# A CASE STUDY IN LANGUAGE CONTACT: ENGLISH, KISWAHILI AND LUHYIA AMONGST THE LUHYIA PEOPLE OF KENYA

**BY**

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**A Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of Linguistics University of Cape Town**



**Cape Town**

June 1999

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ABREVIATIONS

Cl. Class (i.e. noun class)

Con. Concord

COSCO. Code-switching code

EL. Embedded Language

Kis. Kiswahili

Lu. Luhyia

M. Matric

ML. Matrix Language

Nuc. Nucleus

Pr. Primary

Sat. Satellite

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This survey would not have been possible without the advice and encouragement from Prof. Rajend Mesthrie of the University of Cape Town, Department of Linguistics, who had the patience and understanding to read my numerous drafts. I am also indebted to Mrs. Brenda Beneke of Department of Linguistics, University of Cape Town for her encouragement and assistance. My acknowledgement also goes to Rev. Samuel Silungwe, of the United Church of Zambia, a student at the University of Cape Town, for tirelessly assisting in typing and putting together this document. I also acknowledge the assistance I got from Mr Shem Lusimba who proved to be very skillful with interviews.

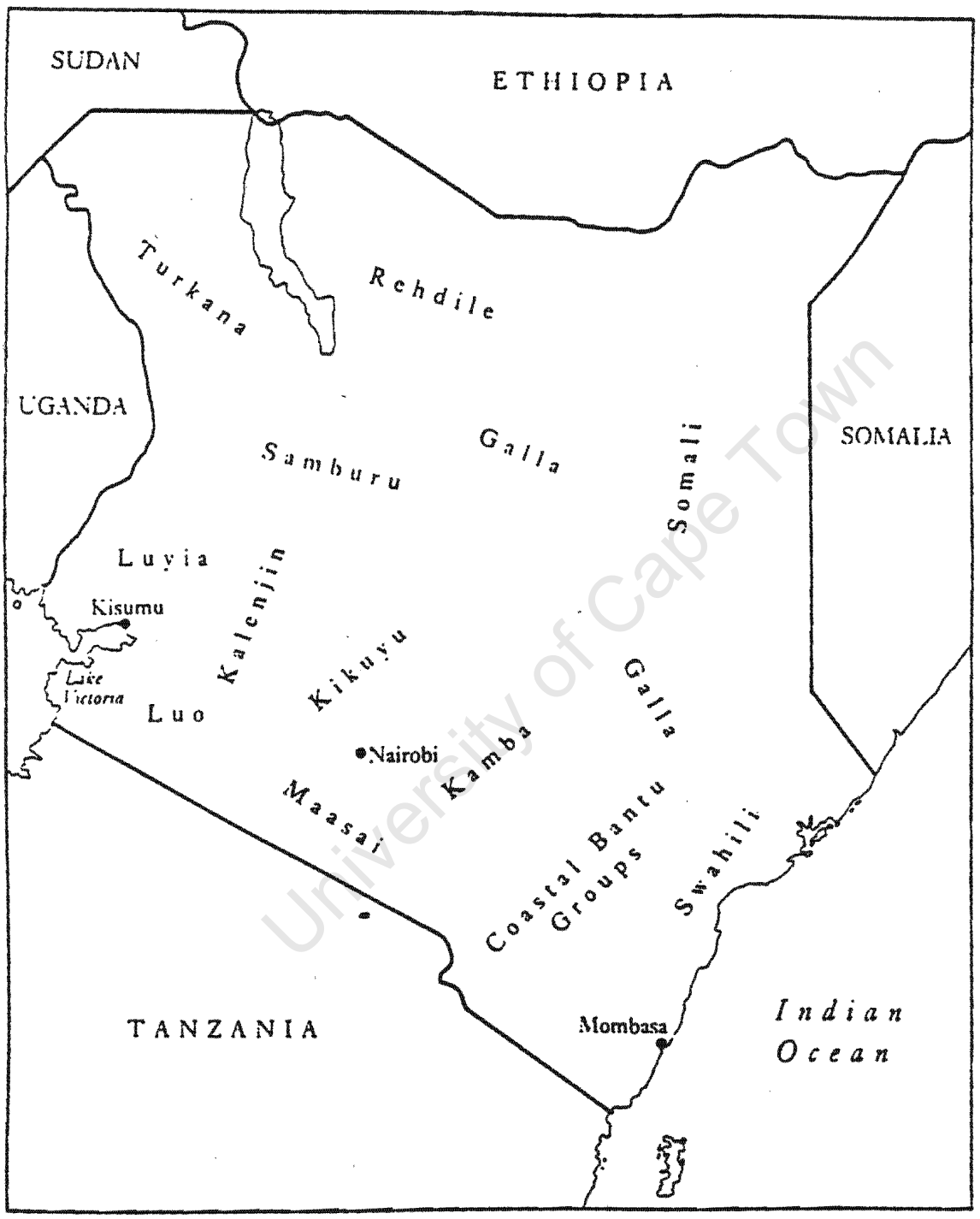
Funds for this project were generously made available by the Centre for Science Development ( CSD ) in Africa and by the Lestrade Scholarship ( UCT ). Their assistance is gratefully acknowledged. I am also grateful to Professor William Ochieng, Principal, Maseno University College, for making it possible for me to carry out this research.

Finally, my thanks go to my wife Hilmara and children for being supportive and understanding during my time of study.

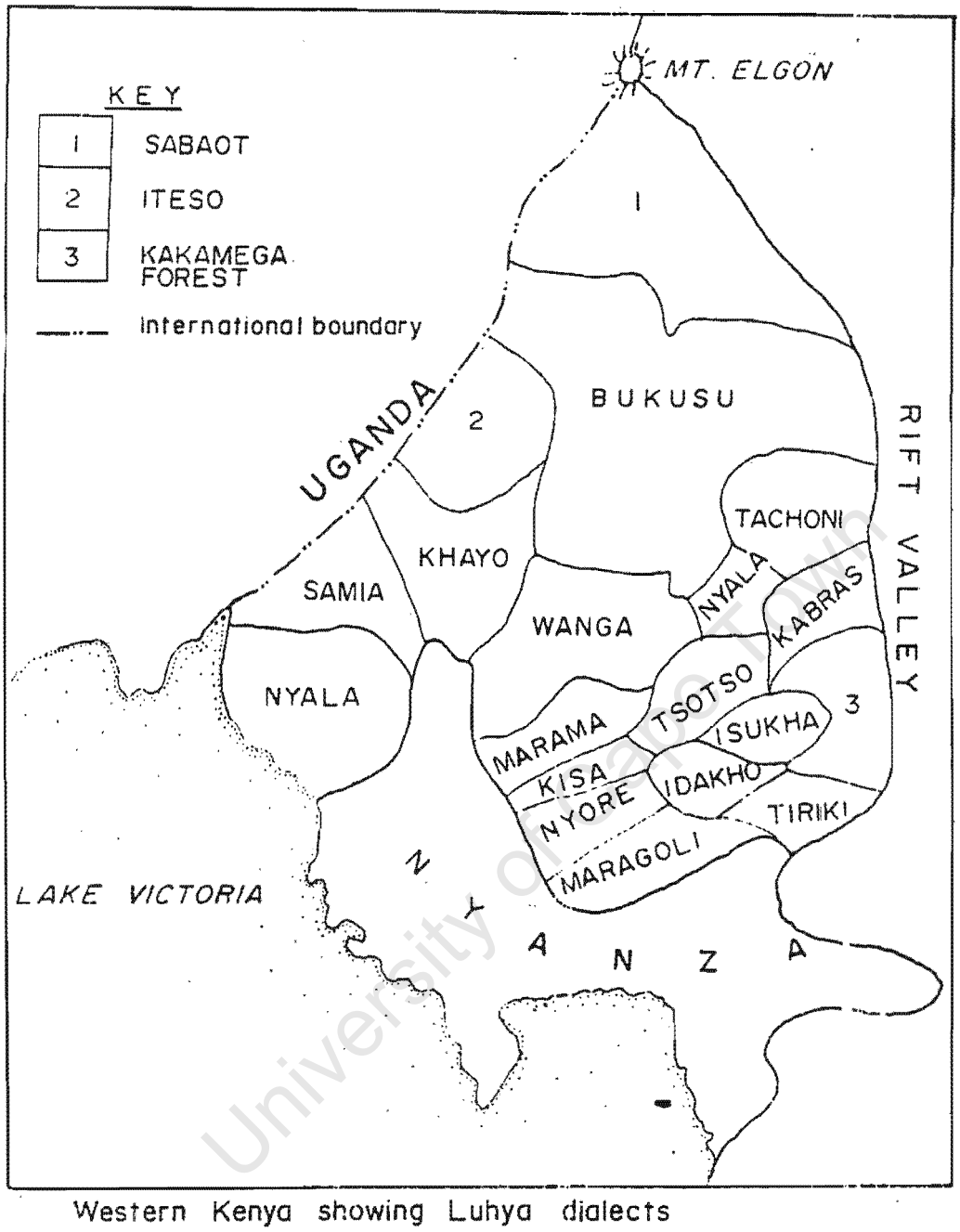
## ABSTRACT

The aim of this research is to provide some ground work in the study of Luhyia socio-linguistics. A fair amount of research on indigenous forms of English has been conducted in South Africa as well as West Africa. According to Schmied (1991), Nigeria is covered by several books and articles on English, but other areas of Africa are relatively blank. Schmied himself has produced primary work on English in East Africa. Studies of language maintenance and language shift have been undertaken by eminent scholars such as Brenzinger (1992), Eastman (1990, 1992). However, it is Myers-Scotton's pioneering research on code-switching among the Luhyia speakers undertaken in the 1980s that provided the initial inspiration and further foundation for this thesis. An attempt is made here to build on Myers-Scotton's insightful observations on code-switching among Luhyia speakers. In addition this thesis explores the type of English in use among the Luhyia, and its effects on the indigenous language with which it has come into contact.

