

Community-Specific Strategies of Intergenerational Language Transmission among Ndamba Speakers in Tanzania

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Abstract: *This study concerns minority language maintenance, specifically it explores local practices that make it possible for a community to sustain its traditional language. Two variables were the focus of the research; speakers' attitudes and language use patterns. These were examined to determine their influence in facilitating parents to transfer language to their descendants. The main goal was to explain how minority Ndamba language speakers in Tanzania have managed to maintain their language over time regardless of formidable influence engendered by Swahili. To answer this question, the micro-social factors of the community, namely; parental attitudinal predispositions, language choice patterns in the home, and community support resourcefulness were analysed, also the macro-sociopolitical decisions that resulted into the current state of micro-linguistic performativity are scrutinized. Data were collected from 30 parents out of whom 4 were focus group participants from two Ndamba dominant villages. Semi-structured, open-ended interview questions, and ethnographic participant observation methods were used for data collection, informal discussion was also deployed as a support method. For data analysis, qualitative data analysis model and relational content (thematic) analysis were utilized. The findings show that overall Ndamba language is being sufficiently transmitted intergenerationally among its speakers. The micro-social strategies responsible for language transmission have been identified as; community members' language loyalty, need for ethnic identification, positive family language policy strategies, appropriate language socialization experiences and potent social speech connections.*

KEY WORDS: Intergeneration language transmission, language attitudes, language use patterns, linguistic ecology, language socialization, language social networks, ethnic identity

INTRODUCTION

The language situation in Tanzania shows that after close to five decades of implementation of seemingly stringent and authoritarian policies on indigenous minority languages, unmistakable indications of language decline have begun to show up in most parts of the country, in many communities,

members no longer speak their indigenous languages, instead Swahili has taken over all situations and functions of language use in the communities. Paradoxically however abundant evidence indicates that despite pressure that would force speakers to shift to Swahili, some communities in Tanzania have successfully managed to maintain their home languages (Legère, 1992; Stegen, 2003; Msanjila, 2004). Studies have revealed that children in some communities still learn home languages as a mother tongue; they speak home language first before they gain proficiency in Swahili. This revelation implies that in spite of Swahili hegemonic pressure realized in the form of official neglect of minority languages and social and psychological motivation to entice speakers to give up speaking local languages, members of these language communities have maintained the capability to transmit their traditional languages.

This paradox whereby language communities have been able to maintain their languages through linguistic reproduction in spite of experiencing hegemonic pressure to relinquish them was the main motive for conducting the present whose main aim was to determine traditional experiences and strategies that facilitate sustainability of indigenous minority languages.

Language Replacement in Tanzania

The process of language replacement is evident in most parts of Tanzania as more and more people who should have acquired dominance in ethnic languages become proficient speakers of the dominant Swahili language rather than in their ethnic community languages. Mugane (2005) refers to this situation as “discordant monolingualism”, a condition whereby a speaker’s (first) traditional language is replaced by another language. He holds this condition as a responsible factor for causing potential linguistic incarceration of most ethnic languages in the country. Many writers (Batibo, 1992; Legère, 1992, Mugane, 2005) have attributed the decline of ethnic minority languages in Tanzania to the rise of Swahili hegemony which has extensively contributed to the undermining and destroying of the languages of minority ethnic communities. According to Batibo (1992) the rise of Swahili, as a national language has contributed the major threat to the decline of ethnic languages. This is because Swahili has prestige, modernity, lingua franca, social promotion, and wider acceptance (p.93).

Mugane (opp. cit.) on the other hand describes the manner in which Swahili has annihilated local languages in Tanzania as “scorched earth policy”, referring to the political and legal pressure applied in the legitimization of Swahili, culminating to a situation of linguistic neglect that has put all minority ethnic languages in an irrelevant position. Denied a function in the

public domain, and their use restricted only to family and cultural performance (Polome, 1980), ethnic languages in Tanzania have subsequently [...] “been given up and gradual extinction is taking place to most of them” (Mkude, cited in Legère, 1992: 108).

