different languages in the formal education system, the place of local vernaculars in education is totally neglected, if not forbidden altogether. As a result, the vernacular languages are severely threatened by Kiswahili. They are only spoken in the home domain for intimate conversations (Brenzinger, 2007). In public places, the ethnic community languages are not heard at all; their use is prohibited, albeit informally, in all educational spheres. Although vernacular languages are not specifically forbidden, they are censured by teachers in favour of Kiswahili. This is in contravention of the cultural policy document which states that the local languages should be seen as an asset to the country and as an important part of Tanzanian heritage (United Republic of Tanzania, 1997). However, as mentioned earlier, this policy is largely ineffective as it has not been implemented ever since it was penned down. Moreover, there is absolutely no encouragement nor incentives from the government to promote the local vernacular languages, save Kiswahili. The promotion of indigenous is seen as an affront to national unity (Petzell, 2012).

### **3.0 Theoretical Framework**

The notion of attitudes in language learning rests on a long research tradition, which is matched by an equally broad range of contexts (Bartram 2010). For instance, different studies have focused on the role of attitudes in first language, second language, (modern) foreign language and bi-lingual teaching and learning contexts. The current study concerns itself with attitudes in a bilingual learning context, since English and Kiswahili are the only two languages used in the educational context in Tanzania.

Discussing language attitudes in general, Baker (1992) cited in Bartram (2010) explains their research appeal as lying partly in the accessibility of the concept itself. As an everyday, familiar notion, it allows bridges to be made between research and practice. Baker goes on to acknowledge the value of attitudes in providing an important social research route to access indications of current community thoughts and beliefs, preferences and desires. Interest in attitude research can also be explained by the wide acknowledgement of the relationship between attitudes and successful learning (Gardner, 1985) In spite of the generally acknowledged importance of attitudes, there is much disagreement on their precise nature, their constituent components, classification and their status as a 'free- standing' concept in the field of language learning (Bartram, 2010).

Attitudes have been defined from different angles according to different theories, which has resulted in semantic disagreements and differences about the generality and specificity of the term (McKenzie, 2010). In Allport's (1954) classic definition, he describes an *attitude* as:

A mental and neural state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual's response towards all subjects and situations with which it is related." (Cited in Bartram, 2010:33)

But according to Bohner and Wanke (2002), an attitude is a summary evaluation of an object or thought. In terms of this definition, an attitude is a hypothetical construct, which is to say, it is not directly observable but

can be inferred from observable responses (Eagly and Chaiken, 1993). Moreover, attitudes are considered to be sufficiently stable to allow for identification and for measurement (McKenzie, 2010). In social psychology, the entities which are evaluated are known as attitudinal objects and encompass attitudes towards objects, individuals, institutions, events and abstract ideas. Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) define *attitude* as a learned predisposition to respond in a consistently favourable or unfavourable manner with respect to a given object. Similarly, Ajzen (1988) defines attitude as a disposition to respond to favourably or unfavourably to an object, person, institution or event.

In the case of language attitude, which is our concern here, the 'object' towards which such predispositions are held is language. According to Fishbein and Ajzen's (op cit.) definition, an attitude is 'learned' through a socialization process which begins in early childhood and, as Allport's (1954) highlights, is 'organised through experience' within the social world. Attitudes are not fixed but are instead constantly fluctuating and shifting according to their social environment.

Generally, attitude research has been conducted according to two psychological approaches: the behaviourist view and the mentalist (or cognitive) view. Both theories consider that individuals are not born with attitudes but that they are learned, particularly over the course of socialisation during childhood and adolescence, although, in recent years, some researchers have propagated the notion that some attitudes may be inherited (Bohner and Wanke, 2002). Behaviourism is a scientific theory which argues that all human activity may be reduced to behavioural units.

The behaviourist view of attitudes argues that they can be inferred from the responses that an individual makes to social situations. Research conducted from this approach is somewhat more straight forward than research conducted from a mentalist approach as no self-reporting from respondents is required (McKenzie, 2010).