There are five chapters in all, with the first chapter devoted to the history of contact between the three languages. English and Kiswahili were introduced to Luhyia people via different routes. Kiswahili was first introduced by slave traders nearly one hundred and fifty years ago. It has taken root, becoming a first language to many Luhyia. English, on the other hand, was introduced through mission schools and has remained largely a school-based language ever since. The colonial government did not at first support the spread of English, though it became more active in spreading it towards the end of the colonial era.




MAP 1 - EAST AFRICA




Western Kenya showing Luhya dialects

# CHAPTER ONE

## A. A CASE STUDY IN LANGUAGE CONTACT: ENGLISH, KISWAHILI AND LUHYIA

### 1.1. Introduction

Luhyia people live to the North of the Kenyan side of Lake Victoria. To the East is the great Rift Valley of Eastern Africa and to the West is Uganda. Luhyia is also a linguistic designation referring to a cluster of nineteen dialects spoken on both sides of the Kenyan-Uganda borders, although in common practice only those speakers of the language in Kenya are referred to as Ba-Luhyia (Soper and Mould 1986: 158).

Luhyia itself, taken as a whole, forms one of the three groups within a sub-group of Eastern Bantu languages known as Lacustrine Bantu. Lacustrine Bantu also includes the Interlacustrine group consisting of the Bantu languages of Uganda, north western Tanzania, Rwanda, Rundi and Ha (Soper and Mould 1986).

The prefix *aba* - denote the people and if one was to give the full name of the language of the people, the prefix *Lu* should be added to produce the word *Lu-luhyia*. Usually the prefix *Lu* is dropped. There is no standard Luhyia orthography and as a result various scholars write the word 'Luhyia' differently: Some write 'Luyia' others 'Luhyia'. However I prefer the way it is commonly written in my dialect - 'Luhyia' and avoid using 'Luyia' which means 'heat' in my dialect.

## 1.2. Social and Political history

The present day Ba-Luhyia of Western Province in Kenya used to belong to the Eastern Province of Uganda until 1902. After the transfer in 1902 to the East African Protectorate (later Kenya Colony) it was renamed the *Lakes Province*. In turn Lakes Province was renamed *Kavirondo Province*.

The word *Kavirondo* was derogatory; throughout the colonial period the Luhyia were referred to as *North-Kavirondo*. Arab slave traders are thought to have named people around Lake Victoria as '*Kavirondo*' a *derogatory* word meant to describe the habit women had of squatting most of the time. The Arab thought that the 'natives' in the area spend most of the time sitting on their heels or *virondo* (Malika 1978: 25). The women described here were employing a politeness strategy which was very much misunderstood by the slave traders. Osogo (1965 : 19) notes that in the former days women usually greeted strangers (or friends) while kneeling or half-raising on their heels, never when standing. This custom was common as far west as the Buganda Kingdom in Uganda. Though the colonial officials referred to the people by this derogatory term, at no time did the Luhyia people use it to describe themselves.

The 1937 census shows the people of 'North-Kavirondo' as numbering 312787. By 1979 Western Province (the post-colonial name for North-Kavirondo) had three districts of which the most populous, Kakamega District, had a population of 1,03 million people. The same census showed that over 557,176 people had migrated away from the district owing to the density of population.

By 1932 the people of North-Kavirondo had only one boys' high school built at Kakamega. There was no high school for girls within this large area. In 1987 Kakamega District alone had (according to the records at the District Education office) 184 Secondary School and 876 Primary Schools.

During the 19th century Arab slave traders moved through most of East and Central Africa in search of slaves and ivory. The Arabs were assisted in their undertaking by *Zanzibari, Nyamwezi* and other coastal Swahili-speaking people. The outcome of this was three fold : firstly, interior trading centres were set up as stopping depots for slaves in transit and for the purchase of locally available ivory. Secondly, slavers founded or propped up dynasties in order to facilitate their trade. Thirdly Kiswahili the language of the coastal people was spread inland along the trade routes and inland centres they founded.

One such trading centre was known as Lureko a name later changed to Mumias - home to paramount chief Mumia, the 'king' of Luhyia. Sifuna (1978) notes that Arabs and Swahili (coastal people) slave traders used to carry out a 'lively' barter trade with Mumia who received beads, copper wire and guns in exchange for food and lodging. The town of Mumias thrived during the Arab slave trading years and the Swahili appeared to have liked it and made it their permanent base. In 1883 the explorer Joseph Thompson was welcomed at Mumias. Bishop Hannington on his way to Uganda reached Mumias in 1895. Father Hanlon who had accompanied Bishop Hannington sums up the socio-economic

In many mission schools the medium of instruction was Kiswahili, though English could be used if permission was obtained form the Director of Education (Sifuna 1990:130). It should be understood that the colonial government was not keen on African education and it did not allocate funding for it. It was thought that the undesirable qualities of self-conceit would follow if education was given to Africans. (Sifuna 1990:116). Pressure from the colonial office as well as from local Indians forced the colonial government in 1910 to accept its responsibilities over education, albeit grudgingly. The colonial government took over the Indian Railway School and established an education department with a yearly budget of 18.50 pounds (Sloan 1962:131).



### 1.3. The growth of English

Inevitably the growth of English among the Luhyia speakers and Kenyans as a whole is a reflection of the growth of education. Therefore it is not easy to discuss one and leave out the other.

At the turn of the twentieth century the only Africans in Kenya who commanded a smattering of English were (again) the Swahili of Zanzibar. Lloyd-Jones (1926) noted that at this time half educated Swahili (in 1905) who were rejected from mission schools in Zanzibar presented themselves for enrolment in the King's African Rifles. They were eagerly snapped up owing to their knowledge of a smattering of English, and became invaluable as clerks and signallers. One such Swahili was George Williams who distinguished himself and was promoted to sergeant on the basis of his knowledge of English. One of the several letters he wrote to his officers is produced below. The officer had been wounded in the Northern Province of Kenya.

1.a.

'Dear Sir

Date 13 Nov. 1913

Just I received a news about you have been fighting with habash[1] and you get wounded so that time when I hear habari[2] I was very sorry to you sir. But I hope to almighty God you are Better now how are you now please. I will be glad when I receive your letter and let me know all about your leg how is please' (Lloyd-Jones 1926:131).

Inability to write in English was not limited to Africans in Kenya. James Martin, Maltese sail maker and companion to Joseph Thompson, (a well known explorer) became a District Commissioner in Kenya. Martin did not know how to read or write beyond his name - James. But he had full magisterial powers and kept a diary in which he wrote only in noughts, crosses, pot hooks and hieroglyphics of his own invention (Ojuando- Aburu 1970:130; Curtis 1986:2).



An advisory committee on education at the colonial office in 1927 recommended for the first time that teachers should be trained to use English in addition to their mother tongue (Gorman 1974:113). In addition it declared that to withhold the teaching of English to pupils was regarded by 'natives' as an attempt by the government to prevent advancement for Africans (Sifuna 1990:140).

1. habash - bandits
2. habari - news

In 1937 a commission for Higher Education which also established Makerere College in Uganda, recommended that only those pupils in primary school who are to proceed to secondary school should be taught in English. English should not be taught to those who will not proceed to secondary school, even as a subject (Gorman 1974:421). This directive only helped to add to the confusion surrounding the policy in regard to the teaching of English in colonial Kenya. If, for example, in the final year of primary school a class consisted of 30 pupils, out of which only three were lucky to proceed to secondary school, it was not easy to know with certainty which children should be given the honour of learning English.

Consequently learners turned to supplementing their rudimentary English via use of phrase books, dictionaries and other texts available to them. Though they might have been uncertain of the meaning of some of the words they had memorised, they nevertheless went ahead and used the novel 'big' word at every opportunity. One of the letters received by John Riddoch chairman of Kisumu Municipal council in 1940 will help illustrate the use of the 'big' word commonly used by learners.



1.b.

Most honourable Sir.