Studies show that the number of people in Tanzania growing up speaking Swahili as their first language is increasing, a large majority of these are people ethnically affiliated to the minority languages (Nurse, 1997: 272). Indeed Mugane (2005) asserts that [...] “most of the population born since 1977 uses exclusively Swahili”. This corroborates Nurse’s (1997) observation that second-language Swahili speakers are relatively few in number and are mainly older people in the west of the country.

Nurse (*opp. cit.*) categorizes speakers of Swahili as the first language in three groups; these, beside members of the traditional Swahili communities along the coast whose ancestors have spoken Swahili for a millennium or more, are many adults who grew up in urban centers and who adopted Swahili as an interethnic language now speak it as their mother tongue. Another group of speakers who also use Swahili as the first language is the increasing number of youth about whom Nurse (*ibid.*) observes, [...] “might have spoken an ethnic language in their early years and perhaps still use it on occasion, but who, as a result of schooling and national policy, use Swahili in most daily situations” (p. 272).

Linguistic hegemony in Tanzania

The linguistic plain in different parts of Tanzania is characterized by Swahili hegemony in a bilingual relationship with ethnic minority languages. It is a kind of unilateral bilingualism or asymmetrical bilingualism (Mugane, 2005). This situation is realized through unequal opportunities that Swahili enjoys over the remaining ethnic languages. The existing linguistic relationship between Swahili and the numerous ethnic minority languages places Swahili in a position of domination over the other ethnic languages (Legère, 1992).

In a broader sense the notion of Swahili linguistic hegemony concerns not only linguistic characteristics but also social aspects. In the view of Suarez (2002), linguistic hegemony concerns [...] “various aspects of social power relations, including social power relationships between majority and minority languages and language groups” (p. 513). A thorough appraisal of the principles of linguistic hegemony is therefore necessary if one is to appreciate the situation of unequal linguistic power relations currently taking place in Tanzania.

Bourdieu (*opp. cit.*) contends that a complex historical process often involving extensive conflict applies when particular languages or sets of linguistic practices gain authority, dominance, and legitimacy. In a similar way Swahili has taken different forms before it has come to be represented and generally perceived as dominant, authoritative and legitimate. The process of Swahili hegemonization is reviewed using Downes' (1998) principles of language restriction; linguistic markets; and political and legal factors as the main forms of linguistic hegemony assertion.

Language restriction: As a factor for legitimation of language the language restriction strategy refers to the subordination of competing languages in favour of the dominant language, making them become used less frequently and in fewer social contexts (Mougeon and Beniack, 1991, cited in Downes, 1998:63). This strategy was applied to the process of legitimation of Swahili when regulations were put in place, which restricted the functions of ethnic languages to family and cultural performances (Polome, 1980). This effectively weakened all indigenous languages because speakers found that they have fewer opportunities to use their languages because of the restriction imposed on them.

Linguistic market: The linguistic market associated with a language variety determines its legitimation. Language is considered a form of cultural and social capital which can be cashed in economically (Sankoff and Liberge, 1978; Dittmar *et al.*, 1988, cited in Downes, 1998). Knowledge of the language variety with the highest market value generates a drive in those with other mother tongues to learn the valued variety. Market forces in a bilingual situation are normally reinforced by political, legal and other forms of power in the law and government policy.

In the case of Tanzania, the promotion of Swahili to the current position was achieved through ratification of political and legal policies which favored Swahili and marginalized a lot of ethnic languages. Following the declaration of Swahili as national language, Legère (1992) observes [...] "serious efforts were undertaken to promote its use in the official sphere...local languages were excluded from the official domain and relegated to the private sphere" (p.106). It is evident that these sanctions were intended to make Swahili not just a national means of communication; but more significantly an instrument of power and control.

The post-independence language policy was one geared toward the growth and expansion of Swahili and eventual disappearance of the ethnic languages. Batibo (1992) notes that;

[...] (this) was a true reflection of the country's linguistic policy which, although was not explicit on the fate of the ethnic languages, it tended to treat them as marginal or even as nonexistent (p.93).

