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The Effect of Revitalization of Indigenous Language on Preservation of African Culture: A Case of Terik Language in Terik Ward, Nandi South Sub County, Kenya

By

Endeku Otsiambo Martin, Dr. Robert Ochieng, Sr. Dr. Achieng A. Lucy

Abstract

The purpose of this sociolinguistic study was to investigate the effect of revitalization of indigenous language on preservation of African culture, a case of Terik language in Terik ward, Nandi south sub county, Terik Language is an indigenous language in Kenya that is spoken by Terik people of Nandi South, Terik language is seriously endangered and it's at a risk of extinction thus endangering Terik culture. The study aimed to determine the evidence and nature of Terik language endangerment among the Terik children. The study took an eclectic theoretical approach; Gaelic Arvanitika Model (GAM) by Sasse (1992) and the Marked Bilingualism Model by Batibo (2005). Qualitative and Quantitative methods were used to collect and analyze data. It also used a combination of research instruments namely; questionnaires and participant observation to collect data on language attitudes and language choice. A semi-structured interview was used to collect data on decline in knowledge of the basic vocabulary of kinship terms within the Terik lexicon among the Terik. The informant sample consisted of A target population of 20,450 from Terik sub location was used but a sample of 3000 respondents from the sub-locations. The results indicate that Terik language is losing its territory; children speak English followed by Kiswahili. Terik language is considered as having little socio-economic value and a lot of its native words are ceasing to exist making it quite susceptible to endangerment. The results of the research thus compliment language shift and endangerment studies done on the major indigenous languages in Kenya. The results of the study will also help researchers and policy makers in the formulation of clear language policies to revitalize shifting and dying languages in urban and rural centers, and finally the result will empower indigenous communities to perceive language shift/maintenance as a phenomenon they can control through their attitudes towards language choice. Language is a marker of identity and by documenting and recommending its maintenance, this work will contribute in saving this rich heritage.

Key Words: Kenya; Indigenous Language, Culture, Terik; African Culture; Terik Ward; Nandi South Sub County

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Introduction

All over the world, the problem of language death or endangerment is alarming, with the effect that bigger languages continue to expand their territories at the expense of minority languages, some of which do not even have as much as a territory for themselves. Terik is one such language facing the danger of death; it is the aim of this study to save the situation and give insights that will bring back vitality of the language.

Statement of the problem

The situation in Africa is the pressure on vulnerable languages by other minority languages; language shift tends to be from a minority language to a locally dominant language rather than to a national or global language (Batibo 2005, 2013). Nearly a third of the world's languages are in Africa and some 10-28% of these are seriously endangered, based on conservative estimates (Lewis et al. 2016, Simons and Lewis 2013, Brenzinger and Batibo 2010). When factors such as overall population size are considered, a much higher percentage of languages in Africa must be considered to be at risk (Sands, forthcoming, Lüpke 2015). The number of threatened languages in Africa is difficult to pinpoint precisely since language documentation efforts tend to have the effect of revealing the existence of languages that were either unknown to linguists or thought to be dialects, e.g. Daats'iin (Ahland, forthcoming) in Ethiopia, Tsupamini (Blench 2012) in Nigeria, and Sasi (Collins and Gruber 2014) in Botswana.

Surveys of language shift in Africa include: Batibo 2005, Lüpke and Storch 2013, Dimmendaal and Voeltz 2007, Childs 2006, Nyombe 1997, Idiata 2009. Case studies of language shift include Robson 2011, Sommer 1995, and Bagamba 2007. A range of studies place languages spoken in Kenya between 30 and 60 (see Heine and Möhlig 1980; Batibo 2005; and Githiora 2006). Of these, about 65% are Bantu, between 30–32 % Nilo-Saharan, while the rest are of the Cushitic family Boni, Burji, Dahalo, Elmolo, Kinare, Kore, Lorkoti, Omotik, Ongamo, Sogoo, Suba, Terik and Yaaku (UNESCO, 2003 & Mosley, 2010). Elmolo, Kinare, Kore, Lorkoti, Sogoo and Yaaku are already extinct, while the rest are seriously endangered.

Recent studies indicate that the co-existence of languages in Kenya and in the rest of Africa is being threatened especially among the minority tribes in most urban settings (Mugane, 2003; Michieka, 2005). As the numbers of indigenous languages face threat of extinction around the world, the issue of language shift and endangerment becomes an important linguistic aspect. The language shift and endangerment of indigenous languages would not only reduce the culture and history of the indigenous language but also endanger their rich source of vocabulary. This study thus focused on Tiriki language to determine its sociolinguistic situation and vitality.