However, the behaviourist approach to attitudes can be criticized for its view of attitude as the only dependent variable and therefore, the sole determinant of the behaviour of an individual (i.e., that there is a perfect correlation between attitude and behaviour). Other factors such as age, gender, provenance, group membership or language background of the individual may additionally influence behaviour (McKenzie, *ibid*). In addition, observation of external behaviour can easily result in mis-categorisation or wrongful explanation and as such, cannot be viewed as a reliable predictor of attitude (Baker, 1992).

The connection between attitude to language learning and performance may not be, as Bartram (2010) puts it, un-contentious as it at first sight appears, since attitude does not necessarily translate into observable behaviour or performance. Gardner (1985) has alluded to this by acknowledging that attitudes are related to behaviour, though not necessarily directly. With respect to language, attitudes can be favourable or unfavourable.

People's attitudes towards a language are often the reflection of how they perceive those people who speak that particular language (Zungu & Pillay, 2010). If attitudes are positive, it is argued, pupils might be more motivated to learn a language. With regard to the aforesaid, Edwards (1985) posits that positive attitudes are likely to facilitate second language learning. Conversely, if people have negative attitudes towards a group of people, they are unlikely to acquire their language. Zungu & Pillay (2010:111) illustrate this by saying;

“[...] in the Soweto uprising of 1976, (the African) learners rejected the use of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction at schools. The learners regarded Afrikaans as the language of the oppressor, as the Afrikaners who were in power at that time, oppressed the African people.”

Generally, it has been shown that institutional support for a language and its use in institutional domains such as the media, education and public services, for example, affect the social, economic and linguistic status of a language (O'Rourke, 2011). O'Rourke further says that if the language is used in public services or in education, knowledge of the language may be required to gain upward social and occupational mobility or social advancement to enter and manipulate these formal domains. This is the case in most African countries, which still regard the languages of their former colonizers as more prestigious when compared to their own African languages. As a result, access to prestigious jobs is also determined by knowledge of a particular language.

Moreover, the language of the economically dominant group is usually the language of institutional dominance, the language that receives official support and that is necessary for entry into higher education or government (Bourdieu 1982). A language that is perceived as having institutional support also has a certain amount of power attached to it and therefore becomes associated with social advancement and upward mobility. It may also prompt parents to want their children to learn it and its utility will be recognized for gaining access to certain parts of the labour market making it, what Bourdieu (1991) terms a form of 'linguistic capital'.

### 3.1 The area of study

This survey was conducted within two districts of Mtwara Urban and Mtwara Rural districts, found in Mtwara region. Mtwara region is located at the South Eastern tip of Tanzania. It lies between longitudes 38° and 40° 30" east of Greenwich, and situated between the latitudes 10° 05" and 11° 25" south of the Equator. The area is inhabited majorly by the Makonde ethnic group of Tanzania (The Makonde live on both sides of the river

Ruvuma, which is the border between Tanzania and Mozambique). According to *Ethnologue* (Lewis, et al 2013), about a half a million Makonde people are found in Northern Mozambique.

The region is divided into the following administrative units namely; Newala, Tandahimba, Masasi, Mtwara rural and Mtwara urban districts. Mtwara rural, Mtwara urban, Tandahimba and Newala districts are predominantly inhabited by the Makonde people while Masasi district is partly inhabited by the Makua speaking people together with Makonde. The Makonde of Tanzania are divided into three main groups: the Nnima people who live in the north-west of the plateau, the Ndonge people who live on the south-west of the plateau, and the Maraba people who live near the Ruvuma and along the coast as well as on the eastern part of the plateau (Kraal, 2005).

