

The Contribution of the Bantu Mother Languages to Tanzanian Socio-economic Development through Media

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Abstract

The study of mother language has been given much attention on the extent of which the language can be used as language of instruction in schools Qooro (2003); Simire (2004); and Rubagumya (1996) just to mention but a few. The concern relating to various aspect of mother language such as mother language in Socio-economic development through media has not well explained. This paper intends to discuss the contribution of Bantu Mother Language to Tanzanian socio-economic development through media. The objective of this paper was to show the extent of which media can use mother language to catalyze the social and economical issues in Tanzania. This study was guided by The Exploratory approach by Thornborrow (1998) as the theoretical framework. The study was a qualitative using several ethnic community languages that we refer as a Bantu Languages as the case study. There are only few countries in Africa, such as Tanzania, Ethiopia, Somalia and most of the Arabic speaking countries, which opted to develop their indigenous *linguae francae* to serve as national languages. If we consider the case of Tanzania, Ethiopia and Egypt, Kiswahili, Amharic and Arabic respectively, have been used as languages of education, trade and commerce. Both focus group and interview will be used as tools for data collection. The findings of this reveal that helpful in building a case to the language planner and policy maker on the necessity of officially allowing the use of mother language in broadcasting to the localities. Unless mother language is used in Radio Stations and other media, the socio-economic development in Tanzanian rural will be far from reality.

Key words: Mother language, Media, Socio-economic, Bantu language

1.0 Introduction

The government of Tanzania has been insisting the use of Kiswahili in socio-economical activities. On the other hand Bantu Mother Language has not given any much attention. It has been urged in the literatures that the use of Kiswahili can bring unit, facilitates more development and other national cultural activities. Different media decide to use two languages in providing information but the real situation in rural areas whereby the socio-economical activities take place but the majority of the village members have been using their Bantu Mother languages such as Sukuma, Sambia, Chagga, Haya, Makonde, and Gogo, just to mention but a few. But as the paper will indicates, in Tanzanian context, the communities does not understand neither Kiswahili nor foreign language such as English and Chinese are used effectively. Crystal (1971) sees language as the unique, distinctive element that differentiates man and human society from the animals. Without language, there can be no successful execution of human activity. Therefore, language could be said to be a means of communication. This paper discusses the extent of which Bantu Mother Languages can be used in different media can be used to foster the socio-economical development, that is to say, the society will get the appropriate and relevancy information through the language which is well understood by them. Now, let us expand the discussion by looking briefly on the issue of media. The media that are considered in by the society and can contribute in the spread of the information are Social media such as WhatsApp, Instagram, Imo, Wikipedia Blog, Newsletters, Newspapers and Radio. In this paper we will we consider radio as the case study. The choice of radio has been made due to the fact that, radio covers a large part of Tanzania and it has come as a traditional media in disseminating information as compared to other categories of media. Through different media

have been used as the source of information but in this paper the radio is selected as the medium which covers the large area. Thus, radio is accessible to majority.

Multilingualism has therefore been viewed as problem rather than an asset that can be exploited to “unity in diversity”. Moreover, scholars and governments in Tanzania see language policies adopted at the end of colonial rule as the genesis of the good or bad practices observed in Tanzania. For many African states, important influences on the prominence, extension and functional use of languages in post-colonial times were already established during the experience of colonial occupation, not only as the result of the creation of borders which put together various ethno linguistic groups as members of future states, but also through specific language related policies and activities (Simpson 2008:2). For instance, in education, usually the kind of education offered to Africans was one to prepare them for blue-collar jobs, and thus the Bantu Mother languages were used as media of instruction in domestic domain such as at the market, traditional ceremony and dances, *shamba* work and other kinship responsibilities.