Literature Review

On a global scale, the problem of language death or endangerment is alarming, with the effect that bigger languages continue to expand their territories at the expense of minority

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languages, some of which do not even have as much as a territory for themselves. With the passing of time, many of such minority languages may not survive the onslaught of dominant others (UNESCO, 2007). Africa, like many other parts of the world, is faced with language endangerment. According to United Nations Educational and Scientific Organisation's Ad Hoc expert group on Endangered Languages (Brezinger et al, 2003), "language is in danger when its speakers cease to use it, or use it in an increasingly reduced number of communicative domains, and cease to pass it on from one generation to the next. That is, there are no new speakers, either adults or children". Language is central and fundamental to communication, culture, and the very essence of people's collective identities thus the permanent loss of any language is therefore a serious matter. It is clear though that the dominant perspective among the experts is to view language shift as inimical to human society, and to suggest measures to revitalize the vulnerable or endangered ones. This is the perspective of Fishman (1999, 2007), Crystal (2000), Obiero (2010). Agitations by language rights advocate who take up the cases of "marginalized" minority languages have recently fueled the revitalization train (Are, 2011). In the case of the latter, 'revitalize' often means the restoration of the use of such languages.

The positions of the scholars cited above hinge on the belief that there is enormous good in preventing languages from dying. For example, Crystal (2000), lists and extensively discusses the socio-cultural, historical, scientific, and identity related values of preserving languages. The causes of language endangerment in Africa are varied but are similar to those seen in other parts of the world. What is particular to the situation in Africa is the pressure on vulnerable languages by other minority languages; language shift tends to be from a minority language to a locally dominant language rather than to a national or global language (Batibo 2005, 2013a). Surveys of language shift in Africa include: Batibo 2005, Lüpke and Storch 2013, Dimmendaal and Voeltz 2007, Childs 2006, Nyombe 1997, Idiata 2009. Case studies of language shift include Robson 2011, Sommer 1995, and Bagamba 2007. According to UNESCO, 50% of the world's languages may be endangered at various degrees. If we use the estimation of ETHNOLOGUE of the total languages spoken as 6 912, about 3 456 languages are on the decline. Considering, as Romaine (2007) does, that linguistic diversity on a world scale reflects a very uneven distribution, chances of survival for the world's minority languages are quite slim.

Taking the world's population to be six (6) billion (Gordon, 2005), 80% or 4.8 billion of that population speaks a total of only 75 languages. In other words, 4.8 billion people speak only 1% of the worlds close to 7,000 languages (Romaine, 2007). The revival of the Sanskrit language happened in India. In 2001 census of India, 14,135 people who had said Sanskrit was their mother tongue. It increased to 24,821 people in the 2011 census of India. Sanskrit has experienced a recorded a growth of over 70 per cent in one decade due to the Sanskrit Revival. However, Sanskrit speakers still accounts for just 0.00198 per cent of India's total population. The Ainu language of the indigenous Ainu people of northern Japan is currently moribund, but efforts are underway to revive it (Tsunoda, 2005) A 2006 survey of the Hokkaido Ainu indicated that only 4.6% of Ainu surveyed were able to converse in or "speak a little" Ainu. As of 2001, Ainu was not taught in any elementary or secondary schools in Japan, but was offered at numerous language centers and universities in Hokkaido, as well as at Tokyo's Chiba University. In China, the Manchu language is one of the most endangered languages, with speakers only in three small areas of Manchuria remaining. (Tsunoda, 2005) Some enthusiasts are trying to revive the language of their ancestors using available

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dictionaries and textbooks, and even occasional visits to Qapqal Xibe Autonomous County in Xinjiang, where the related Xibe language is still spoken natively (Johnson, 2009).