'Understanding that there are several hands wanted in Honoured Department I beg to... offer my hand as adjustment. I appeared for the Matriculation Exam but failed, the reason for which I shall describe to begin with my writing was in illegible due to climatic reasons for having come from a cold climate to a warm one found my fingers stiff and very disobedient to my wishes. Further I received a great shock to my mental system in the shape of the death of my only fond brother besides, most honourable sir,

African was written in West Africa in 1768. It showed a remarkable degree of fluency and competence. In 1780's Ignatius Sancho published his letters which had been written two years previously. The Ghanaian Dr. Edward Blyden wrote to Gladstone the then Prime minister in Britain, who got so impressed with the writer's classical erudition that he carried around the letter in order to show his friends (Bown 1973:3). According to Crow (1970) quoted by Schmied (1991:8), 'fifty Mulatto and African children were sent to Liverpool in 1788 in order to learn English. It is the first case in the history of the continent where students were sent abroad for pedagogic purposes as far as English is concerned. As it might be, the students were West Africans and East Africans had to wait for more than a century'.

Abdul Aziz (1991:394) observes that there was very little opportunity for Africans in East Africa during the colonial period to interact socially with white people. The British settlers were reluctant to use English with their native servants as this was a sure way (they believed) to 'spoil' a 'native' in the master-servant relationship that existed. 'Kitchen' Kiswahili was typically used in this situation. D`Souza (1987:86) also notes that throughout the colonial period African nationalists in Kenya fought for the introduction of English in standard 1 in view of the economic benefits that would accrue in the English speaking economic sector.



### 1.4. Unequal engagement: Luhyia, English and Kiswahili in competition

By the end of the first world war Kiswahili was dominant as a trade language and also as a language of literacy in mission schools. Some of the vocabulary items introduced into Luhyia from Kiswahili can be traced to this period. Examples are given in Table 1.1.

**Household and food items**

| Word | Gloss |
|---|---|
| sufuria | 'cooking pot' |
| panga | 'machete' |
| kitanda | 'bed' |
| blangeti | 'blanket' |
| sahani | 'plate' |
| mchele | 'rice' |
| machungwa | 'oranges' |
| pombe | 'beer' |
| sanduku | 'box' |
| kabati | 'cup-board' |
| kiberiti | 'matches' |
| sabuni | 'soap' |
| toweli | 'towel' |
| paipai | 'paw paw' |
| chumvi | 'salt' |

| Word | Gloss | Word | Gloss |
|---|---|---|---|
| jembe | 'mattock' | soda | 'non alcoholic drink' |
| pilipili | 'pepper' | sindano | 'needle' |
| nyanya | 'tomato' | vyatu | 'shoes' |
| dengu | 'green grams' | maembe | 'mangoes' |
| karaya | 'wash basin' | meza | 'table' |
| mkate | 'bread' | | |

**Building**

| Word | Gloss | Word | Gloss |
|---|---|---|---|
| misumari | 'nails' | mbao | 'timber' |
| dirisha | 'window' | saruji | 'cement' |
| mlango | 'door' | tofali | 'brick' |
| mabati | 'roofing iron sheet' | msumeno | 'hacksaw' |
| furemu | 'timber frame' | nyundo | 'hammer' |
| gorofa | 'high rise building' | choo | 'toilet' |
| kufuli | 'padlock' | fundi | 'artisan' |

**Education**

| Word | Gloss |
|---|---|
| kitabu | 'book' |
| pensil | 'pencil' |
| raba | 'eraser' |
| soma | 'read' |
| andika | 'write' |
| nukta | 'number' |
| darasa | 'class' |
| futa | 'erase' |

**Technology**

| Word | Gloss |
|---|---|
| simu | 'telephone' |
| ndege | 'aeroplane' |
| gari | 'vehicle' |
| redio | 'radio' |
| hesabu | 'maths' |
| meli | 'ship' |
| pikipiki | 'motor cycle' |

**Religion**

| Word | Gloss | Word | Gloss |
|---|---|---|---|
| biblia | 'bible' | mchungaji | 'pastor' |
| takatifu | 'holy' | mbinguni | 'heaven' |
| askofu | 'bishop' | shetani | 'Satan' |
| papa Mtakatifu | 'pope' | | |
| malaika | 'angel' | | |
| kanisa | 'church' | | |

Table 1.1. Kiswahili words which were adapted by Luhyia by 1920

Many of the Kiswahili words in turn came from Arabic, Indian languages, Persian, English, Portuguese and German. After the second world war, English had entered another phase in its contact with Luhyia. There were many people who were able to speak it via the army or other means of contact.

The Binns Report of 1952 on the state of education in Kenya made several recommendations. One of them relevant to this thesis concernes the special treatment teachers of English were to receive . They were to get an increment in salary and at the same time they were to teach their unqualified colleagues (Gorman 1974:115). The other relevant part of the report recommended that Kiswahili should be eliminated gradually from schools.

Thus teachers of English were given enhanced status and authority to teach even their own colleagues. Outside the school environment English teachers were looked upon with greater respect than was the case before. A popular Kiswahili song of the times composed by a Luhyia speaker reflects the mood of the times and respect shown to English.



1.d.

***Julieta Julieta***
***Uko wapi?***
***Tangu tuliachana mwaka ulio pita***
***Uko wapi?***
***Uliniacha kuwa mimi sijui Kizungu***
***Ukampata Mwalimu wa Kizungu***
***Yule Mwalimu ali Kukufukuza tabia Zako Mbaya***
***Julieta Julieta Uko wapi?***

'Julieta, Julieta, where are you?
Since you left me a year ago
Where are you?
You left me because I don't know English
You found a teacher of English
The teacher 'chased' you away
Your manners are bad.
Julieta Julieta, where are you?'

The period 1946-1963 may be termed the second phase in the contact between English and Luhyia. During this time more pupils attended school and the number of secondary schools increased. It is not easy to capture the speech patterns of this period. But by analysing letters written by a wide spectrum of speakers of the time one can gain insights into some of the socio-linguistic patterns of the time.

The sources of these letters are various; some of them were found at the Provincial Archives in Kakamega. Others were saved by individuals who willingly gave samples to me. They were mainly letters from, or to, members of families and their friends or letters to administrators with the intention of lodging complaints or accusing someone of unfairness.



Table 1.2 shows that although Luhyia was a language of literacy, it was not readily used as a code in official communication. Not even letters written to priests were written in Luhyia. Men were more likely than women to communicate their official messages in English. This implies that there were more men than women in positions of power. Alternatively it may mean that few women were able to use English at that period. Compared to English, Kiswahili was used less in official correspondence.

The number of men and women who were able to communicate privately by letters written in Luhyia was roughly equal, indicative of the marriage patterns at the time. Luhyia men were more likely than not to have married a Luhyia spouse.

English at that period had become second in importance in private communication between Luhyia men and women. Parkin (1977:193) estimates that English spoken in Kaloleni in Nairobi to a reasonable conversation level is 40% for men but less than 10% for women. The discrepancies reflect on the imbalances in the education for men current at that time.



| | **Luhyia** | | **Kiswahili** | | **English** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Private | Official | Private | Official | Private | Official |
| Men | 9 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 7 | 20 |
| Women | 12 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 3 |

Table 1.2. Code choice in a selection of letters written between 1946 - 1963

By the close of this phase in 1963 Luhyia had lost ground to both English and Kiswahili in matters involving school, government and official issues. Phase three of linguistic pressure on Luhyia came at independence in 1963. Sifuna (1990:149) noted that in 1957 English was introduced in Asian Schools (hitherto the medium had been various Indian languages). Later this policy was extended to African schools where instructions were given in 'English' right from standard 1.

It was as if a floodgate had been opened. Various methods were used to enforce the use of English in schools. As competition to pass the primary school final examination grew, teachers began to teach over weekends and school holidays. In this way they imposed a day long linguistic enclave throughout the whole year.

I interviewed an 80 year old man who had been Minister of Education at Independence and was responsible for official response to people's demands for English.

(i). C.S. At Independence you were the Minister for Education in Kenya

J.O. Yes.

C.S. Why did you give English and Kiswahili so much prominence in the education system?

J.O. Well the reason is this: English is an international language and Kenyans going out into international way must have English perfectly. Swahili is also an international language so they must know it.

C.S. How did you ensure that this happens?

J.O. First thing was to increase the number of Secondary Schools for both girls and boys.

In another interview I asked a member of parliament why it was necessary to down-grade Luhyia. He is referred to here as B.M.

(ii). C.S. Why was Luhyia not given official backing?

B.M. Because you would not move. You would not get instructions properly in other subjects if you did not know English. So how would you move in any direction if you cannot express in English?

