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Language Endangerment in an Urbanizing Tanzania

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Abstract:

This paper explores the relationship between socioeconomic factors and the maintenance of regional languages within Tanzania. Specifically, this paper highlights the role of the intranational movement of people on the strengthening of a regional lingua franca, Swahili. Due to the increased interactions in urban areas between people of different ethnolinguistic groups, the number of speakers of regional languages in Tanzania is quickly declining, as predicted by Krauss (1992). Preliminary results show a clear trend towards Swahili as a first language, particularly for individuals from urban areas. This trend goes against data from the last 25 years which shows Swahili predominantly as a second language (L2) as opposed to a first language (L1). The data presented in this study should serve as a catalyst for documentation efforts in the country in order to collect data before the number of speakers of the over 100 distinct regional languages begins to seriously decline.

Keywords: urbanization, linguistic suicide, Swahili, Tanzania, language maintenance

Introduction:

This research project explores the influence of Swahili[1] and urbanization on the maintenance of regional languages[2] within the United Republic of Tanzania. Previous research suggests that factors such as nationally-standardized media, urbanization, and education policy lead to a decrease in the use of regional languages. In order to assess this trend between generations, this research project focuses on male individuals between the ages of 18-55 who grew up in different regions of Tanzania. By analyzing data concerning their first and second languages, their current language use, their parents' first and second languages, and their city or town of origin, the researcher controlled for a variety of factors including geographic location, age, and ethnic self-identification. In the course of this study, the researcher explores the following research questions: 1. What is the trend concerning intergenerational maintenance of regional languages within Tanzania? 2. Is an increase in the use of Swahili contributing to the endangerment of regional languages within Tanzania? 3. Are the loss of the regional languages a result of "linguistic suicide" as defined in Beck and Lam (2008)? 4. How well do individuals maintain their first language, even after moving away from their home region? 5. How do patterns of language loss due to intranational urbanization within Tanzania compare to those of international immigrant populations? The researcher hypothesizes that the languages within Tanzania will follow the global language loss pattern presented in Krauss (1992).

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[1] The language is known in Swahili as *Kiswahili*, but will be referred to by its English name during the course of this study.

[2] These "minority languages," i.e. languages, most of which belong to the Bantu language family, will be referred to as regional languages (except Swahili), understanding that they are primarily spoken by people groups contained within one specific region of Tanzania. The author does not use the term "minority languages" because some languages represented in this study have comparable, if not larger, numbers of L1 speakers as compared to Swahili.

According to Krauss (1992), over 90% of languages in the world will be extinct[3] or moribund[4] within the next century, and a serious decline of indigenous languages has already been reported in studies such as Loh and Harmon (2010). With that context, the goal of this current study is to identify the elements that are threatening the continued use of regional languages in Tanzania. The two specific factors that this study will focus on are the ever-increasing role of Swahili in Tanzanian society and the increase in urbanization since 1967. In order to gather data concerning these variables, interviews were conducted with Catholic monks living in the Rukwa region of western Tanzania.

Background:

The social and political roles of Swahili in Tanzania have been thoroughly documented. Studies such as Abdulaziz Mkilifi (1972) and Petzell (2012) highlight the different roles English, Swahili, and the regional languages play within Tanzanian society. Abdulaziz Mkilifi (1972) introduces the term "triglossia," based on the concept of "diglossia" found in Ferguson (1959). Triglossia, according to Abdulaziz Mkilifi (1972), denotes a situation in which three languages operate discretely in a community or society. Petzell (2012) expounds on this concept in the context of Tanzanian society. She states that "English is the international language used in higher education, Swahili is the widespread national language understood by very nearly the entire population, and a smaller African language is spoken in the home" (p. 136). This triglossic situation allows for very little overlap in everyday language use. Although the description of the triglossic situation in Tanzania found in Petzell (2012) still maps almost directly to that proposed

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[3] Krauss uses the term "extinct" for languages in which there are no more living native speakers. He does, however, point out that extinct languages can be revived, e.g. Modern Hebrew.
[4] Krauss characterizes a moribund language as one in which no more children are learning the language. This condition quickly leads to language extinction.