The media are always there, and have come to be taken for granted as an integral part of most people’s lives. Scannel (1988), in account of the social role of broadcasting, argues that even the language, used to talk about Radio programming reflects this ordinariness, this taken-for-granted place in our lives. The expression there’s nothing on Radio has come to mean there’s nothing I want to watch rather than describing an actual state of affairs where there is really nothing being broadcast if you switch on your set. Beyond television the other forms of mass media cannot be underestimated in the process of developing socio-economic issues and it was worth investigating its influence on the mother language into different sphere of life in Tanzania.

Thus, it appears that the media, especially Radio, is an important agent in cognitive socialization. Beyond Radio the other forms of mass media cannot be underestimated in the process of its contributions towards socio-economical development in Tanzania. Secondly, it was important to establish how the contribution of Bantu language in socio-economic development through Media. Therefore this paper intends to investigate the most preferred languages among Swahili, English and Bantu Mother Language to be most useful if used in broadcasting socio-cultural economic activities in Tanzania. The guiding research question is that given Swahili, English and Bantu Mother Language, which one would you prefer most in radio broadcasting socio-cultural – economic activities in Tanzania?

2.0 Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Different literatures available explain how language can be used in a different sphere of life; According to Batibo (2005:47), speakers of minority languages in most African countries are excluded from or marginalized with respect to national participation because of the use, by the ruling elite, of an ex-colonial language or of a dominant Bantu Mother language, which may be used as a lingua franca while not understood by certain groups within the nation. Speakers of minority languages are thereby denied direct participation in public interaction, meaningful audiences with government authorities, and contact with other groups, or active contribution at public rallies. The exclusion of minority language speakers for these reasons is very common in Tanzania as the case of other African countries. Most Africa countries including Tanzania either assumes that all are able to follow discourse in those languages or insist that all official communication be made in them whatever the social cost in Tanzania for example, the assumption in that the immediate consequence is that nationalism, which is an economic necessity that can only be achieved by a communication that is capable of reaching all members

of society in the economic process, is not achieved. Therefore, through broadcasting such domain can contribute to social economic development to Tanzanian. By then let us recall ourselves what development meant? It is important to understand the meaning of development in order to establish the role that language can play in development initiatives. But first of all, it is necessary to state that the concept of development is highly contested with scholars not agreeing to one definition. Tambulasi and Kayuni (2007) assert that this is so because “development is multidimensional [and hence] a topic of massive disagreements” among scholars.

Development is a process which involves the entire spectrum of the society, with each individual making a contribution. A communication channel is, therefore, imperative in order to mobilize the whole society in the process of social change. It is an essential tool in ensuring the full participation of the masses in the political, socio-economic and cultural development. In other words, institutions, organizations and even governments cannot perform clearly and effectively to expectations unless they can understand and be understood by every citizen of a particular nation. This argument is summarized by Simire (2004:1) as follows:

“In order to achieve rapid political, economic and sociocultural change in the country, all academic and specialized institutions and corporate organizations in the local and federal governments, should mobilize, inform and educate the old and the young, illiterate and literate, male and female, lowly and highly placed individuals across the diversified ethno linguistic groups in their respective code”

Therefore, it is observed in this quotation that if a common language is not adopted, which in this case would be a common African language serving as lingua(e) franca(e) of that particular nation(s), the transfer of skills, new knowledge and other vital information desired to effect

changes cannot be delivered to the target group at both the regional and national levels to mobilize the masses for the development endeavor.

Giving example and experience from Nigeria, from statistical point of view, Simire (2004) points out that of about 33% of the total population of Nigerians who are literate in English (the official language), only about 15% of these can really use English effectively in professional and administrative activities. This can be interpreted to mean that 85% of Nigerians do not have sufficient knowledge of the official language, a situation that is similar to other African states that use an ex-colonial language in official matters. Simire's sentiments are echoed by Bamgbose (2011:2) when he argues that when people talk of a common language that will facilitate communication; they almost always refer to an official imported language, which, as is well known, is only truly common to perhaps 10-20%. In the light of the above statistical presentations, education in foreign languages has thus become education for a minority, and the majority is excluded in national development programs. If the development of such countries were to hinge on communication using English, then we must accept that it will involve a very small minority of the population. This becomes a hindrance to economic, political and socio-cultural development because institutions and other corporate organizations cannot perform their developmental roles effectively unless they can understand and be understood. Therefore, African leaders ought to appreciate that development is about people, and as the former Tanzanian president, J.K Nyerere insisted in most of his writings on the concept of development.. Development should be perceived in a broad sense to mean socio-economic and human development, i.e. the full realization of the human potential and a maximum use of a nation's resources for the benefit of all. Simire's analysis on the issue of language and media is

very important because it has shown us the importance of using Bantu Mother language for development.