It therefore can be seen that there was a lot of pressure on the acquisition of English so as to be able to relate to events in the modern world. As expected the number of schools was increased as one way of achieving knowledge of the modern world. Out of the four Luhyia Districts in 1987, Kakamega District alone had over a thousand schools compared to the few which were available in 1932 as shown in Table 1.3.



| | 1932 | | 1987 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Primary** | **Secondary** | **Primary** | **Secondary** |
| Boys only | 5 | 1 | 0 | 80 |
| Boys & girls | 2 | 0 | 876 | 20 |
| Girls only | 3 | 0 | 0 | 84 |
| **Total** | **10** | **1** | **876** | **184** |

Table 1.3. Number of schools in Kakamega District in 1932, 1987 compared

The system that had ensured fewer opportunities for the education of girls (especially at secondary school level) was done away with. English was no longer accessible to men only. In 1987 there were as many opportunities for girls to acquire some education as were for boys. It should be noted that in Kenya the acquisition of English has remained a classroom phenomenon. There are no opportunities available

for people to learn English outside the classroom as it was in the earlier days when one could learn it in the army, or in employment in a white household or farm.

With more people able to speak, read and write in English several changes have become apparent in peoples' speech behaviour. The most easily recognisable phenomenon is code-switching which has become part of the peoples' repertoire. Less noticeable and less obvious are loss of skills in writing Luhyia and a diminished ability to read Luhyia texts. This is part of the outcome of the third phase in language contact which started in 1963.

Through officially planned strategies combined with people's demand, English and Kiswahili have come to dominate in matters concerning education, employment and even certain domestic domains. In turn the English spoken by these people (which in this thesis is referred as Luhyia English) exhibits features that have Luhyia as their origin in matters concerning grammar, discourse and semantics. Luhyia English also shows characteristic Kenyan, African or non-native features of what is currently known as 'New Englishes'. These and other changes involving Luhyia in its third phase of attrition and obsolescence form the basis of the rest of this work.



## B. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 1.1. The Setting.

In the wider setting of Kenya Zuengler (1982:112) notes that little research has been done on English and it is not known how many varieties of English exist in Kenya. Apart from this Kembo-Sure (1992:25) notes that educated Kenyan English itself has not been fully described and codified. This research therefore seeks to establish the

point that there is an identifiable Luhyia variety of English within the Kenyan variety of English.

The research was carried out in three of the eight Districts that form Western Province of Kenya. It lasted five months between October 1995 and February 1996. The bulk of the research consisted of interviews which were recorded with the consent of the interviewees. In this task I was assisted by a man who has had long experience in sociolinguistic research in Kenya. My assistant interviewed 35 people while I did 45. The two of us, sometimes together, or each going separate ways, covered homes, schools, religious gatherings and market places. Only one Luhyia resident of Nairobi who was home on leave was interviewd. The study therefore was rural based. Owing to lack of resources Luhyia speakers from three out of eight districts were interviewed. My instruction to my assistant was to ask questions in Luhiya as far as possible but to let the respondents answer in a language or languages of their choice. My own questions during the interviews were asked in English, Kiswahili or Luhiya. The respondents similarly were asked to feel free to choose the code(s) in which to frame their answers. We also gained access to material in the Provincial Archives in Kakamega. In addition, individuals made available to us family and other letters in their possession.



This was in line with the need to obtain a wide data base. In socio-linguistics Milroy (1980:40) notes that the data base should be the wider community and not a circle of friends or 'captive' population such as school children, patients and the like. Milroy cautions against approaches to priests, teachers and community leaders when investigating language. Figueroa (1994:84) quoting Labov (1989) notes the

particularity of the individual is often ignored in community studies and instead the individual is defined in terms of supra-individual categories such as class and gender. The individual therefore is a token of a type and an individual's speech is analysed as a token of types; hence the language of the individual is abstracted to the community.

However, the community leadership which embodies the spread of English through their activities cannot be reasonably ignored in studying the effects of English in contact with Luhyia. The school is considered a crucial site of investigation for this study. Some of the most important groups of people in the contact situation are teachers, priests and office employees. It was necessary to seek teachers' opinions about the position of English *vis a vis* the mother tongue in the education of children. It was also necessary to pay attention to some of the priests' practice of using interpreters whenever they wished to communicate with their congregations; in the interests of the study of code-choice.



### 1.2. The interview as a method of research: its shortcomings and strengths

The sociolinguistic interview retains a central position within the quantitative paradigms spearheaded by Labov (Wolfson 1979:168). In this study the recorded interview proved very popular with older subjects who were sometimes prepared to talk for hours displaying in the process, a range of discourse features. Sometimes as a condition for granting an interview, interviewees requested for a copy of the recording. We always acceeded to these requests. A touching example was one made by a married woman who wanted a copy of her father's interview with us. All the years she had never heard him say much more than a greeting - a case of taking

patriarchy too far. Forty-five minutes of her fathers' recorded speech was made available to her. Yet the interview as a feature has been subject to criticism by sociolinguists. Milroy (1980:25) observes that interview as a speech event is characterised by some discourse structures not found in spontaneous conversation. Another criticism of the interview method made by Wolfson (1979:168) is that the vernacular cannot be elicited easily in it. But if one can consider code-switching, and non-standard grammatical, discourse and pragmatic features to be part of vernacular then the interview method as adapted in this study was just as good as any other method in eliciting the vernacular, contrary to sceptics like Wolfson.

The third criticism of the recorded interview is made by Gumperz (1972:25) - that it is difficult to induce people to speak normally while a tape is operating. Hymes (1974:45) used the term 'ways of speaking' to describe 'speaking normally' which includes song, whistling, cursing, and insult. We tried to overcome the people's natural resistance to speak freely to strangers by making several trips until we were acquainted with the subject, enough for her/ him to talk freely to us. Not always did we manage to convince a subject to accept to be recorded, especially when the subject was alone. However, in the company of friends and relatives it was easy to get an interview with all present taking part in it.



### 1.3. Problems encountered

About half the subjects we approached for an interview declined to be of assistance to us. They would decline outright or keep on postponing the day of the interview. A startling example involved a man who ran away when he saw us coming for the third time, after he had kept on promising to see us 'next week'. The majority of those who

declined to be interviewed did so for fear of the recorder. It appears that most people are used to the questionnaire type of research. Recorded interviews other than those done by radio, and TV personnel are not common. It is also likely that those who declined to be interviewed felt that we were going to criticise the way they spoke, after they learnt that it was a language study project. One other problem with the recorded interview is the whispered responses. There was a time when one subject after several aborted appointments took us to a 'shebeen' popular for its deafening music. Only after seating in a poorly lit corner where the music was particularly loud was he ready for the interview. As a paricipant in opposition politics he desired to be inconspicuous.

The odd problem is a thing a researcher should expect. For instance, I had a firm promise for an interview, on condition that the subject should be given a 'glassful' of the illicit cane spirits commonly known as 'Changaa' in Kenya. At the end of the third glassful he said 'twice you have asked me for an interview, but let me tell you now; you are not going to use my brain. Never!' However, these problems were not enough to deter us from interviewing eighty subjects.



### 1.4. Interview questions

According to Labov (1966) a few themes have the greatest force for evoking speech from the broadest range of speakers such as death, violence, gossip, accidents, sickness, sex, dating, household negotiating, humour, local issues etc. Cultural

constraints make it impossible for sex and dating to be used as a theme for an interview. It would be difficult to find someone prepared to have his/her moral indignation and attitudes to local issues recorded for fear that this may be used against them.

The majority of the subjects were prepared for long exchanges on household issues, humour, accidents or gossip. Among the older people local history and religion offered an opportunity for inspired and endless discussion. For younger people who are still at school, reference to casual friends or school related topics usually provided a source of material for discussion.



### 1.5. Other Sources Of Material

One of the supplementary sources of data was written material. My reasons for collecting letters written by Luhyia speakers generally were two fold: Letters can easily reveal the general trend in the choice of code(s) of communication. The second reason is based on my belief that people's vernaculars are not always suppressed in informally written communication. Linguistic information found in letters (including code-switching) can yield knowledge of people's speech habits, especially those who can no longer be recorded.

Another source of material was open air preaching, usually organised by younger people. Such preaching takes place in a hall, recreational park or a market place. There are no restrictions as to who may or may not attend such a meeting. In most cases the crowd is bilingual in English, Kiswahili, Luhyia and any other local Kenyan language. There are usually two people involved in the preaching - one gives the

message in English while the other translates into Kiswahili or at times into a Kenyan local language. In many cases the translated message differs diametrically from the original. Several hours of recording this speech event enabled me to analyse language patterns in such an interaction [see chapter 4]. I was also allowed to record plays, dances, poetry, and other recitals during the schools drama festivals which coincided with my research period.