in Mkilifi (1972), Petzell does note that Swahili poses the biggest threat to the continued use of regional languages. Petzell writes, "the minority languages in Tanzania are threatened by Swahili, (Brezinger, 2007:196) not by English [...] A growing number of speakers who start to abandon their language is a first step towards language extinction" (p. 139). Due to social pressures, which view regional languages as subordinate to Swahili, and political pressures, which outlaw the use of regional languages in schools, in the media, and at political rallies, the regional languages are only spoken within very specific contexts, and often only with family members (Petzell, 2012). Due to the national ban on regional languages within schools, and the punishments that are meted out to students heard speaking them, Swahili becomes the principal language for many students once they reach primary school age.
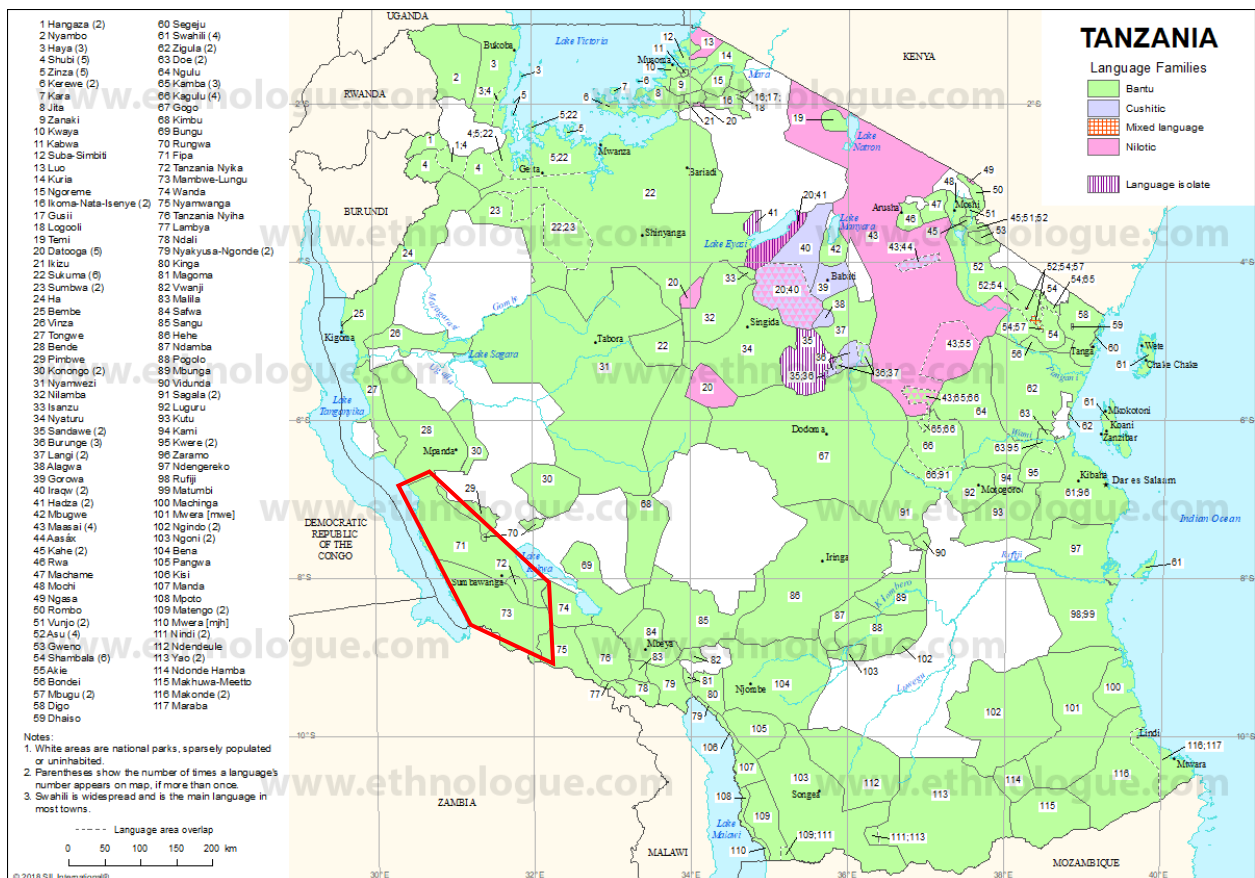

Figure 1: Tanzanian Linguistic Distribution: Rukwa region highlighted in red (Ethnologue, 2018)

This abrupt change from speaking the regional language in the home to only speaking Swahili is mirrored in the change from primary to secondary school, where Swahili becomes the forbidden language. Students caught speaking Swahili at the English-dominant secondary schools receive punishments similar to students caught speaking regional languages in primary schools (Rubanza, 2002; Rutalemwa, 2010). The Tanzanian education system, although referred to as a "bilingual system," actually depicts the triglossic situation in Tanzania (Rutalemwa, 2010). The regional language is relegated to the home, Swahili is the chief language of primary school, and English is the predominant language in secondary school and university education.

Swahili, as opposed to the regional languages, has played an important role in unifying the country both politically and socially. *Mwalimu*[5] Julius K. Nyerere, the first president of the United Republic of Tanzania and commonly referred to as the *Baba wa Taifa*,[6] utilized the language as a political instrument during the push for independence as well as during the *ujamaa*[7] period, in which a newly-unified Tanzania attempted to implement a socialist system (Blommaert, 2005). Part of this push was instituting Swahili as the language of instruction in both primary and secondary schools. Although the implementation in primary schools went smoothly, the adoption of Swahili as the language of secondary schools has yet to be realized. Recent comments by the current president of Tanzania, Dr. John Magufuli, show a renewed desire to change the language of secondary instruction from English to Swahili, but whether or not this goal will be achieved has yet to be seen.

Whereas Swahili is seen as the language of the masses, of primary education, and of the typical Tanzanian, English holds still a higher position within society. In the years in which

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[5] *English*: Teacher
[6] *English*: Father of the Nation
[7] *English*: "Familyhood", i.e. the condition of being a family; sometimes translated as "community"

Tanganyika (mainland Tanzania) was a British colony (1916-1961), English was used as the

language of higher education and government administration, and few colonized people had the

opportunity to learn the language (Bwenge, 2012). This function of English continues up until

today, where English is used in secondary and tertiary education, courts of law, and international

business. However, Swahili is now the language of most government functions. The original

institution of English at the highest levels of government and education relegated Swahili to a

lower prestige status, and therefore solidified its role as the unifying language of the common

people.

Further efforts by the British to encourage the use of Swahili, seen in the establishment of

the East African Inter-Territorial Language (Swahili) Committee (ILC) in 1930, sought to not

only standardize, but also to modernize the language (Bwenge, 2012). After independence,

Swahili was elevated to fulfill roles such as those in day-to-day domestic government functions.

However, it did not displace English in higher education or international business, where English

is still considered the international lingua franca.

Previous linguistics research also explores the effect urbanization has on language

extinction, with Krauss (1992) mentioning it as one of the driving forces behind minority

language loss in Africa. In his article concerning language death, Mufwene (2007) expounds on

the factors which lead to the extinction of a language. He names industrialization and the

resulting urbanization as two of the strongest threats. He succinctly states, "They [cities] have

also produced non-traditional dynamics of competition and selection among the languages in

contact, fostering the language of the industry as an urban vernacular and regional lingua franca,

while collapsing ethnic boundaries" (p. 8). His analysis here expresses the belief that industry,

and the consequential movement of multiethnic peoples into cities, strengthens the use of a

regional, or in the case of Tanzania, a national lingua franca.

Specific studies such as Beck and Lam (2004) and Ulasiuk (2011) highlight the effects

that dominant national languages can have on the maintenance of regional languages between

generations. Beck and Lam (2004) record the effects of the introduction of Spanish into the

Sierra Norte region of Mexico. The results of their study produced the term "linguistic suicide,"

which they define as "situations where parents who are speakers of a minority language

deliberately choose not to teach this language to their children and instead adopt a majority

language in their home" (p. 1). They identify prestige and perceived economic viability as the

most important factors in the shift to Spanish in these communities. The linguistic switch

between generations comes as a result of the belief that adopting the majority language as their

primary language will benefit their children socio-economically.