The feature of Tanzania's language policy

The micro-political decisions which were applied to promote Swahili and curtail the linguistic rights of minorities at different periods of time from the colonial period to the post independence era were gorged toward achieving a monoglot society which according to Blommaert (2006) corresponds with the political ideal of building national identity which is defined in [...] "political-ideological and linguistic terms" (p.247) rather than in terms of ethnic or cultural identity. To implement this ideology, Blommaert (*ibid.*) observes, two important measures were adopted; first Swahili was declared the national language in 1965 whereby it instantaneously took over the position of English in a number of important social domains, e.g. it became the medium of instruction in primary education, language of parliamentary proceedings and became the dominant language in the media, both in radio and print media. The second measure was to neutralize the influence of other languages in the country; in the ideological atmosphere of the time, the first target according to Blommaert (*ibid.*) was English which was perceived to be the language of oppression, which perpetuated imperialist and capitalist interests. Secondly the government was determined to counteract the influence of the indigenous languages which were seen to be relics of the past traditional, and pre-colonial cultures. These were perceived to be a hindrance to national integration and development.

Recently the Tanzania government has introduced the Cultural Policy (1997) (also known as *Sera ya Utamaduni*) which recognizes the existence and rights of minority languages (Legere, 2006). The new policy however does not adequately redress the shortcomings of the previous policies regarding the problem of protecting and promoting the status of minority languages in Tanzania. Apart from official recognition of minority languages, there is no legislation that provides protective measures or assurance for their growth and sustenance. Moreover there is no change in the existing policy in terms of ending discrimination against minority languages; it still continues to favour the official languages- English and Swahili.

Intergenerational language transmission

Studies in minority language maintenance have long established that sustainability of minority languages depends on the ability of families to pass on their home languages to the younger generation of speakers. This is

accomplished when families make a habit of using their traditional languages to speak and interact with their children on daily basis.

Literature on language maintenance and shift does not provide a straightforward definition of the term intergenerational language transmission (henceforth ILT) but descriptions from a number of studies characterize it as the process through which the community transmits language from one generation to the next. Hans-Jurgen Sasse (1992) defines language transmission as [...] the purposive, directed-passing on of a language from one generation to the next" (p.23) and describes it as the initiating factor for primary language shift in a community. Crisp (2005: 150) on the other hand perceives ILT as an ongoing process whereby a language is transferred from generation to generation through the normal familial interactions of parents and children (and grandparents, grandchildren, etc).

Role of family/home in language transmission

The indispensability of the home in ensuring continuity of intergenerational transmission of language is widely acknowledged by language researchers and activists world over. They all tend to agree that for one to understand how minority languages are able to survive one has to consider the role of the home in transmitting language to children and the processes that underlie it should be explored. A renowned proponent of the agency of the home in language maintenance, Fishman (1989) contends that the home, family, and neighborhood constitute a natural process for intergenerational language transmission. It is through the practices in the home that succeeding generations are able to replenish their speakers (p.88).

Strubell (2001) observes that the use of one language in the family is a crucial factor in language maintenance at the family level. He points out that the fate of a minority language depends on the choice of language in the family.

In language ecological terms, ILT is a means by which the community is able to reproduce itself and ensure its own continuity. As Fishman (1972: 88) argues, it is through practices in the home, family and neighborhood that consecutive generations are able to replenish their speakers. Most social and ecological linguists agree that the cornerstone agent in intergenerational transfer of language is the family and home environment through naturalistic interactions between the novices and the mature members the community, it accomplishes to pass on not only language but also values, modes of identity, attitudinal predispositions and information about the community's language (Fishman, 1972, 1991, 1997; Fillmore, 1991; Strubell, 2001; Crisp, 2005). In this view the home, family, and neighborhood according to Fishman (1972), [...] constitute a natural process for intergenerational language transmission" (p.

88). In effecting this process, the role of family (or home), caregivers, and the community are indispensable. The place and function of these transmission agents are discussed below.

Caregiver roles

The home caters for intergenerational continuity of language through facilitating daily, informal, oral interaction between the caregivers (parents, grandparents, and relatives) and children. It is by means of these interactions which take place between adult family members and their young that language transfer is accomplished.