### 1.6. The Subjects

There was usually an enthusiastic acceptance of an interview among school children and their teachers. In a way this attitude is explained by the fact that more than any other class of subjects I encountered, the school community is familiar with the idea of an interview. It is another matter when one intends to interview ordinary people unconnected with school environment as Table 1.4 shows.



| **Employment Status** | **Accepted immediately** | | **Accepted After Appointment** | | **Accepted After More Than Three Appointments** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Men | Women | Men | Women | Men | Women |
| Employed | 2 | 1 | 9 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Unemployed | 2 | 15 | 4 | 0 | 15 | 0 |
| **n = Total** | **4** | **16** | **13** | **2** | **15** | **0** |

Table 1.4. Interviewees' reaction to request to be interviewed

Table 1.4 reflects to some extent the social interaction patterns within the society. Unemployed women do not generally wish to be seen conversing with a stranger. In

order to avoid having to explain to her family the identity of her 'frequent' visitors, a woman preferred to get over the interview as soon as she was asked to do so, or she may reject the idea outright. The opposite is true of unemployed men: the majority preferred to postpone the day of the interview as long as possible. However, women in employed exhibited more flexibility and accepted an appointment for an interview for a later date. Employed men usually accepted to be interviewed by appointment.

### 1.7. Level of education of interviewees

The Table below represents the level of education of all the 80 people we interviewed.



| Year of Birth | Little or no schooling | | Primary School | | Secondary School | | University | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Men | Women | Men | Women | Men | Women | Men | Women |
| 1974-1980 | 1 | 0 | 6 | 3 | 9 | 3 | 6 | 4 |
| 1962-1972 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 6 | 8 | 4 | 4 | 1 |
| 1940-1961 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 1920-1939 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 1910-1919 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **n = Total** | **3** | **2** | **22** | **13** | **18** | **7** | **10** | **5** |

n = 80

Table 1.5 Level of education of subjects

The three most important variables in analysing language as spoken by a community are represented above i.e. age, sex and level of education. By 1972 the imbalances in education based on sex no longer existed to any significant degree.

### 1.8. Languages used in a family

Each interviewee was asked for details concerning language use when members of their families interact. Responses to these questions helped me to form an opinion concerning language patterns within the community. Of interest was the language which came naturally to the subjects as they interacted with family members. Myers-Scotton (1982:128) notes that at Shiveye village in Kakamega about 6% of the residents know some other language or languages in addition to the home language. She further observes that the figures are higher in Kakamega as a whole. However, my sample seems to indicate a difference in language use in the area surveyed. The most significant factor appears to be age. The older generation use Luhyia in their transactions, particularly older women. On the other hand many of the younger generation show code-mixing. Table 1.6 represents the speakers' responses.



| Year born | Code-mixing | | English | | Luhyia | | Kiswahili | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Men | Women | Men | Women | Men | Women | Men | Women |
| 1974-1980 | 5 | 4 | 6 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 |
| 1962-1972 | 6 | 5 | 6 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 1 |
| 1940-1961 | 7 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1920-1939 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 1910-1919 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| **n = total** | **22** | **13** | **17** | **7** | **7** | **4** | **8** | **2** |

Table 1.6 Language usually used in family domain among 80 Luhyia speakers

### 1.9. Luhyia, English, Kiswahili code-mixing

Of the 80 subjects, 35 of them indicated that they use Luhyia English and Kiswahili interchangeably in their repertoire. These speakers claimed that usually they do not hesitate to use a word from any of the three languages whenever they feel the need to do so in their conversation. However, people with some education used more English elements in their mixed code than people with little or no education. The language of those with little education showed only Kiswahili and Luhyia elements. Apart from the level of education, those speakers who had managed to live outside their home areas in employment showed an increased ability to use the three languages. This indicates a relationship between employment, education and ability to use the three codes in a conversation. There were few women in paid employment in the period 1910 - 1930, even if they had received elementary education; consequently none of those women we interviewed spoke in a mixed code.

### 1.10. Luhyia

Luhyia spoken without code-switched elements from either English or Kiswahili was found only in the speech of older people aged over 65 years. In addition to age these speakers did not have an education and had lived most of their lives in the traditional Luhyia speaking environment.

### 1.11. English

The 24 subjects who use English in their interactions with members of their families are of educated background and are also in paid employment. Among this group are people in retirement, which does not seem to change their linguistic patterns. Those people who have had an education and were in employment carry their speech patterns into their retirement and consequently continued to use English with members of their families. Some parents use English when addressing their children as one way of making their children start early in acquiring English. The same children, in the absence of their parents usually speak a mixture of Luhyia - English - Kiswahili with their friends. Nevertheless, English is still a language that is acquired in the classroom inspite of those few parents who teach it to their children while at home.



### 1.12. Kiswahili

Speaking Kiswahili within the home is a feature of the younger generation only, inspite of the fact that Kiswahili has been used in the community since the beginning of the twentieth century, when missionaries opened schools in the community. Younger people use Kiswahili extensively because it was actively promoted after 1963, when it was declared the national language of Kenya and a compulsory school subject. These conditions were not found before Kenyans' independence and as a result older people

in the community use Kiswahili items in ordinary conversation either as code-switched or borrowed forms (without being able to use Kiswahili in lengthy conversation the way younger people do).

### 1.13. Code switching as a written code

Just as code-switching has been established as a code of verbal exchange, so has it also been employed as a written code. Like Luhyia it is not standardised. It is a feature found in the written communication of those who must have been to school from the nineteen fifties onwards. It may also indicate that the writer has been living away from his/her immediate village environment. Usually it is a code used in private communication between individuals. Since 1963 Luhyia has not been taught in school as a written code, the mixed code appears to have replaced it in this form of communication. One example is this 'demand' note from one woman in a village to another.



1.e. Halloo, *Mama*

Please mother if you have the cash for that **kuku** I sold you please **nipe.**

*Ndi nu vudinyu* please.

Yours Mrs. G.

**Glosses:** **Mama** - 'Mother' (both. Luhyia and Kiswahili)

**kuku** - 'chicken' (Kiswahili)

**nipe** - give it to me (Kiswahili)

*ndi nuvudinyu* - I have a problem (Luhyia)'

## 1.14. Language contact and its aftermath

In this chapter a brief sketch of the converging of two foreign languages upon Luhyia has been made. Luhyia speakers found it easier to learn and acquire Kiswahili informally without the necessity of doing so at school. English fared differently. From the time English was introduced, those who have learnt it have done so more or less in a school based environment.

After the missionaries had first introduced English to the Luhyia people; the colonial government reluctantly took on the responsibility of increasing the number of schools and therefore the opportunities for the indigenous people to acquire it.

With independence in 1963 the teaching of indigenous languages in schools was discouraged; unlike the teaching of Kiswahili and English both of which continue to receive attention and funding from government.

In this unequal struggle to survive Luhyia has adapted various strategies. At the same time features that can be traced to Luhyia origins have found their way into the speaker's English. The overall effect of contact is one of attrition as far as the disadvantaged language is concerned. The following chapters will explore some of the survival strategies employed, including Luhyia features of English, and attrition, which is a consequence of its contact with the more powerful languages.

Awonusi (1990:33) quotes Bamgbose's (1981) observation that a remarkable feature of English pronunciation in Nigeria is that it identifies the part of Nigeria to which a speaker belongs. Kembo-Sure (1992:25) argues that Kenyan English has not been fully described and codified so that it can represent a known model.

On a global scale there are features that are common to all non-native English. Williams (1987:162) notes that there are non-native institutionalised varieties of English or what she termed 'NIVES'. There are many features which are similar across 'NIVES' which cannot be explained by 'interference'. 'NIVES' are distinct from pidgins and creoles to which they have been often compared.

Reactions to non-native Englishes vary a great deal. Awonusi (1990:33) expresses tolerance when he notes that non-native forms should not be seen as *mistakes* but as valid characteristics of the new Englishes. On the other end of the scale there is open hostility of a puristic nature to the so-called mistakes as expressed by teachers and others. As Gyasi (1990:25) notes 'English in Ghana is very ill. The cancerous tumours are countless; wrong collocations, false concord, poor spelling due to unfamiliarity with the word or mis-pronunciation.'

Reasons for what native speakers term as 'deviant' English may either be due to the process of transfer, semantic extension of the meaning of words or culturally-bound features finding their way into the speech patterns of second-language speakers. At times elements within the second-language speaker's repertoire are incomprehensible

to or may cause unintended offence to others who do not share the same background. Williams (1992:197) notes that cross-cultural differences are likely to inhibit communication. Wolfson (1992:203) comments further that when a language becomes accepted as an institutionalised second language and it is used for national communication the socio-linguistic patterns of the speech community using it will be reflected in the $L_2$ just as they are in $L_1$.

## 2.1. Luhyia English and Luhyia/English Code-switching

The Corpus reveals two different but related features of the code referred to here as Luhyia English. Luhyia English refers to that code which is typical to Luhyia speakers and whose grammar is English with influence from Luhyia.

On the other hand Luhyia/English code-switching implies that the grammar of each language used in the utterance is kept intact. In this exchange two people were expressing their disgust about a visitor who had abused his welcome. The speakers were overheard in a Kakamega office and since nothing more is known about them they are designated here as A and B. The example illustrates a Luhyia/English code-switching utterance.