Mwangi (2001) on the other hand, has analyzed on the '*Influence of Mass Media in Socialization into Sport of Kenya Secondary School*'. In this paper it has been indicated that the majority of the athletes had their fathers' highest of education of university and mothers' education of secondary school. Most of the athletes' fathers' occupations were professional and managerial, while most of the athlete's mothers' occupational was unskilled activities. It is also apparent that gender affected the influence of mass media on socialization into sport of secondary school athletes in Kenya. Parental social economic status was significant in the influence of mass media in socialization into sport of secondary school athletes in Kenya. As such the higher the educational level and occupational of the parents the greater the influence of Television and internet on socialization into sport of the athletes, on the other hand, the lower the educational level and occupation, the greater the propensity for the athletes to be influenced by radio, newspaper and sport magazines.

As far as language of Instructions is concern, Andersen (1975) and Mvungi (1982) contend that proficiency in the language of instruction is an important factor in educational performance. "The corollary of this is that lack of proficiency in the language of instruction, in our case English, results in poor performance in subjects taught in English" (Qorro, 2008). Elsewhere, studies by Cummins (1979, 1981) and Krashen (1985) urges that poor performance in the language of instruction results in poor performance not only in other subjects, but also in overall poor performance in the second or foreign language. These findings have been confirmed by studies in Tanzania by Roy-Campbell and (Qorro, 1987) and (Qorro, 1999). In these studies, it

has been noted that, when students have a firm grasp of their specialized subjects, that understanding gives them a firm ground on which to build the foundation for learning a second or foreign language, in this case English. However, this firm grasp/understanding, which is central to the quality of education, can only be achieved when teachers and students understand the language of instruction. In the secondary schools and higher education's classrooms in Tanzania, the language of instruction which is English, is not well understood by the majority of teachers and most students (Qorro, 2008). What is happening in the classroom interaction is that the instructors explain concepts using Kiswahili and some cases especially in primary schools where language of instruction is Kiswahili clarifications is done through classes.

Generally, the reviewed literature above has helped us to know and understand the way language has been used in different aspect of life, such as in education activities or how language can be used in the schools or the examination of Africa Languages as Tools for National Development. However, the limited data are established on how Bantu Mother Languages can contribute socio-economical development through media. Bantu Mother Languages have been chosen in this article believing that been used by majority in the different communities in Tanzania, especially, in rural areas. It should be well known that selection of Bantu Mother Languages for broadcasting, it does not mean that other languages such as English, Chines, Germany and French cannot contribute in socio-economic development. These languages can be taken to be complementing with Kiswahili and other Bantu Mother languages in Tanzania.

Theoretical framework

This study is underpinned by Exploratory Approach which was proposed by Thornborrow (1998) as a framework for analyzing the contribution of Bantu Mother Languages to Tanzania socio-economic development through Thornborrow framework, media has been used for many

different purposes which includes: for information, for entertainment and for education. The news has been listened on radio and television for information about local, national and international events. The aim of communication for development is to find out strategies for mobilizing people and consequently resources needed for socio economic development. It facilitates people's participation at all levels of development efforts from problem identification to problem solution implementation and evaluation. Through communication for development, development beneficiaries are protagonists of the projects as they come up with solutions that aim at improving the conditions and quality of life of people both rural and urban areas.