Ulasiuk (2011) approaches the issue of language extinction from a different perspective;

she analyzes the laws and policies implemented in the Russian Federation to oppress minority

linguistic communities. Much like in Tanzania, a regional lingua franca, Russian, was used in

Russia to unite different ethnic groups and support a political cause. Ulasiuk (2011) states that in

a pre-revolutionary Russia, "The Russian language was an important tool in the effort to

maintain the three basic principles upon which the political system rested: autocracy, orthodoxy

and (Russian) nationalism" (p. 72). The effect of this political implementation was the decreased

use of minority languages during this period. After a brief respite during the early Leninist

period, linguistic parity once again came under attack with the beginning of Stalin's

"Russification" plan. Although the official stance of the USSR remained one of ethnic pluralism,

the increasing spread of Russian under the auspices of the unification of country and party ideals,

along with the standardization of schools, meant that children were no longer taught in their minority languages (Ulasiuk, 2011).

These two studies demonstrate that the use of a strong national lingua franca, as opposed to that of an international lingua franca, poses the greatest threat to the continued use of minority languages in a specific country. Whereas the switch from Upper Necaxa Totonac to Spanish in Beck and Lam (2004) was a self-motivated decision, based on the language attitudes and beliefs of the parents, the shift from using minority languages to Russian discussed in Ulasiuk (2011) was forced upon the populations living there in the form of government policy. In reference to these studies, the question that the present study seeks to answer is whether language loss in Tanzania is due to one, both, or neither of these factors.

In Tanzania, the regional languages are only spoken in specific contexts, such as with one's family or ethnolinguistic group. Without frequent use, it is natural that L1 proficiency would begin to decline. Studies such as Sebina (2014), conducted in Botswana, show that the L1 can show signs of attrition even while in the native environment. Although the participants in this study are still living in the same country, the influence of Swahili creates a competitive linguistic environment, and so their L1 is no longer the dominant language, even though they are still in their country of origin.

According to *Ethnologue*, there are approximately 126 languages in Tanzania, which would imply there are more than 100 distinct people groups within its borders (Lewis, 2009). To create a unified Tanzania, President Nyerere understood that a national identity must supersede that of traditional ethnic affiliations, and Swahili, a national lingua franca, was the key to that idea. As the population began to urbanize following independence, cultural and tribal barriers were broken down, and an urban Tanzanian community was formed.

Tanzania	1967 Census	1978 Census	1988 Census	2002 Census	2012 Census
Mainland Urban Population (Growth rate % p.a.)	685,092	2,257,921 (11.5%)	3,999,882 (5.9%)	7,554,838 (4.7%)	12,701,238 (5.3%)
Mainland Total Population (Growth rate % p.a.)	11,975,757	17,036,499 (3.3%)	22,507,047 (2.8%)	33,461,849 (2.9%)	43,625,354 (2.7%)
Urbanization (%)	5.7	13.3	17.8	22.6	29.1

Figure 2: Population Summary Data from 1967-2012 Censuses (Wenban-Smith, 2014)

Urbanization data collected from censuses in Tanzania from 1967, 1978, 1988, 2002, and 2012, viewed in respect to population numbers from these dates, give researchers the ability to determine the rate of increase of urbanized populations during these time periods. The largest growth in urbanization occurred between the years 1967 and 1978, shortly after independence, in which urbanization rose from 5.7% of the population in 1967 to 13.3% in 1978. The data continues to show an increasing trend in urbanization in the remaining periods, with the most recent data from 2012 showing 29.1% of the population as urban (Wenban-Smith, 2014).

There is a considerable body of research investigating rates of urbanization in Tanzania since unification in 1964, but the data primarily focuses on economic and political issues. This study, performed in the context of available research concerning urbanization rates in Tanzania (for full report, see Wenban-Smith, 2014), aims to confirm a connection between urbanization in Tanzania and a decrease in the use of regional languages. By comparing first language (L1) and second language (L2) differences in participants from different towns and municipalities, the effect of urbanization on Swahili as an L1 can be assessed. This is not a new phenomenon either,

and L1 loss has been recorded in a number of studies (see Sebina, 2014; Pavlenko, 2004; Köpke et al., 2007). However, the majority of these studies focus on participants who are moving internationally, not intranationally. For L1 loss to occur within a country, the country must be linguistically diverse and the speaker must be considerably isolated from other speakers of their L1, or there must be some other incentive to use the L2 instead of the L1.

In addition to assessing how language loss occurs intranationally, the data presented in this study will be compared to language loss patterns in international immigrant communities. Language loss in immigrant communities generally occurs within three generations (Hao and Ng, 2010). In a three-generational family context, if the parents are the first generation of immigrants to the new country, then they are typically bilingual in both their mother tongue and the language of the society they live in. The grandparents' generation generally remain monolingual speakers of their mother tongue, although they may eventually learn small amounts of the new national language. The children, the third generation, are typically monolingual and are only likely to speak or understand the mother tongue if their grandparents reside with the family (Alba et al. 2002).

Specific case studies of immigrant populations, such as Hao and Ng (2010) and Zhang and Slaughter-Defoe (2009), reinforce the "diachronic pattern of language shift" from Fishman et al. (1985), which shows the loss of the minority language over a period of three generations. Hao and Ng (2010) observe an intergenerational language shift in Chinese Singaporean communities. Their study explores how institutional decisions in Singapore affect the use of minority languages from India, China and Malaysia. Hao and Ng (2010) also explore the effects of institutionalized linguistic prestige in Singapore in the form of language education requirements, seen in the obligation for all ethnically Chinese students to learn Mandarin, all

ethnically Indian students to learn Tamil, and all ethnically Malaysian students to learn Malay. This causes other languages or dialects represented in immigrant populations from those countries, such as Hokkien, Telugu, and Javanese, to be repressed (Hao and Ng (2010). Their study demonstrates the positive linguistic effects on language maintenance that comes with having extended family members (typically grandparents) living with the family. In their analysis, the researchers also note that "the older generation's decision to pass down languages to subsequent generations depends on the socio-political status of the language, as well as government policy and community support" (p. 73). In the context of this study, the linguistic influence from the grandparents may be outweighed by the stigma or relative socio-economic prestige associated with the regional language.