The European colonization of Australia, and the consequent damage sustained by Aboriginal communities, had a catastrophic effect on indigenous languages in the southeast and south of the country, leaving them with no living traditional native speakers. A number of Aboriginal communities in Victoria and elsewhere are now trying to revive these languages. One of the best cases of relative success in language revitalization is the case of Māori also known as te reo Māori. It is the ancestral tongue of the indigenous Māori people of New Zealand and a vehicle for prose narrative, sung poetry, and genealogical recital (Senft, 2010). There are a large number of languages in Africa which are spoken by very small populations which still manage to be socioeconomically dominant over even smaller populations. Nkɔrɔɔ, spoken in Nigeria by about 2,000 people is "severely endangered" (Obikudo et al. 2015) yet Defaka speakers are shifting to Nkɔrɔɔ. In Botswana, !Xóǀ (Taa), †Hoan (N!aqrīke) and Sasi speakers are shifting to Shekgalagari, even though speakers of that language are undergoing shift to Setswana (Lukusa 2000), in Tanzania, many Hadza speakers to the west of Lake Eyasi have shifted to Sukuma, a Bantu language that is spoken by a fairly large population (> 7 million). Sukuma is itself under pressure from the national language, Kiswahili, and younger speakers have lost a significant number of lexical items known to older speakers (Batibo 2013b). Ngasa in Tanzania have completely shifted to Chaga (Legère 2012), and Akie have largely shifted to Maa and Nguu as well as Kiswahili (Heine et al. 2016). According to Rosendal 2016 and Legère 2007), many other Tanzanian languages are seeing shift directly Kiswahili, e.g. Ngoni and Vidunda.

Kenya exhibits linguistic and cultural diversity. The number of indigenous languages in Kenya ranges between 42 and 68 (Myers-Scotton 1993; Mbaabu, 1996). This difference is due to dialect/ language controversy. According to Obiero (2008), statistically Bantu comprise 65%, Nilotic languages 32% while Cushitic languages are 2%. In Kenya, ethnic affiliation is closely tied to Linguistic affiliation (Kebeya, 2008). In Kenya, the following languages are either endangered or extinct. Boni, Burji, Dahalo, Elmolo, Kinare, Kore, Lorkoti, Omotik, Ongamo, Sogoo, Suba, Terik sand Yaaku (UNESCO, 2003 & Mosley, 2010). Due to the prominence given to English and Kiswahili, indigenous languages are losing their speakers to official and national language due to competing factors such as; economic changes, status, demography and institution support (Giles et. al, 1997; Appel & Muysken, 1987). It is because of these reasons for instance that the Terik a minority language in Kenya is trying to remain relevant therefore this study investigated the effect of revitalization of indigenous language on preservation of African culture, a case of Terik language in Terik ward, Nandi south sub county.

Language Revitalization

The generally adopted - even when not explicitly stated - view seems to be that language revitalization aims to maintain or restore a language to such a state that it is spoken by a reasonable number of people, reasonably fluently, and in a reasonably intact form. See Amery (1994: 147), Schmidt (1990: 106), and Tovey, Hannan, and Abramson (1989: 33). Language revitalization activities create a cultural climate where the people's ethnic heritage (the language, culture, history, etc.) is appreciated and respected and where publications on them are available to those interested. They in turn foster the people's sense of pride, self-esteem, identity, and ethnicity, and they contribute to the attenuation of the negative attitude towards the language and to raising its profile.

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African Culture in Relation to Revitalisation of Indigenous Language

Tradition, according to Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2008) is belief, principle and way of acting which people in a particular society or group have continued to follow for a long time. Interestingly the nature of African tradition or culture is largely oral, which mean it was not recorded in any form other than it resides in the heads and on lips of the custodians and passed down from generation to generation orally. Traditionally, there was no need for the written word because Africans value and cherish oral culture more than written word. Many Africans have no written histories and some native languages have no orthography. Currently as in the past, some traditionalists do not write down their stories because they have been taught that stories should be spoken aloud and not read. Goucher, Le Guine and Walten (1998) describe oral tradition as the oldest system of cultural memory. According to them, written systems of cultural transmission are less than 6000 years old, but orally transmitted cultural knowledge dates back from the time human species became capable of speech and communication. This is only relevant to the developed nations because written records especially in Nigeria dates back to the 19th century with the coming of the colonial masters. In Africa, since the man speaks, human communities have transmitted their shared cultures orally, even in the age of computer; oral tradition remains an important means of preserving and transmitted cultural memory.

The importance of culture either in a developed or developing country is evident in the lives of the people. Culture is a binding force among the people, as people are united through cultural identity. Oral information as an aspect of culture according to Okoro (2010) is relevant, reliable and is provided at the nick of time. It is transmitted directly and verbally. Nielson (2007) opines that culture is the set of distinctive, spiritual, materials, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group and it encompasses art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and belief.

Terik Language

The Terik people speak the 'Terik' language, which is closely related to 'Bong'om' a language spoken by a community that lives around Mount Elgon. For example, the name 'Bungoma' -which denotes a county in western Kenya - came from the Bong'om people. The Terik language is distinct from other Kalenjin dialects in items of vocabulary as well as pronunciation. The main difference between Terik and Nandi dialects is that the Terik language is nasal, while Nandi is lateral.