Bamidele (1999) as cited in Upah (2008:3) confirms that "language plays an important role in national development as it fosters understanding, unity and sense of belonging among the various members of the different ethnic and social groups that constitute a nation." In other words, socio-economic development in any national such as Tanzania, ranges from growth in politics to economy, science and technology, education and health. Information in these areas is transmitted through language. Language is used to achieve proper co-ordination of activities that relate to more developmental context.

This study sees this framework is appropriate since it can be applied to assess how Radio as a media can broadcast through mother languages to provide information through broadcast to the communities, thus triggering development. Tanzania Broadcasting Cooperation (TBC), Radio UTUME, owned by Tanzania Lutheran Church (KKKT), SAFINA Radio owned by Safina Ministry. These radio stations covers a large part of Tanzania with programs that attract the use

of ethnic community languages, for instance Mashami, Makua, Sukuma, Nyakyusa, Gogo, and Haya.

3.0 Methodology

The study used a descriptive design because of the study aims at discovering the domain preference in broadcast and insights. The research design involves identifying participants for the research, and preparing for data collection activities that comprise the research process (Creswell 2002). This study adopted qualitative research design because it is necessary for descriptive purposes and it allows the researcher to test the validity of certain claims and assumptions in the real-world contexts. The study targeted speakers of Bantu languages in rural area. They were participating in the activities of social, political and economical development. Stratified random sampling based on provincial representation was utilized to select 40 speakers from 5 Bantu Mother Languages which are Makua, Mashami, Sukuma, Gogo, Haya and Nyakyusa.. The methods for collecting data for this study were largely qualitative which involved

- a) Documentary Review, reviewing and analyzing of contents from national language policy document (2014) and theoretical literature to gain deeper insights on mother language and role of radio broadcast in dissemination of information. Whether conducted other supplementary searches from other non-published searches like newspaper for example the newspaper that was used by Mashami Community Members known as KOMKYA means KUMEKUCHA 'GOOD MORNING'.
- b) Focus Group Discussion, the explanatory sequential design in this approach a research first collected qualitative data and then collecting data to help explain or elaborate on the qualitative results.

c) Standardized questionnaire. Also, the study used a standardized questionnaire for data collection. The data collection instrument is often very crucial to the success of a research also thus can determine an appropriate data collection method.

Survey data was first collected followed by organized interviews with aim of collecting insightful data for the study. In the organized interview, the radio listeners were asked to indicate which program they propose it could be much better be broadcast in which language. Also, the focus of attention in the study was to explore the perception and experience of the participants

4.0 Result and Discussion

The preferred language broadcasting in the Society

To achieve this, respondents were required to respond this question: Which language is used in the society? Where the respondents were required to choose among Kiswahili, Mashami Language and English, the result were tabulated as follows

Table 1: The preferred language broadcasting in the Society

Language	Frequency	Percentage %
Kiswahili	15	38
Mashami	20	50
English	5	12
Total	40	100%

Source: Field Research, February 2019

The table (1) from the respondents towards on the specific question ‘**Which language is used in the society?**’ The respondents provided the responds that 38% of the speakers preferred to use Kiswahili, 12% of the speakers preferred English and 50%of the speakers preferred Mashami. Majority of the society mention the contributions of Bantu Mother Languages in Socio-economic development.

Broadcasting facilitates business Activities

Given Swahili, English, and Indigenous language, which one would you prefer most in radio broadcasting Business activities?

To achieve this, respondents were required to respond this question: **Which language is used to facilitate Business Activities in the society?** Where the respondents were required to choose among Kiswahili, Sukuma and English, the result were tabulated as follows

Table 2: The preferred language broadcasting in the Society

Language	Frequency	Percentage %
Kiswahili	10	26
Sukuma	25	63
English	5	12
Total	40	100%

Source: Field Research, February 2019

The table (2) from the respondents towards on the specific question ‘**Which language is used to facilitate Business Activities in the society?**’ The respondents provided the responds that 26%

of the speakers preferred to use Kiswahili, 5% of the speakers preferred English and 63% of the speakers preferred Sukuma. The contributions of Sukuma through media were mentioned in different perspectives. In business, the language can contribute more whereby speakers prefer to use his/her native language rather than Kiswahili or English. Anyone who wishes to do business with a foreign country can make the mistake of thinking that everything that works in one's own country will work in other countries.