Caregiver roles and activities have been noted in other studies to comprise two broad styles of child raising, these are: *child-centered* and *situation-centered* styles (Heath, 1983; Ochs and Schieffelin, 1986). The two styles refer to the nature and scope of activities provided by the caregivers to facilitate language learning of the child. According to Ochs (1988) in child-centered style, the common practice for caregivers is to make accommodation to language acquirer's cognitive maturity hence language transmission is effected by adults adjusting their speech to suit the child's competence. Park and King (2003) identify two common strategies used by caregivers to adjust their speech to children; these are realized through self-lowering wherein caregivers use baby-talk and through child-raising where caregivers interpret child's unintelligible utterances. The intention of this strategy is to ensure that children are gradually introduced to the language of adults through use of simplified language. In situation centered style on the other hand, caregivers do not accommodate to children's speech thus children acquire language on their own without much help of adult language simplification. Children make their own effort to be understood and interpret others' responses to them (Ochs, 1988; Schieffelin, 1979). In this situation children learn to understand and produce home language by observing adults 'performing' it (Park and King, 2003).

Community's role in language transmission

Within the construct of home language transmission, the local community context is an important factor to be considered in examining the relationship between the learning of a language and its development. Hinton (1999) argues that while family dynamics play a significant role in establishing primary linguistic competences, it is the community that reinforces knowledge and skills gained in the home. The significance of the local community in language development of the child is that it provides the child with the opportunity for reinforcing the skills and knowledge that he or she had acquired earlier on in

the family. In a sense the community offers the child the opportunity to experience the use of language in real usage context.

Studies elsewhere have found that much as parent's use of language with children is important for home language continuity, but if the children are to speak the home language as adults, they must have opportunity to speak it both as children and as adults in the community (Hinton, 2001). However the community may widen the knowledge gained by the child at home, only if it offers opportunities for the child to experience and practice what he or she already knows. This can be achieved in many ways, including wider use of local language in a number of domains, holding of cultural events using the local language, and utilizing ethnic elders to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes that are pertinent to cultural reproduction of the society.

Statement of enquiry for the study

The present study sought to provide an explanation to the question, How have Ndamba speakers managed to maintain their language over time regardless of formidable influence engendered by Swahili domination? To answer this question, the study has examined micro-social factors of the community, namely; parental attitudinal predispositions, language choice patterns in the home, and community support resourcefulness.

METHODOLOGY

Research site

The research for this study was conducted at Merera and Mofu villages. These villages were selected on the basis of advice the researcher received from the sources he had consulted, showing that children in these villages learned Ndamba and spoke it as a mother tongue; implying that the language was still being transmitted intergenerationally in these village communities.

Participants

The theoretical viewpoint that this study is framed on is that the most important strategies that promote language transmission take place in the home and parents are the single most significant source of language input for children (Fishman, 1991).

For this reason, it was decided that the population for the research should be parents (including family members who play the role of caregivers.) Parents were considered eligible for the study if they had a child (children) of the age range between 1-10 years.

As the normal conditions for conducting purposive sampling did not apply in the context of the present study, a non-probabilistic sampling method was used. Specifically snowball sampling strategy was used. Location of respondents was achieved through a guide who proved to be a competent research assistant; with his guidance the researcher was able to identify family participants who were willing to become research participants either as interviewees or focus group participants. Almost each family that was interviewed volunteered to mention to the researcher other households where parents of school-going age could be found. In this way the researcher was able to locate 30 parents out of whom 4 parents agreed to become focus group participants.

DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

Triangulation

For a better and more accurate understanding of the attitudes and language practices of Ndamba parents, a multiple strategy for gathering data were adopted, this practice is referred to in social enquiry literature as triangulation.

In the present study, triangulation was realised through the use of two approaches of data collection; the first approach allowed parents to articulate for themselves their opinions about language attitudes and use, for which the survey method was used; the second approach involved the researcher participating in the daily life of the speakers, watching and studying their language behaviour as they went about their daily life for which participant observation method was chosen. As a research technique, participant observation assumes that by noting the behaviour reactions of an individual over a period it is possible to learn a great deal about the person's attitudes (Burgess, 1984). The two methods were used simultaneously; some people who were interviewed were also formally observed. The focus group observation served to validate the findings from the interview.