Language Death

Crystal (2000) observes that: A language is said to be dead when no one speaks it any more. It may continue to have existence in a recorded form, of course – traditionally in writing, more recently as part of a sound or video archive (and it does in a sense 'live on in this way) – but unless it has fluent speakers one would not talk of it as a 'living language'. And speakers cannot demonstrate their fluency if they have no one to talk to, the language is effectively dead when there is only one speaker left. The prospects of language death or survival can, to a large extent, be predicated on its vitality. A language with a high level of vitality is either not endangered or has a negligible threat from endangerment. In other words, such a language has a very good chance of survival. Conversely, a language that has a low level of vitality is highly threatened by endangerment and, therefore, consequently constitutes a good candidate for language death.

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Describing language endangerment, Ethnologue: Languages of the World, Fifteenth Edition, (Gordon, 2005), states that “for a variety of reasons, speakers of some languages are motivated to stop using their language and to use another. Parents may begin to use only that second language with their children. Eventually, there may be no speakers who use the language as their first or primary language and frequently the language ceases to be used altogether and the language becomes extinct - existing, perhaps, only on recordings or written records and transcriptions.”

Ethnologue uses two dimensions to evaluate and characterize language endangerment. The two are, first, the number of speakers of the language and, second, the number and nature of the domains in which the language is used. In other words, a language may be endangered because there are fewer and fewer people who speak it or because it is being used in fewer and fewer domains or because both conditions converge on it. Ethnologue posts 42 African languages on its list of endangered languages. According to the list, Nigeria leads other African countries with 23 endangered languages. It is followed by Cameroon and Sudan tying at 12 endangered languages. Chad comes next with 8 endangered languages. Ethnologue list of Africa’s endangered languages is too conservative to reflect the actual situation on the ground. For instance, I know some Kenyan languages on the verge of death that are not on the list. Other African countries too have endangered languages that are not on the ethnologies’ list.

According to the UNESCO (Wurm, 2001) Atlas of the World’s Language in Danger of Disappearing, 97 African languages are considered to be in danger. This figure, which is more than double the number given by Ethnologue, is closer to reflecting the actual situation on the ground. Still, the number of endangered languages on continent could be higher. UNESCO’s document titled “Language and Vitality” by the Ad Hoc Expert Group on Endangered Languages states that “a language is endangered when it is on the path to extinction”. It adds that “language is in danger when its speakers cease to use it, use it in an increasingly reduced number of communicative domains, and cease to pass it on from one generation to the next. That is, there are no new speakers, either adults or children”. Unlike Ethnologue which evaluates and categorizes language endangerment using only two parameters, UNESCO uses a much more comprehensive set of parameters to evaluate language vitality. The organisation’s Intangible Cultural Heritage Unit’s Ad Hoc Expert Group on Endangered Languages has developed nine factors to assess the endangerment status of a language.

The factors are:

1. Intergenerational language transmission
2. Absolute number of speakers
3. Proportion of speakers within the total community
4. Shifts in domains of language use
5. Response to new domains and media
6. Materials for language education and literacy
7. Governmental and institutional language attitudes and policies
8. Community members’ attitudes towards their own language, and
9. Type and quality of documentation

Experts have continued to develop more comprehensible methodologies for evaluating language vitality. Fishman came up with the Graded Intergeneration Disruption Scale (GIDS) which improved on the method devised by the UNESCO Group. Summer Institute of

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Linguistics (SIL) has improved on GIDS to come up with Expanded Graded Intergeneration Disruption Scale. At more concrete level regarding language death, Mufwene (2006) states that: Languages die when their speakers give them up. ---speakers do not deliberately refuse to use their languages but are compelled to use other languages that offer practical or material advantages: being integrated in a mainstream society, finding a good job, and getting opportunities for socioeconomic ascension. Speakers could, of course, also keep their ancestral languages, but often wind up speaking only the more advantageous language especially if they move out of their native communities. Then their knowledge of their ancestral languages suffers a form of atrophy. When more and more speakers adopt this behavior and only the older generations speak them for traditional communicative functions, linguists say such languages fall into attrition. As the older speakers die, so do the languages.