Zhang and Slaughter-Defoe (2009), in contrast, analyze the language attitudes and opinions of Chinese immigrants to the United States. They consider the opinions of two generations, the parents and the children, in order to understand the ethnic and social roles played by the language, as well as its potential viability for the coming generation. Issues raised by the children in this study include a lack of identification with the parents' culture and home country, as well as a perceived lack of usefulness for their parents' language.

In addition to providing context, the background information provides a theoretical rationalization for this study. The studies from Petzell (2012), Abdulaziz Mklifi (1972), and Bwenge (2012) give an overview of the current linguistic situation in Tanzania, data available from Wenban-Smith (2014) discusses macro-level economic and urbanization trends in Tanzania, and Krauss (1992) and Mufwene (2007) discuss current global trends concerning language loss and its relationship to urbanization.

Methodology:

In order to collect data, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with Catholic monks living in the Mvimwa Holy Spirit Abbey, located 1.5 hours west of Sumbawanga in the Rukwa region of Tanzania. The interviews lasted 6-12 minutes and the audio was recorded by the researcher. Although the participants were considered "Exempt" according to Institutional Review Board (IRB) standards, verbal consent for both the interview and the audio recording were still obtained before the official interview began. Because of the limited English proficiency of some of the participants, some of the interviews were conducted in both English and Swahili, and in a couple of instances, an intermediary was used for clarification. Questions asked during the interview focused primarily on demographic information, such as age, place of origin, and linguistic background.[8] Data was also collected concerning the linguistic background of the participants' parents in order to establish a trend between generations. After the demographic and background information was collected, the participants were asked to perform three self-judgment tasks, the first two of which were based on a 10-point Likert scale. The first two tasks required them to assess their current fluency in both their first and their second language, and the third task required them to estimate their current first language use (within the past year) as a percentage.

After the conclusion of data collection, the researcher continued to do background research and began to informally assess the data. Interviews were transcribed into Microsoft Word files, and were used for qualitative analysis. The interview analysis was based off of *Basics for Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*

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[8] For a complete list of topics, please see Appendix A.

(2008), which provides research-based recommendations for coding qualitative factors such as language choice and emotional expressions.

Participants:

The participants (n = 30) are all Catholic monks living in the Rukwa region of Tanzania, near the western border with Zambia. The monks all fell between the ages of 18 and 52, with a mean participant age of 32, in the middle generation, and a median participant age of 28. However, the participants originate from all over the country, from both urban and rural areas, and of the 26 mainland regions that comprise Tanzania, 10 are represented in this study.

Figure 3: Approximate location of Mvimwa Holy Spirit Abbey

Although this distribution does not give a complete representation of the entire country, the regions are not the primary focus of this study. In order to judge the effect of urbanization on

linguistic diversity, the researcher had to gather data concerning the specific cities of origin of the participants.

The monastery, as a centralized location, creates a rare pool of participants that have insight into the difficulties in maintaining an L1 after an intranational move. Linguistically, the monastery functions much like a microcosm of an urban city. It brings together speakers of various L1s from all over Tanzania and makes them live in a very close community. Naturally, as with the rest of the country, Swahili is the predominant language for communication between these individuals of various ethnolinguistic origins.

The participants are divided into three age groups. Each group comprises 15 years: 10-24 (although participants were 18-24 for the purposes of this study), 25-39, and 40-55. There is the younger generation, those under 25 (n = 9), the middle generation, those from the age of 25-40 (n = 10), and the older generation, those 40 and older (n = 11). The average age of participants with Swahili as an L1 (n = 10) was 25, while the average age of participants with a regional language as an L1 (n = 19) was 37. One participant, #29, had English as his L1. This is an outlier for the purposes of this study, but will be examined further in the "Discussion" section.

A notable drawback of this study is the inability to directly assess the prospect of passing on the language to the next generation. As Catholic monks, they will never have children of their own. In order to gauge the linguistic trajectory for the next generation, questions were posed to the monks concerning their siblings and their siblings' families. If the participant did have siblings with children, questions were asked concerning their home language use to determine whether the regional languages are being taught to the next generation.

Participants represent both urban and rural areas, with some participants coming from the local Rukwa district, primarily from Sumbawanga, and some participants coming from cities

such as Mbeya, Shinyanga, Kasulu, Njombe, and Mpanda. When asking for information

pertaining to geographic origin, some participants initially attempted to give the researcher the

nearest large city or the name of their district instead of the village they came from. After

clarification, some participants gave a more specific answer and approximate location in the

district. Because of the lack of dependable census data from these small villages, some

population estimates were taken from the maximum that could be in the ward. Isemelo, the

hometown of Participant #17 located in the Shinyanga district, did not have a dependable source

of population data. Some participants also offered estimates for the population of their town or

ward.

Results:

  This research project sought to answer five primary research questions, the first of which

focused on the current and future state of regional languages in Tanzania. It asks, "What is the

trend concerning intergenerational maintenance of regional languages within Tanzania?" This

topic, briefly touched on in the "Background" section, historically points toward Swahili being

spoken primarily as an L2, rather than an L1 (Mkilifi 1972, Petzell 2012).

  The average age for participants that had Swahili as a L1 (n = 10) was 25 and the average

age of those with a regional language as an L1 was 37 (n = 19). Although the data collected

shows that Swahili is still primarily spoken as an L2, it also reflects a generational shift towards

Swahili an L1. This gap in average age between these two groups of speakers, i.e. those who

have Swahili as an L1 and those who have another regional language as an L1, points towards a

shift in linguistic norms in Tanzania. The younger generation (participants younger than 25, n =

9) overwhelming has Swahili as an L1 rather than an L2 (n = 7/9 participants in the younger

generation). In contrast, the middle generation had only two participants with Swahili as an L1 (n = 2/10 participants in the middle generation). The older generation followed a similar trend, with only one participant in this age group having Swahili as an L1 (n = 1/11 participants in the older generation). Concerns with this data will be discussed in the next section, since there are potentially multiple factors affecting this generational divide, but the stark contrast between participants below and above the age of 25 is indicative of a larger trend.