The Maraba are part of the Swahili coastal culture, which next to their Makonde origin determines their cultural and historical identity, reflected in their religion (Islam), their fishing practices, the way they dress and their language, which is strongly influenced by Swahili. There is another group that claims to be part of the Makonde people: the Matambwe (*ibid*). They live near the Ruvuma next to the Ndonge with whom they intermarry. Most educational institutions schools, admit students from the catchment. Most of the secondary schools in the region are commonly referred to as *shule za kata*<sup>1</sup>. Many of them are therefore day schools. Only few boarding schools are within Mtwara Urban district. For the purpose of this study, six schools were involved. Three schools were sampled from Mtwara urban district while the remaining three were sampled from Mtwara rural district.

### 3.2 Methodology

Traditionally, sociolinguistic studies on language attitudes have often used indirect methods like the matched guise technique. This study has however, used the Likert questionnaire to enquire the students language attitudes. The use of questionnaires as tools for eliciting sociolinguistic information on language attitudes has previously been associated with few undeniable demerits. Baker (1992) describes what he refers to as the “halo effect” where by the respondents may describe their linguistic behaviour in a way that makes them appear more decent and socially respectable than they actually are; or in a way that makes them appear as they think the researcher would like them to be.

There is however, a sound justification for the choice of this method in the current study. First, matched guise techniques are more often than not, used to elicit attitudes on language varieties. This study was not about varieties of Kiswahili, but rather attitudes towards Kiswahili language. Secondly, questionnaires allow the researcher to gather a considerable amount of information concerning a wide range of individuals, which, can be compared with results of research carried under similar conditions. Moreover, a careful analysis of data is likely to provide many useful insights into the respondents’ attitudes as well as into the relationships among various sociolinguistic groups and the languages spoken within a given speech community (Guerini, 2007).

For the purpose of this survey, data was collected by use of anonymous questionnaires that were administered by the researchers, assisted by two field assistants. Data was collected from six secondary schools, purposively<sup>2</sup> selected. Three schools were selected from Mtwara Urban districts while the other three were selected from Mtwara Rural district. This exercise was carried out in the month of October, 2012. The study involved students from form 1 to form 4. Kiswahili is a compulsory subject in Tanzania for students from form 1 to form 4. For students in form 5 and form 6, Kiswahili is an elective subject. The exemption of form 5 and 6 students from the study was meant to safeguard against perceptions that would be a result of its optional status. 340 students satisfactorily filled the questionnaires which were administered. The questionnaires were originally prepared in Kiswahili<sup>3</sup> language.

The questionnaire had 29 statement items. The first section had items that were designed to gather bio-data of the respondents, the respondent’s class level and the school typology in terms of whether it was boarding or day school. This dichotomy was important because, normally, the two may have different intra-school language policies which might shape the learners attitudes towards languages used. The second section of the questionnaire comprised of subtly formulated statements that were meant to elicit the respondent’s attitudes towards Kiswahili language.

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<sup>1</sup> Shule za kata whose literal translation is “ward schools” are a new government initiative that is aimed at providing easily accessible education in the villages in rural Tanzania. These schools are however, ill equipped in terms of teacher staffing and other important instructional materials and facilities. Most candidates who did Ordinary-level examinations in these schools in 2012 scored division Zero.

<sup>2</sup> This research was undertaken during the Form 4 national examination period. As a result it was not possible to involve a number of schools that had earlier been earmarked. Therefore, other schools where the candidates had completed their examinations but had not been released were selected.

<sup>3</sup> For the purpose of this paper, the questionnaire has been translated from Kiswahili to English. The respondents’ choices have been rendered in English too. We wish to note however, that, the process of translation has not in any way whatsoever, affected the results that were presented in the Kiswahili version of the questionnaire.

Many statements overlapped in content but differed in wording. This was done in order to determine which wording was best to capture the underlying attitudes of students. The items were placed in random order. Next to the items was a grid consisting of five columns having the responses: ‘strongly disagree’, ‘disagree’, ‘uncertain’, ‘agree’, ‘strongly agree’. Respondents were asked to tick the appropriate box to indicate to what degree they agreed or disagreed with each item. The respondents were asked to rate the statements on a five-item scale. The questionnaires were administered in classroom condition. Students filled the questionnaires in the presence of the field workers. This was done so as to provide an opportunity for clarification to those respondents who faced any difficulty while filling the questionnaires. It was also done in order to reduce incidences of damage to questionnaires. Apart from that, the presence of field workers made the respondents to take the exercise seriously. This was manifested by the fact that all statement items in most questionnaires were filled save for a few questionnaires. Confidentiality was assured since the questionnaire was anonymous. The software program adopted for managing the data and conducting statistical analysis was IBM SPSS statistics v21.