The survey method used in this study was interview. Its selection was motivated by the need to obtain descriptions of Ndamba parents regarding their life with respect to interpreting their attitudes to language and patterns of choice in everyday use.

Interview method

The interview format used in this particular research was the informal, semi-structured interview format which instead of asking questions and recording answers in a set pattern, the researcher organised questions in a form of themes and topics of discussion with the respondents. This strategy, it is argued (Burgess, 1984), [...] "gives informants an opportunity to develop their answers outside a structured format" (p.86).

Interview questions

Open-ended questions were used to interview respondents in this particular study. Babbie and Mouton (2005) describe open-ended questions as those in which [...] “the respondent is asked to provide his or her own answer to the question” (p.233). A combination of questioning strategies was used to probe for details about the respondents at different points in the interviews. Among these were descriptive questions which required informants to provide statements about their activities.

Interview Procedure

An interview schedule containing nine main discussion topics was administered on one parent each from 25 families. Most of the interviews were conducted in the respondents’ own homes. According to Hall and Hall (1996), the place where the interview is conducted has a significant effect on the sort of information that the informant gives. When interviewed in their homes, participants are [...] “more likely to answer at length and in a more ‘conversational’ style” (pg. 167). Parents were interviewed individually in the language of their preference, either Swahili or Ndamba. A majority of them preferred to speak in Ndamba. This did not pose difficulty as the researcher has sufficient receptive competence in the language.

Interview data collection procedure

Collection of interview data was achieved by using a portable cassette recorder and reflective notes. All respondents consented to the use tape-recorder to record their answers. Use of the tape-recorder helped to obtain reliable data that was “more complete, concrete, and detailed” (conf. Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983) than if field-notes were used.

Participant Observation Procedure

Gaining Access to the field site

Gaining access is an essential phase in any research process. Burgess (1984) contends that access has an influence not only on the reliability and validity of the data that the researcher subsequently obtains but also the ways in which those who are to be researched [...] “define the research and the activities of the researcher”.

Focus group participants

Participant observation was carried out in the homes of four focus group participant families. The main goal of participant observation was to determine language habits pertaining to the family-home situation. The main concern was to see how parents and other caretakers use Ndamba language on the daily basis. The focus of observation was to note instances of language

behaviour realised by parents and other mature caregivers while interacting with children or non-family members within the home compounds or while busy carrying out their normal domestic activities (e.g. meal time).

This research set out to utilise four families as focus group (or key) participants. The aim was to use the families as focal points for obtaining in-depth examination of cultural practices of the community. These were selected as perfect examples of typical Ndamba speaker family in which intergenerational language transfer takes place. Burgess (1984) asserts that the selection of focus group (or key) participants is made on account of their knowledge of a particular setting which may complement the researcher's observation and point towards further investigation that needs to be done in order to understand the social process.

Focus areas of participant observation

The main language practices which were the focus of observation were language choice practices in the homes, language attitudes, and code-switching patterns.

Language choice patterns

The view of language choice adopted in this particular study was the micro-interactional perspective (Labov and Gumperz 1982; 1992; Wei, 1993) with its emphasis on the individual speaker's capacity to produce and reproduce social norms and values through everyday interactional behaviours. Wei (1994) observes that research adopting micro-interactional approach as a matter of rule relies on information collected through face-to-face interaction with the respondents.

In this particular study, language choice patterns were deduced from the language use patterns of the informants. Speaker's language uses were analysed both as language-in-use and as speaker-in-community (conf. Wei, 1994). The focus of observation exercise was given to three language use patterns; inter-speaker variation, stylistic variation and code-switching.

- (i) *Inter-speaker variation* refers to speaker's language used while engaged in interaction with different interlocutors. In this study the language that parents used while speaking to other members was observed and documented. This follows the assumption that there is correspondence between speaker's linguistic behaviours and interpersonal relations. This assumption (Wei, 1994: 137) observes results from the view that [...] "speakers' language use is influenced and shaped by the types of social contact they have, and in the meantime it actively contributes to the social relations which speakers maintain".