Language Survival

Unless the unexpected takes place, there is nothing to suggest that the bigger, more economically vibrant and culturally proud ethno-linguistic communities will lose their languages in the near future. Whereas it is not easy to speculate on how long it will take these languages to be weakened by the undermining influences discussed above, it is not too far-fetched to say that the languages will be around by the turn of the century. This is the likely scenario especially for those languages spoken by ethno-linguistic groups with a strong group identity, community esteem and cultural pride. Indeed, with such attributes, even a not-so-large language can survive into the next century. Although compared to some other African languages Sesotho and Seswati are relatively small in terms of the number of speakers, they are in no danger of extinction; at least not in the near future.

languages are more than speech systems; they are also cultural and political emblems for their respective countries. It is therefore likely that the two languages and others like them will remain alive not only for ordinary communication but also as symbols of political independence and cultural identity. Some of Africa's indigenous languages have taken up a number of modern communicative functions. For instance, they are used in print and electronic media, in theatre and film, in creative writing, in popular music, and in commerce. These roles serve to enhance the vitality and prestige of the languages thereby increasing their chances of survival. Included in this group of languages are Kiswahili, Kikuyu and Dholuo in Kenya; Amharic and Tigrinya in Ethiopia; Somali in Somalia; Kinyarwanda and Kirundi in Rwanda and Burundi respectively; Lingala in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; Shona and Ndebele in Zimbabwe; Khosa and Zulu in South Africa; Wolof in Senegal; Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo in Nigeria; and Ga and Akan in Ghana. By the look of things, these languages will sail into the 22nd century.

Some indigenous languages may do better than just survive; they might grow into technologically-developed speech systems. A good example of an indigenous language with such a potential is Kiswahili. Different aspects of Kiswahili linguistics such as phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, discourse analysis and pragmatics are wholly taught in Kiswahili in Kenyan and Tanzanian universities. Arguably, there are more literary works in Kiswahili than in English being published in the two countries. In the mass media, there are news bulletin in Kiswahili in both radio and television. There is also a robust print media in the language especially in Tanzania. Besides the general dictionaries, the language has also specialized dictionaries in areas such as linguistics, physics, chemistry and biology.

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Critical Review of Theories

The study was guided by theories developed over the years on the subject of the study, which presents set of arguments that required further research. The idea behind a theory is to clarify issues and to have guiding principles as well as direction for the explanation and interpretation of social phenomena (Oтите and Ogionwo, 2006). This study adopted two models:

1. The Gaelic Arvanitika Model (GAM) by Sasse (1992)
2. Marked Bilingualism Model by Batibo (2005).

The two models are complementary in that they both capture the phenomena of shift and endangerment. GAM focuses on the causes and effect of domination. While, Marked Bilingualism Model focuses on the process involved from the time a language is dominated to the time it becomes extinct and is dominated by another. GAM utilizes evidence of language death from Arvanitika and East Sutherland Gaelic. In the Gaelic Arvanitika Model, Sasse shows interaction of three stages of research (external setting, speech behavior and structural consequences) thus, presenting a methodological framework for all cases of language death in the world. However, it is biased towards a European economic, political, cultural and social context. GAM may be hard to perceive for some Europeans and North Americans but for majority of the people in the world, multilingualism is an everyday affair. There are two types of language contact situations in the Marked Bilingualism Model. The first type is the horizontal known as the coordinate while the second type is the vertical known as superordinate. The horizontal refers to a situation where the two languages of the same status operate and neither dominates the other. The vertical involves two languages with different prestige and status in contact. It results in a vertical relationship giving rise to a diglossic structure. L1 will be overpowered by L2 gradually giving way till language shift takes place. Marked Bilingualism Model is thus a methodological framework for language death but it does not deal with the structural consequences of the dying language.

The Gaelic Arvanitika Model (GAM) - Sasse (1992)

This is a causality-based model by Sasse (1992). It is based on three types of phenomena relevant to language shift and death. First, External setting (ES): includes the entire range of factors that are extra linguistic: ethno-historical, economic, cultural and sociological (e.g. urbanization in this study). Secondly, Sociolinguistic/Speech behavior (SB): This refers to the social parameters such as choice of register, language choice, language attitudes and domains of use (e.g. language choice and attitudes in this study). Thirdly, Structural consequences (SC): This involves structural changes resulting from the pressure and the speaker's response to it. The language threatened by extinction may have changes in its syntactic rules, morphological structure, sound system, or lexicon (e.g. decline in core vocabulary within the Terik lexicon).