### 3.3 Analysis

Data analysis adopted a quantitative descriptive framework. The questionnaire responses were coded, viz:

- 1- Strongly disagree
- 2- Disagree
- 3- Uncertain
- 4- Agree
- 5- Strongly agree

Frequency counts and their corresponding percentages were run by use of IBM SPSS data processor to determine the emergence of patterns and to note the similarities and differences. In order to determine respondents choices per item, the two positive categories; ‘strongly agree’ and ‘agree’ were aggregated and their total frequencies per each item used. The same was applied to get the negative choices, for ‘strongly disagree’ and ‘disagree.’ For statements that were in the negative, the order was reversed. The average percentage and frequency was used to determine the students’ attitudes towards Kiswahili. A percentage score of 60 and above was to imply the prevalence of positive attitudes.

### 4.0 Results and discussion

Reported below are the findings resulting from the analysis of the survey questionnaires. In the presentation of figures, percentages are compared against the total number of respondents. The participants in this study were 340 secondary school students, sampled from two districts of Mtwara region. A summary of the sample characteristics is as follows.

Of the total number of participants, 39.7% (n=135) were male and 60.3% (n=205) were female. Of the school typologies involved, majority of the respondents i.e. 69.7% (n=237) were boarders and 30.3% (n=103) were day scholars. In terms of class level representation, Form 1 accounted for 28.5% (n=97), Form 2 was 27.1% (n=92), the Form 3 had 27.1% (n=92) while Form 4 was 17.3% (n=59). This is captured in table 1 below.

Table 1: Sample characteristics

Gender	f	%	B.Sch (f)	%	D.Sch (f)	%	Class	f	%
Male	135	39.7	75	31.6	60	58.3	Form 1	97	28.5
Female	205	60.3	162	68.4	43	41.7	Form 2	92	27.1
							Form 3	92	27.1
							Form 4	59	17.3
Total	340	100	237	100	103	100		340	100

B.Sch = Boarding School

D.Sch = Day School

#### 4.1 Students’ language attitudes

The results show that students in secondary schools in Mtwara region have positive attitudes towards Kiswahili. Although their item analysis scores ranged considerably, the vast majority of students hold fairly favourable attitudes towards Kiswahili language. Table 2, presents the attitudes of students towards Kiswahili (favourable, neutral and unfavourable) and the percentages they represent in each case.

Table 2: Students attitudes towards Kiswahili, average percentages

Category	f	Percentage
Favourable	238	69.73
Neutral	40	11.68
Unfavourable	62	18.59
Total	340	100

There was no significant difference in attitudes between male and female students (appendix 1). Male students had a mean of 2.34 and a standard deviation of 1.080 where N= 135, whereas female students mean was 2.33 and standard deviation of 1.064 where N= 205. The lack of significant correlations for gender and type of school may be related to the consistent and positive attitudes reported by all participants.

However, when specific questionnaire items were analysed in terms of frequencies and percentages of the respondents' choices, the items elicited different choices that point to the respondent's attitude predisposition. Though Kiswahili is by no means the most dominant language in Tanzania, different schools adopt different language policies for their students in school. The policies vary from "English only", "English and Kiswahili" to Kiswahili only in most *Kata schools*. Thus, when asked whether students should voluntarily speak Kiswahili at all times while in school, only 24% (n=76) agreed while 70% (n= 238) disagreed.