As the one participant in the younger generation with a regional language as his L1, Participant #27, who spoke Kifipa, is originally from a small village in the rural part of the Rukwa region, it is unsurprising he speaks a regional language as his L1 given the rural-urban divide in the data. Data concerning the effect of urbanization on Swahili as an L1 will be discussed further in reference to research question #5.

The trend seen in these interviews points towards a shift from Swahili primarily as an L2 to primarily as an L1, especially for people who were raised in an urban environment. This is a notable shift, and it is tangentially mentioned in Petzell (2012). The data collected in this study reinforces that belief, but it also provides concrete evidence of this linguistic shift. Of the nine participants under the age of 25, seven spoke Swahili as an L1, and six spoke English as an L2. Here, the role of the regional language in the household and community is dissolved, due to urbanization or other societal shifts, Swahili becomes the predominant language for the children (and potentially for the parents as well, in a situation of linguistic suicide), and English becomes the L2 where it was previously the third language (L3).

The second research question focuses more directly on the role of Swahili in Tanzania, and asks, "Is an increase in the use of Swahili contributing to the endangerment of regional languages within Tanzania?" To collect data to answer this research question, the researcher

asked specifically about the participants' maintenance of their regional language after they had left their home region. Because the monks came from all over the country to Mvimwa, they were no longer surrounded by speakers of their regional L1. As seen in the discussion of the results for research question one, there is a generational shift in regard to Swahili as an L1. The question is whether this trend is being affected by an increase in the use of Swahili, particularly as an L1, although also used as an L2, especially in ethnolinguistically-diverse communities and in situations of linguistic suicide. This is a quantitative question, but without a larger data set, it cannot be answered definitively. This issue is also touched on in Petzell (2012), who argues that Swahili does have an effect on the loss of regional languages, however the true extent of that effect is hard to measure.

Therefore, for participants who do not have Swahili as their L1, or for participants who are not from the Rukwa region and do not have the benefit of speaking Kifipa (the primary regional language of the Rukwa region), Swahili is their only option linguistically. Some of the monks, particularly speakers of Kifipa and Sukuma, would sometimes speak with other members of their ethnolinguistic group, but even in Sumbawanga most of the interactions were in Swahili and not in Kifipa.

In addition to issues of prestige, individual attitudes and opinions can also shape the languages people choose to use or pass on to the next generation. These attitudes, which are influenced by historical, cultural, and political beliefs, affect the linguistic choices that everyone makes in their day-to-day interactions. In the course of the interviews, multiple participants shared their opinions on the role of the regional languages, Swahili, and English in Tanzanian culture and education. For example, Participant #21, who was a member of the young generation and from an urban regional, did not understand when I asked him why didn't speak Kisukuma,

his ethnolinguistic heritage language. He explained, "because of urbanization […] I don't speak

Sukuma because I am learning in Mbeya, I live in Mbeya town. That is why I don't know [much]

Sukuma. But I am a Sukuma." To Participant #21, it was natural that he did not speak Sukuma

because he was raised in Mbeya, a large urban city. Although he still self-identifies as a Sukuma,

and he speaks a little of the language, he did not express any inherent value or necessity in

speaking Sukuma in a city such as Mbeya. In contrast, Participant #15, who was from the middle

generation, spoke Kifipa as his L1. When asked when and why he used Kifipa, he explained that

he only used the language to communicate with his family, primarily with his grandmother, who

only spoke Kifipa. In this way Participant #15 highlights the importance of multigenerational

maintenance of an ethnolinguistic language, and this example shows the positive effects that a

grandparent can have on the acquisition of a regional language as an L1. As most participants did

not indicate value placed upon the regional languages outside of their role as a cultural unifier, it

is understandable that most of the younger participants did not speak a regional language (as an

L1 or otherwise) unless they grew up with their grandparents and other native speakers of the

language.

  For the self-assessment concerning percentage of L1 used per year, not one of the

participants who spoke a regional language as an L1 said they spoke their L1 more than their L2,

Swahili. In terms of language maintenance, this means they were spending less than 50% of their

time speaking their L1, which was the predominantly-spoken language during their childhood.

For speakers with a regional language as an L1 (n = 19), the average of their estimated annual

use of their L1 was 14%, with some participants giving percentages between 30-40%, but with

the majority (n = 13) of the participants from this demographic giving numbers between 0-10%.

The participants were also asked to self-assess their fluency in their L1. With a decrease in the use of the language, a decrease in fluency should also be expected. Half of the participants from the older generation (n = 11) with a regional language as their L1 (n = 10/11), rated their L1 fluency between 3-7 on the Likert scale test (n = 5/10). Of the other five, four rated their fluency in their regional language as a 10, meaning that they detected no decrease in fluency.

A decrease in fluency over time, especially in an L1, would be more noticeable in the older generation. Fluency is naturally tied to how much or how often the language is used, and if the participant's L1 were a regional language, the opportunities they have to use it may be sporadic. Looking at the older generation, of those between the ages of 40-55 (n = 11), all except one had a regional language as their L1. The only participant between the ages of 40-55 with a non-regional language, Participant #24, had Swahili as his L1, but noted that both his parents were professors, and that they decided to teach him Swahili instead of Bena in an effort to benefit him in school.

The third research question explores the phenomenon of linguistic suicide. The question reads, "Are the loss of the regional languages a result of 'linguistic suicide' as defined in Beck and Lam (2008)?" As presented in the background section, linguistic suicide is defined by Beck and Lam (2004) as "situations where parents who are speakers of a minority language deliberately choose not to teach this language to their children and instead adopt a majority language in their home" (p. 1). The decision to not teach children a minority language can stem from a variety of reasons, both personal and systemic. In many countries, such as the example presented in Beck and Lam (2008), the regional or minority language is abandoned in favor of the dominant language due a perceived economic or educational benefit for their children. This is especially the case in Tanzania, in which the regional languages are not taught in formal

institutions, and Swahili is the official language of primary education. To determine the effect of

parents' choices on the second generation of regional language speakers, data was collected

concerning the participants' parents' first and second languages, as well as the language that was

mostly used in the home while they were growing up.