Mother language and social relation

Given Swahili, English, and Indigenous language, which one would you prefer most in radio broadcasting Traditional ceremony, Weddings and marriage issues?

To achieve this, respondents were required to respond this question: **Which language is used in social relation in the society?** Where the respondents were required to choose among Kiswahili, Makua and English, the result were tabulated as follows

Table 3: The preferred language broadcasting in the Society

Language	Frequency	Percentage %
Kiswahili	8	20
Makua	30	75
English	2	5
Total	40	100%

Source: Field Research, February 2019

The table (3) from the respondents towards on the specific question ‘**Which language is used in social relation in the society?**’ The respondents provided the responds that 20% of the speakers preferred to use Kiswahili, 5% of the speakers preferred English and 75% of the speakers preferred Makua. Different media have been using mother language to states how mother language has been used to emphasize social activities. 30 participants indicated that it is important for the media to use mother language, mother language is closely linked to our social relationships and is the medium through which we participate in a variety of social activities. This fascinating study explores the important role of language in various aspects of our social life, such as identity, gender relations, class, kinship, status, and hierarchies. Drawing on data from over thirty different languages and societies, it shows how language is more than simply a form of social action; it is also an effective tool with which we formulate models of social life and conduct. These models - or particular forms of social behaviour - are linked to the classification of 'types' of action or actor, and are passed 'reflexively' from person to person, and from generation to generation. Providing a unified way of accounting for a variety of social phenomena, this book will be welcomed by all those interested in the interaction between language, culture, and society.

Mother language facilitates Religious matters

Given Swahili, English, and Indigenous language, which one would you prefer most in radio broadcasting religious activities?

To achieve this, respondents were required to respond this question: **Which language is used facilitates Religious matters in the society?** Where the respondents were required to choose among Kiswahili, Gogo and English, the result were tabulated as follows

Table 4: The preferred language broadcasting in the Society

Language	Frequency	Percentage %
Kiswahili	15	38
Gogo	20	50
English	5	12
Total	40	100%

Source: Field Research, February 201

The table (4) from the respondents towards on the specific question ‘**Which language is used to facilitate religious matters in the society?**’ The respondents provided the responds that 38% of the speakers preferred to use Kiswahili, 12% of the speakers preferred English and 50% of the speakers preferred Gogo. Religion is another important element in most societies. The impact of religion in the business world varies from country to country, according to the legal system of each, the homogeneity of the religious creeds and their tolerance with other religions. Religion also affects the type of products that consumers buy and the seasonality of some purchases. Religious restrictions are also imposed to individuals affecting their capacity for work as well as their availability for the work journey.

Mother language and local political rallies

Given Swahili, English, and Indigenous language, which one would you prefer most in radio broadcasting Political rallies?

To achieve this, respondents were required to respond this question: **Which language is used for local management in the society?** Where the respondents were required to choose among Kiswahili, Nyakyusa and English, the result were tabulated as follows

Table 5: The preferred language broadcasting in the Society

Language	Frequency	Percentage %
Kiswahili	4	10
Nyakyusa	32	80
English	4	10
Total	40	100%

Source: Field Research, February 2019

The table (5) from the respondents towards on the specific question ‘**Which language is used to facilitate local management in the society?**’ The respondents provided the responds that 10% of the speakers preferred to use Kiswahili, 10% of the speakers preferred English and 80% of the speakers preferred Nyakyusa. In practical terms, the success of organization is closely related to its capacity of reading, analyzing and giving answers to the region’s cultural particularities where it acts. The globalized world intensified the presence of foreign organizations in all continents giving more attention to the cultural differences. 14 participants present an impact in many dimensions of the management activity, such as marketing, production, people, and financial-accountancy. In the marketing area, culture has a strong impact in the moment that influences tastes, preferences and customs of the consumers. This makes the company adjust its advertising policies, promotions, product development, location and pricing to the cultural specifications of

the local community. In the production area, however, cultural influences the manner, the schedules and the individual and group activities. The ones responsible for the management of the production units abroad need to know the local culture in order to avoid their values clashing with local values.