- (ii) *Stylistic variation* denotes speaker's personal language use. Bell (1984) observes that a speaker varies one language in relation to language differences which exist between speakers on the "social" dimension. In this study stylistic variation was inferred by change of language use the parent (or caregiver) realised in different situations (home, church, work).
- (iii) *Code-switching* refers to variation of language from one to another in the course of conversation (Wei, 2000). It is a form of linguistic contextualisation cue that speakers utilise in conversation to express some preconceived meanings or to achieve certain discourse functions. There are many ways in which speakers realise code-switching in conversation. Numerous studies have indicated that code-switching involves what Wei, (2000: 16) describes as [...] "skilled manipulation of overlapping sections of two (or more) grammars". In conversation code-switching may take the form of either, a long narrative that is divided into different parts which are expressed in different languages, a sentence that begins in one language and finishes in another; or a succession of words from different languages (Wei, opp. cit.).

The assumption adopted in this study regarding code switching is that speaker's variance of language during conversation, using Wei's (opp. cit.) words, seeks [...] "to contribute to the signalling of contextual presuppositions" (p.17). In this sense therefore code-switching is seen as a form of language choice pattern that is intended to achieve certain communicative effects. In this study, code-switching instances were recorded for the purpose of interpreting the functions or meaning they were intended to express in the conversation.

Data analysis

The two sets of data elicited in this multiphase study; semi-structured, in-depth interview data and participant observation data were analysed manually using a multiple of techniques including grounded theory (Strauss and Corbin, 1990); qualitative data analysis model (Seidel, 1998); and relational content (thematic) analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study examined micro-social factors of the community that help to perpetuate community language (Ndamba) across generations. The factors were looked at from the point of view of; parental attitudinal predispositions, language choice patterns in the home, and community support

resourcefulness. Concurrent with the study's main assumption, data has overwhelmingly revealed that Ndamba language is being transmitted intergenerationally among its speakers. The discussion below presents both the findings of the present study and an explanation on how these findings differ and/or share similarities with studies conducted by researchers elsewhere. The microsocial situations at play in the community that facilitate transmission of Ndamba language from one generation to another include the following strategies:

Language pride and loyalty

Language socialization is based on the idea that the process of acquiring a language is part of a broader process of transforming a novice individual to becoming a person in society. Hence language socialization practices impact on language maintenance and sustenance. The present study determined that the main attitudinal factor that facilitates parents to transmit home language to the children is their strong feelings of pride to the home language. In self-report responses a majority of parents indicated that they felt proud to speak Ndamba for the reason that by doing so they identify with their culture and traditional roots. This finding corroborates Mufwene (2003) who observed that overtime the vitality of most minority languages has degenerated as a result of speakers losing pride and prestige of their traditional languages. However, other researchers, Grenoble and Whaley (1998) suggest a different viewpoint which provides that speakers may be compelled to abandon traditional languages for the need to adapt to an environment where use of that language is no longer advantageous to them (p.22).

Parents' language socialization strategies

Research literature has established that the main responsibility of language socialization is on the hands of the parents and caregivers of language learners (Kramsch, 2004). Data from this study has demonstrated that Ndamba has been maintained because the language is used in many families as medium of communication between parents and their offsprings. Most parents interviewed were highly critical of parents who abandoned the use of Ndamba with their children, which they sited as the leading cause of Ndamba language decline in the community. One parent quipped, language loss occurs "*kwa sababu ya wazazi*" (because of the parents).

Siblings and peers language socialization strategies

Consistent with the literature on minority language sustenance, the study has determined that peer group interactions facilitate children's language development. Data from both self-reported interview and observation of natural interaction have confirmed that children in the community involve

themselves in activities that lead to acquisition and development of Ndamba language. Furthermore it has been revealed that children use language in everyday settings - in the home, in the community, on the playground or at school. This finding correlates the observation by Corsaro (1994) who found that through participation in their own peer cultures and appropriation of features of the social discourses of the wider adult culture, children construct their social identities. On the otherhand Rogoff (1998) observed that cultural tools, such as language used in play by children contributed to each other's learning as well as to their own development.