In the researcher's informal and formal conversations with Tanzanians, it became evident

that linguistic suicide in the country is also a result of relative prestige. The regional languages

are not seen as necessary or even as effective modes of communication, and the younger

generation sees little value in learning or maintaining the regional outside of its cultural value, as

is mentioned by Participant #21, who is from a rural village but spoke Swahili as his L1.

Of the younger generation (n = 9), only one participant recorded the regional language

being primarily spoken in the home, even though almost all of the parents of the participants

from this group spoke Swahili as an L2, rather than an L1. Some of the younger generation

reported learning the regional language as an L2 or L3, especially if they lived with their

grandparents or were in close contact with them. This signifies the shift from Swahili as an L2 to

an L1, but also shows that this shift is voluntary. Because Swahili is the language used in

primary school education, many parents choose to only use Swahili in the home, believing that it

will benefit their children in their long-term educational goals. From a research perspective, this

thought process is actually detrimental to the child's educational success, following studies such

as Marian and Shook (2012), which show bilingualism having a number of cognitive benefits.

Although this project is not an analysis of the efficacy of the subtractive bilingual system

found in the Tanzanian education system, the languages used and encouraged in the school

system shape the prestige that various languages have in the country. The interview with

Participant #24, a monk who was also superintendent at the local Catholic school, which was in

the process of transitioning from Swahili to English as their language of instruction (LOI),

expressed the prevailing attitude towards the use of regional languages in the school system. He

reinforced the belief that regional languages have no place in formal education, and he argued

that the primary school system should be taught in both English and Swahili. He stated that

without fluent English language skills, Tanzanians would not be able to be successful in

education and business.

The fourth research question ties directly into research questions #1 and #2, and asks,

"How well do individuals maintain their first language, even after moving away from their home

region?" L1 maintenance, especially for L1 speakers of regional languages, is affected by the use

of Swahili in the area they live in, as well as by the potential for communication with other

native speakers of their L1. The results concerning language maintenance due to intranational

movement are unclear, but the data does point to L1 fluency loss over long periods of time, as

seen with the older generation. As four participants in the older generation reported an L1

fluency as six or less on the ten-point self-assessed Likert scale, it would reinforce the theory that

loss of L1 fluency can occur intranationally. However, the other five participants from this

specific group (older generation with regional language as L1) rated their L1 fluency as strong,

with 4/5 participants assessing their L1 fluency in their regional language as a 10.

The interpretation of this data is not definitive, but it does offer an insight into how the

regional languages are maintained after an intranational move. For the participants of the middle

and younger generation who spoke a regional language as an L1 (n = 9), all but two rated their

L1 proficiency as a 10. This reinforces the theory that the loss in fluency for a regional L1 over

time is over a period of decades, such as is the case with the older generation in the study.

For the middle group, most of whom had a regional language as an L1 as well, the effect of intranational movement on language maintenance is not seen as with the older generation. The average self-reported L1 fluency for the older generation was 7.5, which is considerably lower than the middle generation, whose average self-reported L1 fluency was 9.4, a 25% increase. As most of the middle generation is clustered between the ages of 25-28, they have most likely been living in Rukwa region for less than ten years. It would be beneficial to conduct a multiyear study that asked for the same fluency assessment 5 or 10 years from now, when the middle generation begins to move into the older generation. In contrast, the younger generation, most of whom had Swahili as an L1, rated their L1 maintenance as consistently high, with all L1 speakers of Swahili rating their fluency as a 9 or 10. Unlike the older generations, Swahili is their native language, and they use it in everyday life.

The fifth research question deals with more quantitative data, and it maps regional language loss to urbanization data taken from Wenban-Smith (2014). It asks, "How do patterns of language loss due to intranational urbanization within Tanzania compare to those of international immigrant populations?" As mentioned in articles from Krauss (1992), Mufwene (2007), and Petzell (2012), urbanization is one of the driving factors behind language loss in sub-Saharan Africa. The census data, available in the "Background" section, summarizes data from 1967, 1978, 1988, 2002, and 2012. The urban density, based on the population at the time, show a steady increase in urbanization since 1967. By tracking the birth years of the participants and comparing it to the increase in percentage of urbanization, the slow shift from regional L1s to Swahili can be highlighted.

	pre-1967	1967-1978	1978-1988	1988-2002	2002-2012
% Urbanized	5.7	13.3	17.8	22.6	29.1
%Δ in urban pop.	-	+7.6%	+4.5%	+4.8%	+6.5%
# of participants represented (n)	1	9	4	16	0
Swahili as L1	0/1	1/9	1/4	8/16	-

Figure 4: Urbanization Data and Swahili as L1

As the percentage of urbanized population increases, the proportion of L1 speakers of Swahili increases. Although no participants were represented in the last census period, 2002-2012, the trend from the first four groups shows a gradual increase in L1 speakers in each period. If further data were to be collected, collecting data from participants born in the years between 2002-2012 would be useful to see if the trend continues. The effects of urbanization on language loss are already well-documented, but this study shows current data trends in Tanzania. If urbanization data collected 2012-2019 were available, it would highlight the continued increase in urbanization as Tanzania's metropolitan centers continue to expand.