(i). A: *Nahuka muno*. Why did he leave in the night?
(I was surprised)

B: *Mbo Yiba Ingokho* and all the beddings.
(I tell you he stole a chicken)

A: So you welcomed *mwivi* (thief)

Selected grammatical and lexical features of Luhyia English and Luhyia/English code-switching will be explored and reasons behind their production examined. Some of the features will be typically Luhyia, others will be part of a wider Kenyan, African or of the more general 'non-native English' (NIVE) variety.

## 2.2. Pronouns

The choice of pronouns in English is almost entirely a matter of sex since English has no gender; that is to say the nouns of English can not be classified in terms of agreement with articles, adjectives or verbs (Palmer 1971:189).

One of the distinctive markers of pronouns in English is therefore a differentiation of sex. This is not the case with Bantu pronouns which distinguish between person, animate and inanimate categories. As such the units 'he' and 'she' belong to same Bantu classification of 'person' which ignores any sex differentiation.

The differences in the classification of pronouns between Luhyia and English is a source of problems in the speech production of Luhyia speakers. In a recorded conversation a man recounts a story in which he had assisted a woman after she had been assaulted by her drinking partners. The man has a university education and claimed to be able to speak three languages fluently: English, Kiswahili and Luhyia. English is the code used in this exchange. The man who had taken the victim to a

local police station in order for her to make a report of the incident, is identified as T.M. In this thesis, Kiswahili is written in bold letters, English in Roman and Luhyia is written in italics where possible.

(ii). **Kiswahili/English Code-switching**

C.S. What happened?

T.M. The corporal shouted: **Tuna jua wewe** (We know you).
**Wewe mwanamke si tunakunywa nawe pombe?**
(You woman don't we drink beer with you ?)

Then the lady told *him*: You see you are infringing on my rights. what I do should not be your concern, eh? The case is straight. I have been assaulted. If you think so then forget it. She started moving away.

Then the corporal shouted:

**mimi ninaweza kukuweka kwa** cell
(I can put you in cells)

the lady answered: What do you want from me? I am telling you that I have been assaulted. This is a miscarriage of justice.

C.S. I see. Even if she was a prostitute her rights should have been protected.

T.M. The policeman wanted to slap her. She said: Alright, if you can not book the case you can forget it. Just in Luanda here.

C.S. Uhm. It was in Luanda?

T.M. Of course. The policeman wanted to slap her. The lady told *her*: My friend you must be careful. You may not know the person you are talking to. The policeman was telling *him*: I don't care.

Alright *he* said, you may not care. But there is a certain time you will care.

C.S. Uhm.

T.M. Then we walked out. She was bleeding...

In the above exchange the corporal is referred to as *him* and also as *her*. Similarly the woman is referred to as *he* and also as *him*. This is an indication that there is a conflict in the expression of sex through pronouns in Luhyia English. This conflicting practice is based on Luhyia which does not distinguish sex differences in pronouns and English which does.

In another recording a female high - school chemistry teacher narrated the story of her encounter with a Pakistani woman who had converted to Christianity. The chemistry teacher is identified as R.I. At an open air rally the Pakistani woman told her audience that while in Pakistan she had called on Jesus who had healed her. Previously she had called on Allah without effect. Part of my interview with R.I. is reproduced:



(iii). **Luhyia English**

C.S. What happened afterwards?

R.I. So now she decided now I have called on Allah, Allah is not helping. Why not call on the son of Mary? So kind of Jesus manifested himself to her that night and healed her even changing her clothes. The aunt who used to come in the mornings to help

*him* was surprised when *he* came and found her moving about in the house in shiny clothes.

In both examples above there appears to be no significant differences in the way men and women handle reference to sex in pronouns. If the speech of a university educated speaker can contain this feature then its application can be assumed to be wide spread. Further light is shed on this point after analysing the speech of some subjects from the data base. The number of personal pronouns (***she, he, himself, herself***) were counted and their correct or incorrect application noted. Important variables in the analysis are: age and education as shown in Table 2.1. Details of these interviewees are given in the appendix.



| Age | Level of Education | Pronoun correctly applied | Pronoun incorrectly applied | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 26 | university | 22 | 3 | 30 |
| 29 | university | 23 | 4 | 29 |
| 30 | primary | 25 | 5 | 30 |
| 45 | secondary | 22 | 2 | 24 |
| 55 | primary | 27 | 6 | 31 |
| 57 | secondary | 26 | - | 26 |
| 20 | secondary | 26 | 8 | 29 |
| 60 | secondary | 30 | - | 30 |
| 70 | secondary | 27 | - | 27 |
| **average** | | **228**<br>**89%** | **28**<br>**10.9%** | **256** |

Table 2.1 Gender reference in personal pronouns in conversational Luhyia English

In this small sample personal pronouns are used correctly about 89% and about 11% incorrectly used by speakers of Luhyia English. Older speakers, irrespective of educational level, appeared to use personal pronouns in the standard English fashion.

This difference is likely to be based on the kind of exposure to English the subjects have had. The older subjects are mainly the product of the mission schools where high standards of performance in English were achieved. Today there are no missionary schools any more. The second factor is related to the fact that older speakers interacted with native speakers of English who were either their teachers or acquaintances. Frequently, a native speaker would correct improper application of English during an interaction without causing an offence. Today it is considered very rude to correct someone's English errors during an interaction.

**2.3. The use of plurals**

My corpus contains many instances where irregular nouns are given regular plurals. Williams (1987:71) notes that another area which shows evidence of a shift to a more regularised pattern is the distinction between *mass* and *count* nouns where rules that generally apply to native varieties are changed. Zuengler (1982:116) argues that because of the differences in Bantu *count* and *non-count* nouns, nouns like the following are regularised in Kenyan English: *fruits, ammunitions, hardwares and furnitures*.



Sey (1973) gives the following examples of Ghanaian English to illustrate a regularisation of irregular nouns when number is indicated:

I lost my *furnitures*

There were *noises* of laughter and *chats*

I was in-charge of *correspondences*

(Sey 1973:26 - 27)

Bamgbose (1982:105) argues that 'peculiar' word formation may occur with plurals e.g. *equipments, aircrafts, deadwoods*. This tendency is sometimes referred to as overgeneralisation. Platt et al. (1984:50) note that overgeneralisation means that when people acquire a new language they apply a rule too widely. 'In this case it would mean that they mark a noun for plural whenever it refers to one thing or person'. In other words this a process of reclassification where speakers of new Englishes appear to be classifying certain nouns, which in more established varieties of English are considered uncountable, e.g.:

| | |
|---|---|
| damage | damages |
| equipment | equipments |
| fruit | fruits |
| furniture | furnitures |
| machinery | machineries |
| staff | staffs |
| work | works |

(Platt et al. 1984:50 - 1)

Regularisation of noun plural formation is not unique to Ghanaian, Nigerian or Kenyan Englishes, but a common feature of new Englishes world-wide.

It appears that the differences between languages in the way they form noun plurals has something to do with the overgeneralisation of the English noun-plural formation, especially in Luhyia English. In Luhyia both singular and plural are marked by an

appropriate prefix. In English the singular is usually not marked while the plural may be marked by a suffix. A comparison of Luhyia and English noun plural formation is shown in Table 2.2.

**Class 1/2 person**

| Singular form | Gloss | Plural form | Gloss |
|---|---|---|---|
| *mu - satsa* | 'man, husband' | *va - satsa* | 'men, husbands' |
| *mu - cheni* | 'visitor' | *va - cheni* | 'visitors' |
| *mu - khali* | 'wife, woman' | *va - khali* | 'women, wives' |
| *mu - sakhulu* | 'oldman' | *va - sakhulu* | 'oldmen' |

**Class 9/10 animal**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *i - mbova* | 'rat' | *tsi - mbova* | 'rats' |
| *i - suna* | 'mosquito' | *tsi - suna* | 'mosquitoes' |
| *i - sutse* | 'fish' | *tsi - sutse* | 'fish' |
| *i - ngombe* | 'cow' | *tsi - ngombe* | 'cows' |

**Class 5/6 mass, solid or circular objects**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *li - vuyu* | 'egg' | *ma - vuyu* | 'eggs' |
| *li - kaa* | 'charcoal' | *ma - kaa* | 'charcoal' |
| *li - china* | 'stone' | *ma - china* | 'stones' |

Table 2.2. Formation of plurals in English and Luhyia

An important point of difference is the fact that some of the irregular plural nouns in English are arbitrarily formed e.g. *men. women, fish*, and *cattle*. At the same time these irregular nouns are regular in Luhyia as shown above. Therefore the regularity in Luhyia nouns is generalised to include nouns that are arbitrarily made irregular in English. Luhyia speakers regularise plurals in irregular nouns in English, producing such noun plurals as: *cattles, charcoals, furnitures, equipments, beddings, hairs* and *childrens.* English words which have found their way into Luhyia through the process of borrowing tend to show both systems of marking noun plurals e.g.

| **Luhyia borrowed word plural** | **Gloss** |
|---|---|
| *tsi - beer - s*<br>6cl. - beer - pl. | beers |
| *va - chief - s*<br>2cl. - chief - pl. | chiefs |
| *va - farmer - s*<br>2cl. - farmer - pl. | farmers |
| *va - conductor - s*<br>2cl. - conductor - pl. | conductors |

| | |
|---|---|
| *va - driver - s* | drivers |
| 2cl - driver - pl. | |
| *tis - cattle - s* | cattle |
| 6cl. - cattle -pl. | |

Table 2.3 Plural marking in borrowed English words in Luhyia

The following examples from the data base will illustrate how Luhyia English regularises irregular English noun plurals. In the first example a man who had attained class eight level of education narrates his experiences as a hawker in Nairobi. The man is referred to as A.L. Part of the interview with A.L. follows:

(iv). **Luhyia English**

C.S. Did you have a particular shop for selling albums or a place for selling charcoal?