Parents' instructional speech

Parents' instructional speech refers to language teaching strategy which involved parents explicitly telling children what to say and how to say it. Such styles and methods varied greatly from family to family. However observation of parents' language used to or in the presence of children in various social interaction events demonstrated a cluster of language instructional styles which were common across the families. Through these methods parents and other caregivers were able to impart to children both linguistic and social knowledge. The research by Delgado (2009) discusses a number of additional language socialization strategies used by parents to help pass on traditional language and culture to siblings; these include, education, responsibility, affection, discipline and obedience, teasing and joking (p. 107).

Language social networks

Language use pattern in the community language transmission is promoted by the way individuals use their local language in daily interactions. Data has revealed that individuals who are intimate, interact frequently, or have high intensity of interactions like; spouses, relatives, friends or close neighbors dominantly communicate using Ndamba. One respondent revealed as follows;

Nengapa na mwehe wangu patwikala pakayapa zaidi tukutovanga chichindamba...
[The language that my wife and I speak most at home is Ndamba....]

A similar language preference tendency was observed when relatives from distant places like; sisters, brothers, uncles etc. paid visit the focus group families, they dominantly chose Ndamba as language of communication. The importance of language social networks as a strategy of language maintenance was revealed by Sallabank (2010) who observed that high-density, "traditional" social networks correlated with the maintenance of low-status or local language varieties. In a study that focused on Guernesians, the endangered indigenous language of Guernsey, Channel Islands, she

demonstrated why some people maintained their ancestral language and transmitted it to their children, while others abandon it.

Family language policy enforcement strategies

The general understanding in the field of minority language maintenance and loss sees the family as the central driving force in children's language socialization. This is because families play a critical role in the preservation of their language and culture (Phinney et al. 2001; Schwartz, 2010). Family language policy and ideologies pursued in most Ndamba families were considered to play the most crucial role in sustaining language in the community. Evidence obtained from both self-reported interviews and observed language behavior in the homes shows that most families practice policies and ideologies that favour the use of Ndamba as the language of interaction among family members. More precisely data reveals that in the home, Ndamba is the language of intimate family communication, used with spouse and siblings; it is the preferred language in interactions between husband and wife; and parents and children.

Participating in social networks activities

Another factor facilitating transmission of Ndamba language is speakers' demonstration of their identity through participation in social network interactions and functions which involve family members, kin relatives, close friends and neighbors. According to Milroy (1987), social network events provide members not only with a sense of belonging but also a framework for assisting one another in solving problems that face them individually, hence it is a means for securing security and solidarity among the members

To demonstrate use of Ndamba in social network contacts, a female participant commented as follows; *valongo pavayisa kama vandamba tukudeta chindamba kama pana mchanganyiko lazima dete chiswahili..... Yaani pandanganyika na mndamba miyangu panywanga chindamba ndo nguwona ufahali sana.* [When relatives come to my house, it depends if they can speak Ndamba I will speak to them in Ndamba, but in a mixed group with speakers of other languages, we are compelled to speak Swahili].

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Given that the main goal of this study was to address the challenge of language decline currently facing a majority of indigenous minority languages in Tanzania, the present study has the following recommendations.

Effort towards revival of minority languages in Tanzania should begin with the introduction of policies that provide for greater national recognition and

support for minority cultures and language rights. This would help to raise the profile of minority languages and improve their social image. Such policies interventions should seek to achieve the following objectives.

- (i) To raise the legal status of indigenous minority languages, such that speakers can have the liberty to speak Swahili or their local languages in all public contexts.
- (ii) To promote indigenous languages and encourage their active use in home contexts as means of everyday communication.
- (iii) To increase the confidence of indigenous language speakers in their languages and cultures.
- (iv) To oversee protection of minority languages by forming a statutory body responsible for minority languages maintenance.

CONCLUSION

The results of the study show that the micro-social processes that contribute toward language transmission in Ndamba community fall into three broad categories of strategies; ethnic identity retention strategies, language use strategies, and language socialization strategies. Language socialization processes that facilitate language transmission have been analyzed into, parents socialization experiences, and siblings and peers socialization experiences. Other strategies that also contribute toward language transmission are associated with parents' attitudinal predisposition namely; ethnic identity and language loyalty; participation in social network interactions, frequency of Ndamba use in the home; and their pride and loyalty toward the traditional language.

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