Mother language facilitates cultural activities in traditional ceremony

Given Swahili, English, and Indigenous language, which one would you prefer most in radio broadcasting Traditional drums and other cultural activities?

To achieve this, respondents were required to respond this question: Which language is used facilitates cultural activities in invitational ceremony? Where the respondents were required to choose among Kiswahili, Haya and English, the result were tabulated as follows:

Table 6: The preferred language broadcasting in the Society

Language	Frequency	Percentage %
Kiswahili	5	12
Haya	20	50
English	15	38
Total	40	100%

Source: Field Research, February 2019

The table (6) from the respondents towards on the specific question ‘Which language is used to facilitate cultural activities in invitational ceremony in the society?’ The respondents provided the responds that 12% of the speakers preferred to use Kiswahili, 38% of the speakers preferred

English and 50% of the speakers preferred Nyakyusa. Language is another important element of culture. Language organizes the way members of a society see the world. In addition, language gives important clues about the cultural values. The presence of more than one language in a country is an indicator of diversity in the country's population. Although countries with the same language should not be seen as countries with the same culture. It is the language community of the mother language, the language spoken in a region, which enables the process of enculturation, the growing of an individual into a particular system of linguistic perception of the world and participation in the centuries old history of linguistic production.

Challenges on the idea of using Mother Languages in broadcasting socio-economic domains in Tanzania

Psychological Challenge

It is clear the psychological problem has been continuing to grow in such a way that using of Bantu mother language is an old fashion or uneducated perception. This creates challenges in promoting Bantu Mother Language to be used in socio-economic development through broadcast. Some speakers of the mother language fail to use their first language due to the bad perceptions that they have about Bantu Mother Languages. In psychological challenge, the speaker fears to use his/her language because of bad beliefs.

Lack of effective National language policy

Language policy is the very sensational aspect of developing language in a different areas or community. Lack of effective National language policy creates a challenge in implementing or developing plans right about how language can be used in a different society. In Tanzania,

language policy states how Kiswahili and English should be used in different places or context. Unfortunately, the language policy does not explain the way Bantu Mother Language should be used or given a certain status in Tanzania while Bantu Languages have majority status.

Development of science and technology

The development of science and technology regardless of its importance in the world is definitely creating challenges towards the development of Bantu Mother Languages in Tanzania. Products have been made up and absolutely explained by either Kiswahili or English. This is challenge in implementing Bantu Mother Language to be used in different media in Tanzania.

Superiority and Inferiority discernment

This challenge is enormously created by some speakers in the communities. Superiority and Inferiority discernment is created by speakers themselves, what is created here? is definitely unnecessary question; which is superior or inferior language in a community?.This controversy is created by speaker, whereby, to select the uses of any language in a media to facilitate socio-economic development fails because that perception among the speakers in the society.

5.0 Conclusion and suggestions

Tanzania needs to undertake a thorough review of their language situation and establish policies which are consonant with their national aspirations, optimum utilization of the national linguistic resources and the ultimate national goal. Such a goal should include not only economic development, but a truly democratic and harmonious way of life. Not all languages need to be accorded the same role or status or to be used in media. The positions and domains of use of each

of the languages in a country could be determined by its relative demographic and socio-political position in that country. Hence, a hierarchy of language use could be established.

Bantu Mother Language facilitates integration, unity, economic well-being, mass participation in government, and educational growth, the socioeconomic development emphasizes progress in terms of economic and social factors with a geographic unit. Economic development is the process of raising the level of prosperity through increased production, distribution and consumption of goods and services.

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