A.L. No. But we managed to get a licence for *albums* and *charcoals*. I tried myself without a licence. Later I got a licence then I continued also selling *charcoals*. I was simply trying whatever was going on.

In the next example a jailed husband writes to the Provincial Commissioner in order to be assisted in tracing and recovering his wife, who seems to have eloped with someone else during his long absence in jail. This material was found at the Provincial Achives in Kakamega. The writer is referred to as Mr. F. and the following is part of his letter:

2.a. **Luhyia English**

Dear Sir,

I have the honour to submit my complains to you regarding my wife Esther who left my home on 3-7-1975 with five *childrens* and she taken by a teacher. I went to the chief of the area for help and he did not help me but I was nearly killed, but this is my really wife married her in 1954. We had 9 *childrens.* I kindly ask you to arrest her before being sent her to Uganda.

Yours Mr. F.

In my final example a member of parliament in 1963 also showed this phenomenon in his writing. Usually entrance into Kenyan Parliament is tolerant to lack of high qualifications. This material was found in the archives in Kakamega. The honourable member is referred to as Honourable J. His letter is addressed to a District Education officer.



2.b. **Luhyia English**

...I am not prepared to stand still questioning you what may or may not be the *effects* on one boy expelled from Kimilili D.E.B. School. It has been my duty to know the reasons why the boy was expelled...

Yours Hon. J.

Regularisation of irregular noun plurals in Luhyia English is likely to be evident in the speech of people who only had primary education. There is a tendency of fossilisation for those who left school without having mastered the plural formation rules in the irregular nouns.

## 2.4. Genitives

The genitive is many times not marked morphologically in Luhyia English both in spoken and written form. This phenomenon seems to be of wider application in Kenya among all classes of speakers of Kenyan English. Zuengler (1982:116) attributes this phenomenon to 'the non-occurrence of pronominal possessive forms which are not found in Bantu languages.' As a result there are in Kenya official organisations such as: *women groups* (women's self-help groups); *children welfare society*, (children's welfare society) etc. (Zuengler 1982:117).

In addition to such official usage; I have seen the following on school notice boards in Kakamega: *school scout club; young farmer club; one day notice; President Moi philosophy of peace love and unity.*

The genitive is marked within a phrase in Luhyia and not morphologically as it is sometimes marked in English. As a result of this difference, the morphologically marked genitive is a source of problems to Luhyia speakers. Two examples which follow show that the morphologically marked genitive was omitted. In the first example a high school teacher writes to a prospective land buyer cautioning against the sale of his late father's land. This material was made available to me by an assistant chief. The author of the cautionary note is identified as E.S.

2.c. **Luhyia English**

Ref.: Buying the late Laurent ϕ[1] plot.

Take note that it has come to my notice that you intend or you are in the process of buying part or the whole of the late Laurent ϕ plot parcel without the consent of the whole family. Be informed that...I strongly object to sale of the late Laurent ϕ property without the family ϕ consent.

In the next example an assistant chief is complaining to a higher authority concerning a woman who seems to be dissatisfied with his ruling in a case involving her. Chiefs usually use Kiswahili, Luhyia or mixed code when communicating with those under them. When writing to higher authority, chiefs use English or English-Kiswahili mixed code.

2.d. **Kiswahili English; Kiswahili/English Code-switching**

Ref.: Case between Henry and Mrs. Mary -

Mr. Henry - was reported to have abused Mrs. Mary - that she is harlot. **Wazees** [village elders] decided that Henry is found guilty. Henry ϕ fine was decided to be four **kukus** [chickens]. Mrs. Mary ϕ decision to go on with the case is pure **fitina** [malicious] and a big surprise to **wazees**.

The corpus of nine speakers reveal a number of unmarked genitives. The figures in Table 2.4 show that about 60% of Luhyia English, the genitive remains unmarked and

[1] Zero symbol shows genitive omission

about 40% is marked. Expressions showing unmarked genitive are given in the appendix.

| Speaker | Morphologically marked genitive | Genitive - s omitted |
|---|---|---|
| S1 | - | 2 |
| S2 | 2 | 2 |
| S3 | 2 | 3 |
| S4 | 2 | 2 |
| S5 | 2 | 3 |
| S6 | 0 | 1 |
| S7 | 1 | 2 |
| S8 | 1 | 3 |
| S9 | 4 | 2 |
| | 14 | 21 |
| average | 40% | 60% |



Table 2.4 Genitive marking in Luhyia English

### 2.5. Articles

There are no equivalents to the English definite and indefinite articles in Luhyia. This is likely to have some effect on Luhyia English speech patterns. Sometimes it takes the form using articles in positions where usually a native speaker would not do so. At other times non-use of an article where native speaker would apply one can be discerned.

In Bantu languages nouns are categorised on the basis of their classes and it is done at the level of morphology via a system of prefixes. According to Denny and Geider (1986:217), proto-Bantu, noun prefixes reflected a semantic system where each prefix was associated with a particular characteristic meaning. The bulk of the noun prefixes was associated with a configuration of shape meanings.

Although linguists consider this to be a gender system (where 'gender' means 'family' or 'group'), for reasons that will become clear it is more appropriate to discuss the system in conjunction with article usage in Luhyia English.

Bantu nouns are classified according to whether or not they share a common prefix which may denote such characteristics as rounded, bunched or elongated entities. Another class of nouns would have prefixes denoting humans and yet another would denote animals and so on. The classification of these prefixes is further complicated by whether or not the nouns under consideration are concrete or abstract. Denny and Geider (1986) noted the following examples of noun classification in proto-Bantu:



**Class 3/4. Extended or long entities**

| **Concrete** | **Gloss** |
|---|---|
| *bidi* | 'body' |
| *cagga* | 'sandy island' |
| *cua* | 'termite' |
| *gudu* | 'leg' |

**Abstract**

| | |
|---|---|
| *dimo* | 'work' |
| *dimu* | 'spirit' |

Table 2.5 Classification of nouns in proto-Bantu

On many occasions Luhyia speakers of English tend to convert the English noun-phrase articles in order for them to function as if they are Bantu noun-marking prefixes. The noun-class prefix is the same as the concordial prefix of the adjective in the utterance. For example the Luhyia equivalent of the expression: 'beer is bad' is rendered as :

1. *Ma - lwa ni ma tamanu*
   (6cl. beer is con. bad)

In the above setence the noun-class prefix agrees with the prefix which marks the adjective. The ordering of the prefixes in the relation between noun, verb and adjective, obeys a simple rule: the noun prefix must agree with the verb or adjective prefix in any given utterance. In a sentence like 'The thin cows are dying' the noun, verb and adjective will have the same prefix for the purpose of keeping concord, e.g.:

2. *Tsi - ngombe tsi ngahu tsi khutsanga*
   (4cl. cow con. thin con. are dying)

It appears that mandatory concordial agreement as seen above plays a role in the distribution of articles in a Luhyia English noun phrase. In the same way articles in Luhyia English seem to be controlled the same way as concordial prefixes. The following utterance by a class-3 pupil has its articles arranged as if they were prefixes

in Luhyia noun phrase.

3. I do not like beer. *The* bad *the* smell *the* beer.

A native speaker of English will consider the use of articles in the above utterance as 'ill formed'. But what has happened is a process that has turned the definite article before the noun *beer* to function as if it is a noun-class prefix and the subsequent articles before the adjectives *bad* and *smell* to function as mandatory concordial prefixes as is usually found in Luhyia in similar circumstances. That is, what looks superficially like English articles are more likely to be noun class and concordial prefixes.

In a similar way, other speakers used articles in their utterances that may seem unacceptable to native speakers; indicating that the class III pupil's usage in example 3 is not an isolated, but a common, feature of Luhyia English. A chief's certificate quoted in sentence 4 below shows a similar phenomenon. Chiefs usually write their messages in English or mixed Luhyia-Kiswahili-English code. This material was made available to me by the author.



4. **Luhyia English**

Ref.: Title no. 269/Kakamega/Iguhu.