There is a clear correlation between speaking Swahili as an L1 and an increase in population. In Figure 5 below, along the x-axis are the populations of towns and cities represented in this study, in increasing population, and the numbers on the y-axis represent the number of participants from that specific location. The light blue represents participants who do not have Swahili as an L1, and the black represents participants who did have Swahili as an L1.
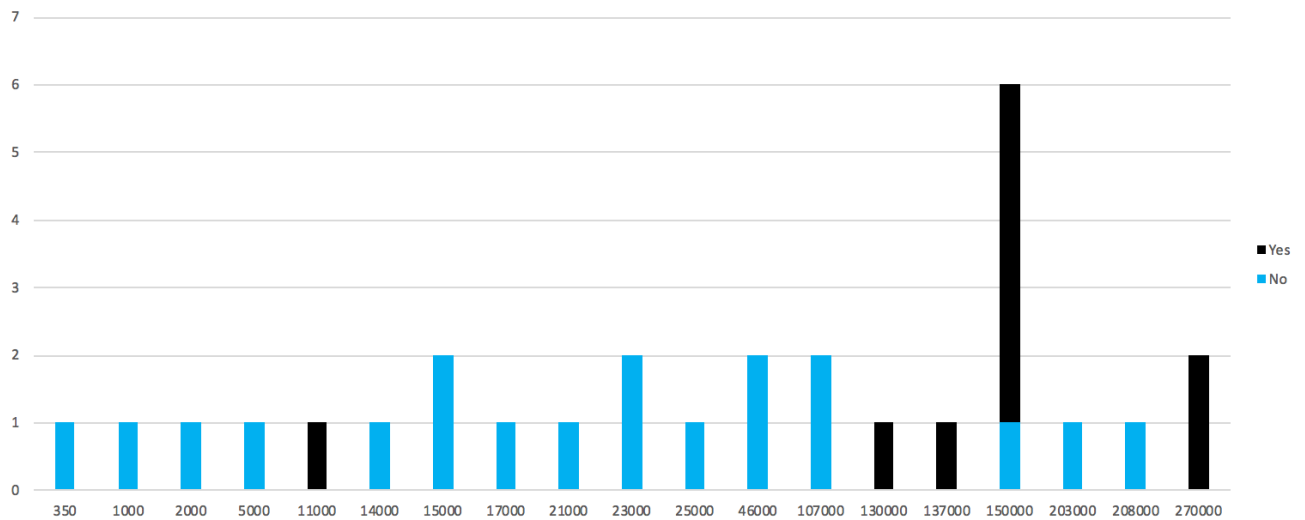
Figure 5: Number of participants vs. Population

All except one of the participants who spoke Swahili as an L1 were from a city with more than 130,000 residents. The one participant from the older generation with Swahili as his L1, Participant #24, spoke Swahili due to the effects of linguistic suicide, as his parents taught him Swahili instead of Bena in the hopes that he would perform better in school. This graph confirms the hypothesis that people from urban areas are more important likely to speak Swahili as an L1.

Of particular interest is the influence of ethnic bonds on linguistic maintenance. Although ethnic groups in Tanzania generally divide up along linguistic borders, there is considerable variation in how close those communities are socially. Two of these ethnolinguistic groups are particularly important to this study, the Sukuma[9] and the Fipa.[10] Sukuma, meaning "people of the south," are the largest single ethnic group in Tanzania and have lived in the Lake Victoria Basin for hundreds of years ("Sukuma"). They are part of a larger ethnic group, the Greater Unyamwezi, and are the counterpart of the northern Unyamwezi tribe, the Nyamwezi. Although there is regional variation in pronunciation, the dialects of Kisukuma[11] are all mutually

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[9] *Sukuma people*: Basukuma
[10] *Fipa people*: Wafipa
[11] *English*: Sukuma language (Kisukuma is used to differentiate between the people group and the language)

intelligible. Kisukuma and Nyamwezi exist on a dialectal continuum, but the speakers of the languages themselves consider them to be two different languages.

Due to their large numbers and close ethnolinguistic ties, Sukuma speakers consider Kisukuma to be an integral part of their identity. This sentiment was repeatedly expressed in interviews with monks who were of Sukuma origin, and is reflected in the data as well. For members of the older generation with Sukuma as a first language (n = 3), two reported their Sukuma fluency as a 10. As they are in the older generation, it would be expected that their L1 fluency would have decreased over time, such as is the case with the speakers of Kiha, Gogo, and Bena (Participants #2, #10, and #18).

The Fipa people, who traditionally live in the basin area between Lake Rukwa and Lake Tanganyika, are the primary ethnolinguistic group in the Rukwa region. As one third of the participants were from the Rukwa region, maintaining their L1, Kifipa, would be far easier than for someone who originally came from another region of Tanzania. They would also have significantly more opportunities to speak Kifipa with other native speakers, and they are most likely in closer proximity to their family than other monks who come from across the country. Of the five native speakers of Kifipa in the study, four assessed their L1 fluency as a 10. The geographic location of Mvimwa Abbey certainly affected both the population available for study as well as their ability to maintain their regional L1.

The question remains of how intergenerational language loss intranationally compares to the three-generational language loss paradigm found in immigrant communities. Because the next generation could not be directly assessed in the study, and because monks do not have children, questions concerning their nieces' and nephews' language use were posed. Although not all participants had nieces or nephews, or knew specifically about their daily language use,

the few that did comment noted that they did not think they were being taught the regional language at home.

In conclusion, the first research question, which relates directly to the fourth and fifth, is quantitative in nature and dependent upon the self-reported use by the participants. Of the speakers whose L1 was not Swahili, none reported using the L1 more than 30% of the time during their daily lives. Because these speakers were generally of the older generation, the equivalent of the first generation in the three-generational paradigm, this accelerated decline in the use of their L1 after moving from their home region is important to note.

The second and third research questions can be answered by the participants' self-reported attitudes concerning the role of Swahili and regional languages within the country. The question this study sought to answer can be summed up as such: Is Swahili the primary source of decline in regional language use due to an elevated status as well as for utilitarian reasons? Almost every participant stated that their use of Swahili was due to its "usefulness" or "better ability to express [myself]." These quotes display the attitudes and opinions of L1 and L2 speakers of Swahili in Tanzania. The middle generation of participants, as the equivalent of the second generation in the three-generation immigrant paradigm, are the ones who decided whether or not to teach the third generation the regional language. Attitudes such as these which favor Swahili are only strengthened in urban areas where social and cultural barriers are broken down, and will be the driving force behind language extinction in Tanzania in the coming years.

Data Limitations and Concerns:

The data concerning the generational divide in L1s of the participants is also affected by the difference in urbanization of the participants. The younger generation (participants younger

than 25, n = 9) are overwhelming from urban communities such as Sumbawanga, Mbeya, and Songea. This weakens the argument that the younger generation is speaking Swahili only due to a shift in cultural norms, or a generational difference based on linguistic attitudes, but it does support the argument that an increase in urbanization leads to a generational divide in L1s, which supports the regional lingua franca, Swahili, and relegates the regional languages to a secondary or tertiary position.