The results indicated that most students prefer to have freedom of choice with respect to language use. A similar statement (C<sub>12</sub>), sought to determine whether students *should be forced* to speak Kiswahili at all times in school. Very few respondents, 29.9 % were in agreement that students should be forced while 61.5% were opposed to the idea of forcing students to use Kiswahili in school. This indicates that most students choose Kiswahili but at the same time, are not willing to be coerced into using Kiswahili. Commenting on this scenario in an earlier research, Mwinsheikhe (2001) has indicated that most Tanzanian students choose Kiswahili as their first language of communication while only a few choose English. This state puts majority of the students, and by extension, their teachers in a situation where they rely on code mixing and code switching (Brock-Utne, 2002).

Students' attitudes were elicited with regard to Kiswahili lessons. Asked whether or not Kiswahili lessons were interesting, a greater majority comprising 80% affirmed while a small number of 14.1 % held the view that the lessons were boring and unexciting. These responses were directly attributed to the immense influence of the teachers of Kiswahili who, the respondents reported played a big role in making the subject likeable. Item C<sub>25</sub> sought to determine the teachers' influence on their learners' perception about Kiswahili. Most respondents, 81.8% which represented 278 of the respondents agreed that their Kiswahili language teachers had great impact on their liking the subject. Just 11.2% of the respondents were of the view that their teachers had no impact on their liking Kiswahili. Various authors (Miller & Aldred, 2000; De Angelis, 2011; Carson, 1990) have underscored the influence of educators on their learners' attitude formation. De Angelis (2011) sums it up thus, teachers may choose to encourage or discourage the use and/or maintenance of the home language on the basis of personal beliefs, individual interests or personal experience, and the advice they offer will inevitably influence parents' decisions and contribute to supporting or hindering language choice in the school context.

Kiswahili subject is one of the disciplines taught at national and private universities in Tanzania. We wanted therefore, to find out students' perceptions about studying Kiswahili at university viz a vis other disciplines. Students were asked whether they thought someone who studied Kiswahili at university was less educated. Responses show that secondary school students view Kiswahili just like any other discipline. Most students, 72% (n=245) were of the view that a Kiswahili scholar is just as well educated as a scholar in any other discipline that uses English as the medium of instruction. However, 15% (n=51) expressed the view that someone studying Kiswahili is not as well educated as the rest. These positive attitudes towards Kiswahili may account for the massive number of students who register to study Kiswahili at undergraduate level in all Tanzanian universities. At STEMMUCO<sup>1</sup> for instance, nearly over half of all students' population have enrolled for Kiswahili course. More precisely, 69% of 3<sup>rd</sup> years, 48% of 2<sup>nd</sup> years and 51% of 1<sup>st</sup> year's students respectively take courses in Kiswahili department (2012/2013 Admissions Register).

However, when respondents were asked if they would become teachers of Kiswahili in future, it was noted that there was no significant differences between those who agreed and those who were of contrary opinion. For instance, 38.5 % were opposed to becoming teachers of Kiswahili while less than half of all respondents, i.e. 46.2% indicated their desire to become teachers of Kiswahili as their future career choice.

Similarly, we enquired whether speaking of Kiswahili was an indicator of an educated person. A section of the respondents was cognizant of the fact that language use cannot be equated to being educated while a quarter of

<sup>1</sup> STEMMUCO: Stella Maris Mtwara University College is a constituent college of St. Augustine University of Tanzania. STEMMUCO is the only university in the larger Mtwara region.

all respondents were neutral. 40.3 % of the respondents disagreed while 39.4 % agreed and 25% reported a neutral position. Reactions to this item might have been informed by the fact that in Tanzania, more than 85% of the citizens are fluent speakers of Kiswahili. Though, not all of this population is educated.