Marked Bilingualism Model by Batibo (2005)

According to this model, there is a vertical, termed super-ordinate language contact. It refers to the situation in which two languages with significantly different status and prestige come into contact; A vertical relationship results with the more powerful language overpowered by L2 gradually giving way until language shift takes place. The model postulates five phases

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that a language goes through on its way to extinction as its speakers shift progressively to the other language.

Conclusion

There is a difference in the language choice patterns of the older speakers (parents) and the younger speakers (children). English is the most dominant language among the children followed by Kiswahili. Younger speakers use English to speak to their siblings, parents and friends. The older speakers (parents) most dominant language is Terik. This is the language they use to speak to their siblings, relatives, parents, Terik friends and Terik house help(s). Older speakers (parents) interact mainly with the younger speakers (children) in English and Kiswahili. However, the older speakers (parents) interact with Terik guests, relatives and house help(s) using Terik. The younger speakers (children) hardly speak Terik. They only utter a few words in Terik on rare occasions when responding to yes/no questions in Terik or when responding to Terik greetings.

English followed by Kiswahili are the most prevalent languages used by the Terik parents and their children in the given domains; shopping, social functions and reading the bible. In addition, both the younger speakers (children) and older speakers (parents) prefer the English radio stations. Terik was lowly rated for education and employment by both the younger speakers (children) and the older speakers (parents). However, English is highly rated for education and employment by both the younger speakers (children) and the older speakers (parents). Kiswahili is the second highly rated language for education and employment by both the younger speakers and older speakers. In the case of Sheng, it was lowly rated for employment and all the respondents rated it as not important for education.

Parents speak to their children mainly in English or Kiswahili and the children predominantly speak in English and Kiswahili. One of the issues that emerge from these findings is the implication that Terik language in an urban up-market seems to lose its territory. In the home and family domain, the occurrence of language shift can most easily be detected. For, it is only at home or family situation where the children can use their ethnic language, Terik. Yet, the parents speak to their children mainly in English or Kiswahili resulting in failure of MT transmission. The younger generation's decline in Terik competence has an implication on its transmission to their children. If Terik is not fully acquired, a shift to the DL (in this study, English and to some extent Kiswahili) is likely to occur.

The findings on language attitudes imply English and to some extent Kiswahili are associated with employment and higher education. They are a key to social mobility and a means of social advancement and status. Terik is considered as having little socio-economic value and gain. As a result, respondents from the two groups especially the younger speakers prefer English and Kiswahili to the detriment of Terik. The findings on decline in knowledge of the basic vocabulary of kinship terms within the Terik lexicon among the younger speakers has an implication that younger speakers of Terik language lack practice in the language. They have not learned the Terik language enough to enable them to acquire knowledge in the basic vocabulary. There is thus, lexical loss among younger speakers of Terik. Language shift linked with loss will finally result in language death (Crystal, 2000).

Recommendations

Terik language seems to lose its territory. The parents speak to their children mainly in English or Kiswahili resulting in failure of MT transmission. Terik is considered as having

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little socio-economic value or gain. As a result these Terik speakers prefer English and Kiswahili to the detriment of Terik as a lot of Terik's native words are ceasing to exist, making it quite susceptible to endangerment. Younger speakers (children) have not learned the Terik language enough to enable them to acquire knowledge in the basic vocabulary. There is thus, lexical loss among the younger speakers. The younger generation's decline in Terik competence has an implication on its transmission to their children. According to Crystal (2000), when nobody speaks a certain language anymore that language dies. A community loses a significant amount of its cultural identity when its language dies. Hence, need to preserve this valuable possession - indigenous languages.

To increase the rate of acquisition of the language, guardians and parents should encourage children to learn and speak Terik.

To increase the rate of acquisition of the language, Parents and guardians should also speak Terik to children

The reading of Terik written materials, the listening of Terik radio in media especially among the children should be encouraged to help them acquire the basic vocabulary, functional words and grammatical features of the Terik language. Awareness should be created for the members of a speech community such as Terik to understand and know the significance of promoting and safeguarding their MT. The MT is a carrier of a people's cultural heritage. Languages are repositories of History, languages express identity, and languages contribute to the sum of human knowledge and are interesting. The notion of English as the language of intellectual, social and economic development should be demystified by developing positive attitudes towards Terik by; making indigenous languages like Terik to be more lucrative. For instance, knowledge in the local indigenous languages should enable one to qualify for jobs such as a mass media practitioner, an instructor in the language, a translator, an interpreter etc. Kenyan universities, middle level colleges and tertiary institutions should introduce indigenous languages like Terik as an educational discipline.

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