Self-assessment of qualitative factors, especially attitudes and even proficiency levels, are highly sensitive and may be considerably different than an actual objective assessment. However, assessment of the way participants answer questions can reveal deeper held beliefs, especially in relationship to linguistic hierarchies. When conducting the interviews, it became apparent that some of the participants were underestimating their L1 fluency. For example, two of the participants, #1 and #30, both of whom were in the younger generation, rated their L1 fluency in Swahili as 9 and 8 respectively. It is highly unlikely that their fluency was not comparable to the other participants in this group, but rather that they were underestimating themselves.

Furthermore, it was unclear how many of the participants were actually native bilinguals of a regional language and Swahili. Some participants reported that Swahili was the primary language spoken in their home, but that some of the regional language would be used. Some described situations that were almost perfectly bilingual, with about half of the communication being done in the regional language and half being done in Swahili. Every member of the younger generation, except for one, reported using mostly or entirely Swahili at home, with one participant from rural Rukwa reporting only Kifipa being spoken at home.

The participant pool presents its own set of issues. Although it does provide advantages, especially in terms of diversity of age and ethnolinguistic origin, it is difficult to assess the next generation of regional language speakers. Because monks do not have children, the only way to directly assess the continuation of the regional language was to ask if the participants had any siblings who had children, and whether those children were being taught the regional language in the home.

Participant #29 was considered an outlier for the purposes of this study. Very few children in Tanzania speak English as an L1 or natively, and those that do are generally of a higher socioeconomic status. This participant, who was raised in Songea, a large urban area in the district of Ruvuma, learned English as an L1, although his speech was not as fluid or well-structured as that of a native speaker. According to his interview, he was sent to an international boarding school in Songea that was English-only. However, his parents only spoke Swahili at home, and he was still living in a primarily Swahili environment. He rated his L1 fluency, in English, as a 7, and rated his Swahili fluency as a 10, noting that he believed his English had gotten worse since coming to Mvimwa. Although his case is out of the ordinary, it expresses valuable information concerning the relative prestige of English and Swahili. This participant, who came from a middle-class family, was sent to the English-only boarding school with the belief that it would benefit him academically and economically in the future. However, even at international schools, the English education program probably does not appropriately prepare students to perform in subject-area classes entirely in English for secondary school.

Missing eight years from the younger generation also means that the data set is not complete, and data from those between the ages of 10-18 would hopefully continue to enforce the trend. However, the absence of the data in the current study means that the youngest

generation is skewed towards the older end of the 15 year window (ages 10-24). If further data were to be collected, it would ideally be collected from participants born between the years of 2000-2012 in order to have a full representation of the younger generation of participants.

It would be crucial to be able to survey this next generation in order to continue to confirm a positive correlation between Swahili as an L1 and an increase in urbanization rates. A follow-up study, especially one that focuses strictly on people who have moved from rural to urban communities in the last 20 years, would provide valuable data concerning the specific effects of urbanization on L1 maintenance and intergenerational use. A comparative study that took a larger sample size from both urban and rural populations and compared rates of the occurrence of Swahili as an L1 would either further validate or further question the rate of language loss in Tanzania.

Discussion and Conclusions:

This study provides a glimpse into the current trends concerning language shift in Tanzania. Although a larger sample size would provide a more accurate representation, this data is of use to researchers interested in work in documentation efforts for the number of regional languages declining in Tanzania. Because the declining trend follows that predicted in Krauss (1992), documentation efforts should be directed towards low-resource and endangered languages. This study also provides more recent data reinforcing the triglossic situation that is presented in studies such as Mkilifi (1972) and Petzell (2012). In the recent relevant literature concerning language shifts due cultural and political norms, such as Blommaert (2013) and Bwenge (2012), the effect of urbanization on language shift is not discussed. The role of this

factor will become increasingly important in the coming years as the population of Tanzania continues to shift from primarily rural to primarily urban.

The data analyzed in relationship to these five research questions reinforces the hypothesis that the preeminence of Swahili in Tanzania is slowing causing the shift from regional languages to Swahili as an L1. As Tanzania continues to urbanize in the coming years, and less importance is put onto ethnolinguistic affiliation, the regional languages will lose native speakers quickly. This study should serve as a catalyst for both documentation and internal cultural revitalization efforts before the number of speakers begins to decline. The similarity between the three-generation language loss structure in international immigrant communities and intranational urban communities highlights the difficulty in maintaining a regional language between generations. Ideally a future study with a larger sample size would reinforce the validity of this hypothesis and would be able to gather data relating to more recent urbanization trends.

If a comparable study looking at L1 maintenance due to intranational movement were to be performed, it would be useful to see if results were similar with urban populations. Potential research topics would be whether people who move from one region to another, but into a city, retain their language better than the monks, who live in a more rural area. Some thought-provoking questions for future research are: "How are linguistic and ethnic bonds in Tanzania formed in urban environments different from those formed in rural environments?", "In these urbanized minority ethnolinguistic communities, how much communication is done in the regional L1?", and "How much of daily communication is done in Swahili, and how long (years or generations) does the shift from regional L1 to Swahili take?"

In a grander scope, the importance of linguistic documentation and revitalization efforts lie foremost in each language's individual cultural value. For every language, there exists a

group of people who speak it and an oral history that depends on it. In addition to the vast

historical and cultural value that is contained within each oral tradition, every language that is

studied provides valuable insight concerning the evolution of linguistic diversity and typology.

Appendix A

Information requested during the interview process:

- First and last name (not to be published)

- Age

- City/Town of origin

- Region of origin

- First language (L1)

- Second language (L2)

- Other languages that they speak (OL)

- Self-rated first language fluency (FLF)

- Self-rated second language fluency (SLF)

- Mother's first language

- Father's first language

- Mother's other language(s)

- Father's other language(s)

- Language spoken at home as a child

- Current annual first language use (as a percentage)

- Whether the participants had siblings

  - If yes, whether their siblings had children

    - If yes, then whether their nieces and nephews were learning the regional language

- Whether their grandparents lived at home with them when they were children

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