Integrative attitudes were at play when respondents' perceptions were analysed with regard to the use of Kiswahili in radio broadcasting and the introduction of vernacular radio stations. Of all respondents, 42.6% were of the view that only Kiswahili should be used as the language of radio broadcasting. However, 30.3 % were of the view that other vernacular radio stations should be set up. Likewise, a sizeable 27.1 % remained neutral. Though results show that a small majority favour the de facto use of Kiswahili in radio broadcasting, it is worth noting that the number is below half of all the respondents. Moreover, there is a growing desire among students to have their local vernacular languages used in the media broadcasting. That 27.1% of the respondents were neutral, however, shows that the issue of using vernacular languages is still a sensitive one in the country. Item C<sub>29</sub> showed that the use of vernacular languages in Tanzania is still frowned at. This item was a negative statement which stated, "I don't like introducing myself by my vernacular language." Of the total respondents, 57% (n= 194) agreed, that they didn't like introducing themselves using their local languages. This is to say, they introduce themselves either by use of Kiswahili or English. On the contrary, 37.6 % (n= 128) indicated they used their local languages.

It is important to note that the seemingly higher percentage of 37.6 who used their local languages to introduce themselves could be attributed to the fact that over 80% of the respondents were Makonde speakers. The study area therefore by and large manifested signs of linguistic homogeneity. However, the results corroborate Petzell (2012) assertion that in Tanzania, the use of vernacular languages in public places is discouraged as it is perceived to be an affront to national unity.

Instrumental attitudes towards Kiswahili were elicited by use of statements items C<sub>5</sub>, C<sub>27</sub> and C<sub>28</sub>. The respondents' reaction to these items were based on functional benefits, real or imagined, that would accrue from the use of Kiswahili. Majority of the respondents, 69.4% were positive that Kiswahili is of great importance to the economic development of Tanzania, compared to 14.4 % who were of the contrary opinion. However, when required to comment on whether all visitors visiting Tanzania for work should learn Kiswahili, the percentage of those who agreed dropped to 63.2% and those against stood at 19.4%. On whether Kiswahili should be adopted as the official language of the East African Cooperation (EAC), 70% (n= 238) of the respondents were in favour with the use of Kiswahili. Only 17.6% were of the contrary view.

Keeping in mind that the EAC member countries use Kiswahili at varying degrees and competences, with Tanzania having the highest degree of use, the respondents perceptions about the instrumental value of Kiswahili resonate with the views of Neke (2003:18) who argues that "decisions about language policy are economic in the sense that the choice of a language especially in post-colonial states is tied to nation building, greater social and political integration. Nation building in ex-colonial countries meant economic and social development where the choice of a single unifying language would create and make communication and governance easier and more efficient." Kiswahili appears to fit the bill to accomplish these tasks in the region.

With regard to the place of Kiswahili in the curriculum, most students, 72.6 (n=247) indicated that Kiswahili should remain a compulsory subject from form 1 to form 4, whereas 17% (n=58) indicated that it should be made optional. When asked if Kiswahili were to be an optional subject, how many would study it anyway, a high majority of 71.5% indicated that they would still have studied it as opposed to only 18.3% who indicated they would not study it. This is a clear manifestation of the respondents' perceptions towards Kiswahili. Granted that English language is spoken by a very small percentage of Tanzanians, Kiswahili is the most viable language to the majority.

## 5.0 Conclusion

Although the findings indicate that the majority of students in Mtwara region display positive attitudes towards Kiswahili, more can be done to enhance the status of Kiswahili at school. In tandem with previous studies (Criper & Dodd, 1984; Brook-Utne et al 2003), Tanzania should consider formalizing the use of Kiswahili as a medium of instruction in post primary and higher education. Instructing students in a language they are most familiar with not only enhances their performance academically but also innovation. To this end, various studies have been carried out in Tanzania; the most prominent called the Language of Instruction in Tanzania and South Africa, LOITASA. LOITASA research clearly indicates that English can no longer serve as a medium of instruction in secondary schools and tertiary education in the country and that Kiswahili should replace it (Senkoro, 2005). In spite of the official policy in government secondary schools, to a very large extent, English is not being used as the medium of instruction. It is only logical that Kiswahili should officially take up this role.

With the on-going constitutional review, Kiswahili should be given a co-official status which should be enshrined in the constitution. Constitutional recognition of the place and role of different languages will guarantee them of protection and grant empowerment to various bodies and organizations mandate for carrying out research geared towards their development. Moreover, there is need to educate the citizenry about their

language rights with regard to the use of vernacular languages. Likewise, concerted efforts should be made to conserve local languages as part of Tanzania's heritage in line with UNESCO's theme of preserving linguistic diversity. In order to do this, the Swahili Council's mandate could be broadened to include local languages to form the Academy of Tanzania's languages. Research in preservation and conservation of local languages will also foster development of Kiswahili in areas such as lexicography, terminology and literature.

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Appendix 1 Descriptive statistics based on gender

		N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
C1. Kiswahili language is easy to learn	Male	135	4.27	1.001	.086	4.10	4.44
	Female	205	4.37	.949	.066	4.24	4.50
	Total	340	4.33	.970	.053	4.22	4.43
C2. Students should speak in Kiswahili at all time while in school	Male	135	2.47	1.190	.102	2.26	2.67
	Female	205	2.35	1.300	.091	2.17	2.53
	Total	340	2.40	1.257	.068	2.26	2.53
C3. I like reading short stories written in Kiswahili	Male	135	4.07	.959	.083	3.91	4.24
	Female	205	4.08	1.097	.077	3.93	4.23
	Total	340	4.08	1.043	.057	3.97	4.19
C4. Students understand concepts better when they are presented in Kiswahili	Male	135	4.32	.886	.076	4.17	4.47
	Female	205	4.33	.889	.062	4.20	4.45
	Total	340	4.32	.886	.048	4.23	4.42
C5. Kiswahili is important for the economic development of Tanzania	Male	135	3.82	1.145	.099	3.63	4.02
	Female	205	4.00	1.219	.085	3.84	4.17
	Total	340	3.93	1.192	.065	3.81	4.06
C6. Kiswahili lessons are interesting and exciting	Male	135	3.92	1.159	.100	3.72	4.12
	Female	205	4.15	1.099	.077	4.00	4.30
	Total	340	4.06	1.127	.061	3.94	4.18
C7. Most students don't read Kiswahili books and newspapers	Male	135	2.30	.941	.081	2.14	2.46
	Female	205	2.19	1.045	.073	2.04	2.33
	Total	340	2.23	1.005	.055	2.13	2.34
C8. I find it difficult to speak fluent Kiswahili in spite of doing practice	Male	135	2.10	1.067	.092	1.92	2.29
	Female	205	2.20	1.153	.081	2.05	2.36
	Total	340	2.16	1.119	.061	2.05	2.28
C9. I dislike Kiswahili because my fellow students laugh at me at the slightest mistakes committed.	Male	135	2.07	1.182	.102	1.87	2.28
	Female	205	1.97	1.095	.077	1.82	2.12
	Total	340	2.01	1.130	.061	1.89	2.13
C10. Kiswahili exams results discourage students and make them dislike the language	Male	135	2.56	1.182	.102	2.36	2.76
	Female	205	2.53	1.323	.092	2.34	2.71
	Total	340	2.54	1.267	.069	2.41	2.68
C11. If I were to become a teacher, I would choose Kiswahili as my teaching subject	Male	135	3.01	1.352	.116	2.78	3.24
	Female	205	3.18	1.461	.102	2.97	3.38
	Total	340	3.11	1.419	.077	2.96	3.26

Continued

C12. Students should be forced to speak Kiswahili in school at all time	Male	135	2.44	1.325	.114	2.21	2.66
	Female	205	2.42	1.404	.098	2.23	2.61
	Total	340	2.43	1.371	.074	2.28	2.57
C13. I don't feel inferior whenever I speak in Kiswahili	Male	135	3.90	1.205	.104	3.69	4.10
	Female	205	3.88	1.321	.092	3.70	4.06
	Total	340	3.89	1.274	.069	3.75	4.02
C14. I enjoy watching Kiswahili programs and films	Male	135	3.86	1.141	.098	3.67	4.05
	Female	205	4.02	1.233	.086	3.85	4.19
	Total	340	3.96	1.198	.065	3.83	4.08
C15. Whenever I speak in Kiswahili, I feel am a very important person	Male	135	3.62	1.257	.108	3.41	3.84
	Female	205	3.57	1.376	.096	3.38	3.76
	Total	340	3.59	1.328	.072	3.45	3.73
C.16. I wish to be very eloquent in spoken Kiswahili language	Male	135	4.47	.711	.061	4.35	4.60
	Female	205	4.35	.992	.069	4.21	4.49
	Total	340	4.40	.892	.048	4.30	4.50
C17. I don't like listening to Kiswahili music	Male	135	2.18	1.263	.109	1.96	2.39
	Female	205	2.16	1.231	.086	1.99	2.33
	Total	340	2.16	1.242	.067	2.03	2.30
C18. Kiswahili should not be used in the office and all official work places	Male	135	2.38	1.257	.108	2.16	2.59
	Female	205	2.45	1.381	.096	2.26	2.64
	Total	340	2.42	1.332	.072	2.28	2.57
C19. Kiswahili language is not important and so it should not be taught in school	Male	135	1.73	.883	.076	1.58	1.88
	Female	205	1.74	.985	.069	1.60	1.87
	Total	340	1.74	.944	.051	1.63	1.84
C20. My parents and friends appreciate a lot when I speak in Kiswahili	Male	135	3.66	1.186	.102	3.46	3.86
	Female	205	3.49	1.353	.094	3.30	3.67
	Total	340	3.56	1.290	.070	3.42	3.69
C21. When I speak Kiswahili, it's a sign that I am educated	Male	135	3.13	1.346	.116	2.90	3.36
	Female	205	3.05	1.313	.092	2.87	3.23
	Total	340	3.08	1.325	.072	2.94	3.22
C22. Kiswahili should not be a compulsory subject in school	Male	135	2.18	1.158	.100	1.98	2.37
	Female	205	2.13	1.282	.090	1.96	2.31
	Total	340	2.15	1.233	.067	2.02	2.28
C23. Apart from radio stations using only Kiswahili, stations that use vernacular languages should be started	Male	135	2.89	1.291	.111	2.67	3.11
	Female	205	2.81	1.330	.093	2.63	3.00
	Total	340	2.84	1.313	.071	2.70	2.98

Continued

C24. If Kiswahili was to become an optional subject, I would not study it	Male	135	2.24	1.278	.110	2.03	2.46
	Female	205	2.20	1.316	.092	2.02	2.39
	Total	340	2.22	1.299	.070	2.08	2.36
C25. My teacher of Kiswahili makes me to like Kiswahili language subject	Male	135	4.01	1.051	.090	3.84	4.19
	Female	205	4.19	1.096	.077	4.03	4.34
	Total	340	4.12	1.080	.059	4.00	4.23
C26. I think anyone who has studied Kiswahili at university is not well educated like the rest	Male	135	2.17	1.194	.103	1.97	2.37
	Female	205	2.14	1.372	.096	1.95	2.33
	Total	340	2.15	1.303	.071	2.01	2.29
C27. All visitors visiting Tanzania for work or for business should learn Kiswahili	Male	135	3.60	1.317	.113	3.38	3.82
	Female	205	3.86	1.295	.090	3.69	4.04
	Total	340	3.76	1.308	.071	3.62	3.90
C28. Kiswahili should be used as the official language of the East African Community cooperation	Male	135	3.85	1.267	.109	3.64	4.07
	Female	205	3.92	1.342	.094	3.73	4.10
	Total	340	3.89	1.311	.071	3.75	4.03
C29. I don't like introducing myself by my vernacular language	Male	135	3.34	1.561	.134	3.08	3.61
	Female	205	3.29	1.588	.111	3.07	3.51
	Total	340	3.31	1.575	.085	3.14	3.48

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