Mr. John - is *the* rightful person for heirs for *the* above for *the* succession.

In these circumstances the indefinite article as well as the definite article are meant to function as if they are mandatory concordial markers. This can be observed to an even greater degree in the following exchange. The speaker in this example is a retired businessman who is recalling his past experiences during his school days in the nineteen thirties. He is referred to as S.E. Part of the interview with S.E. is reproduced below.

(v). **Luhyia English**

C.S. Without knowledge of English one would not go far?

S.E. You wouldn't go far. But those who wanted to go far they preferred also to speak English. It was *a* kind of *a* pride when you go on holiday *the* elders *the* parents were interested to see *the* son singing in *the* English. So when we go to *a* meeting as *a* church members they will say Oh! students...those who have finished cattle...You have to sell your cattle to go school. So it was *the*...they took pride to see that his sons and some daughters could speak *the* English and can sing *the* English.



Below are the phrases involving 'a' and 'the' as they appear in the above text.

*a* kind of *a* pride

*the* elders *the* parents

*the* son singing in *the* English

*a* meeting as *a* church members

can sing *the* English

*A* and *the* above have been used repetitively as if they were denoting the same noun class prefix showing concord in verb and adjective within a sentence. A survey of the interview material from each of the nine people selected as representative of Luhyia English speakers is analysed in Table 2.6.

| Subject | Level of education | appropriate use of 'the' | Inappropriate use of 'the' |
|---|---|---|---|
| S1 | primary | 3 | 9 |
| S2 | primary | 6 | 5 |
| S3 | primary | 7 | 9 |
| S4 | secondary | 10 | 2 |
| S5 | primary | 8 | 9 |
| S6 | secondary | 8 | 5 |
| S7 | secondary | 9 | 2 |
| S8 | secondary | 3 | 2 |
| S9 | secondary | 4 | 3 |
| | | 58 | 50 |
| average | | 53% | 46% |

Table 2.6 Appropriate and inappropriate use of the definite article



People with primary level of education tend to use articles inappropriately compared to people with secondary education who exhibit better results with comparatively more appropriate usage of the definite article.

Two conclusions can be drawn from this: Firstly, using a noun-class prefix to function as a definite article reveals an early language learning-strategy which is applied less and less with growing competence. And secondly, for those who may not have higher education, fossilisation sets in, resulting in speakers using inappropriately the definite article as if it is a noun class marker. The early language learning-strategy does not

completely disappear as some sentences produced by people with university education still exhibited inappropriate use of the definite article. The indefinite article does not show striking results as in the case of the definite article.

### 2.6. Articles in other 'New Englishes'

Bokamba (1982:81) noted that the definite article is at times omitted in official documents written in Nigerian English. Sey (1973:29) observes that article omission is a common characteristic of African English. Gupta (1994:16) suggests that the phenomenon of article omission is a process of simplification. Williams (1987:169) lists modifications like the lack of morphological endings, omissions of articles, under the rubric of simplification. Bokamba stresses that Bantu languages do not have overt articles. It appears therefore, as if Luhyia English speakers occasionally omit articles owing to the absence of this system of defining definite and indefinite concepts.

Platt et al. (1984:52) note that in the New Englishes the rule for the use or non-use of the definite article *the* and the indefinite article *a/an* are different from those in the more established varieties of English. According to Platt et al, English makes use of a definite - indefinite system comprising of *the,* and *a/an.* Some languages, however, do not make definite - indefinite distinction but rather make a distinction between specific and non-specific concepts (Platt et al.1984:54 ) as shown in Table 2.7.

| Specific | Non-specific |
|---|---|
| 1. The persons or things are previously unknown to the listener or reader [−known]<br>or<br>2. The persons or things are previously known to reader [ + known ] | 1. The identity of the item is thought by him to be an irrelevant issue, or it is thought to be obvious or<br>2. The person or things are not particular ones but belong to a group. |

Table 2.7 Using articles in non-native English to refer to specific or non-specific items

When the person or thing discussed is non-specific often no article is used. When the person or thing is specific but unknown to the listener, the speakers use *one* as in sentence 5 below:

5. I stayed with *one* friend (Platt et al. 1984:56).

When the referent is specific and known *to the* hearer *the* is used.

There was evidence of the use of non-specific reference of articles in my data base where the speaker thought that the item referred to was unimportant or part of a group. Out of eighty speakers only two showed this phenomenon. Parts of the recordings are transcribed here.

In the first example a retired nurse, identified as F.O. is asked to comment on the deteriorating standards in Kenyan hospitals. Her response follows (article omission is indicated by ϕ).

(vi). **Luhyia English**

C.S. Do you think that if missionaries came back to this country with doctors, medicines and money, hospitals would do better?

F.O. No. This is ϕ independent country.

The zero form here appears to indicate 'non-specific', with the semantics of 'one of a type' of independent countries.

In the second example, a retired high school headmaster referred to as A.A. was reminiscing about his student days.

(vii). **Luhyia English**

C.S. What happened after Maseno?

A.A. Well, after Maseno I proceeded to USA. I went to North Carolina State University.

C.S. Is that in Charleston?

A.A. No. This is in Durham City. I went as ϕ undergraduate and finished three years, and had my bachelor's degree in education. I proceeded on and took ϕ Master's degree in education administration, then embarked on ϕ PhD.

Here ϕ *undergraduate* falls under the category 'non-specific', since the type of undergraduate studies taken is not specified up to that point. There are problems with the next two zero articles, however, in terms of Platt et al's explanations. Since ϕ

*Master's degree in education* is specific as to the kind of degree chosen, it cannot be non-specific. Likewise the interpretation that $\phi$ *Ph D* in non-specific (any kind of Ph D) is unlikely, since the Ph D follows the same track as the Master's degree. It seems therefore Platt et al's formulation is either incomplete or inapplicable to these sentences of Luhyia English. An additional factor that would appear to be relevant is the intonation and rhythmical patterns of the phrases involved.

### 2.7. Use of the Diminutive

Another example of noun prefixation in Luhyia English is the use of the *diminutive*. English nouns are either premodified or post modified or sometimes they are both premodified and post- modified within the same noun phrase:

6. The man (Premodified head noun)
7. The long lost wandering old man (Premodified head noun)
8. The man who was lost in his wandering (Pre and Post modified head noun)

English does not allow modification of its nouns at morphemic level as is the case with some Luhyia nouns, which may at times be modified by prefixes at the morpheme level. Bakari (1982:100) notes that morphology in Bantu shows such functions as insignificance, diminutives, argumentives and 'monstrosity' by affixation to nouns. An example of noun modification by prefixation can be illustrated by these Luhyia nouns.

| Noun | Gloss | Prefixation | Gloss |
|---|---|---|---|
| *mu - limi*<br>3cl. land | piece of land | *kha - limi*<br>*ku - limi* | small piece of land<br>large piece of land |
| *vu - shi*<br>6cl. honey | honey | *ru - shi* | small amount of honey |
| *shi - ndu*<br>9cl. beast | beast | | |
| | | *kha - ndu* | small harmless wild beast |
| | | *ku - ndu* | huge ferocious wild beast |
| | | *li - ndu* | gigantic wild beast |

Table 2.8 Distribution of noun-class prefixes and their corresponding diminutives

With a few modifications which indicate number, the adjectival prefixes: *kha, ku, ru, li* form a closed set of items which Luhyia speakers use in order to by pass complex premodification of nouns. There are occasions when these prefixes are made to premodifiy Luhyia English nouns as this exchange between two women at a Kakamega bank illustrates. The speakers are middle-aged women and since nothing more is known about them I will designate them as A and B.

(viii). **Luhyia/English Code-switching**

A. I have come here for some *kha* salary

B. Now we shall eat things.

A. No. My friend. This *ku* bank is slashing a lot of my money, because of the *li* loan I took. So I have nothing.

A's speech can be paraphrased as follows:

> I have come here to withdraw *a very small amount of* money which is part of my salary.
>
> No. My friend. *This thieving and usurious* bank is taking a lot of my money on account of *the big and crippling* loan which I took from them. In the end I have very little money left.

It can be seen that instead of using various units of premodification one single prefix does the work: Instead of saying: *a thieving and usurious* bank the prefix *ku* is employed in the noun phrase *ku* bank. This strategy was not extensively investigated but is widely applied by more proficient speakers of Luhyia English. In this case it a strategy which rather than *omit* a feature in order to simplify; *adds* an item from the second language in order to simplify the modification of a noun or an adjective.



**2.8. Regularisation of strong Verbs**

Eastman (1981:110) notes that 'it is because of the over importance of concord in Bantu languages that categorical differentiation between verbs and adverbs is diminished'. Concord is just one of the features of verbs that show regularity. Verb endings which indicate tense and aspect usually are marked with regular features. Of importance is the behaviour of borrowed English verbs in Luhyia language. Borrowed verbs whether regular or irregular are all rendered regular after having been borrowed as shown in Table 2.9.

| borrowed verb + past tense marker | gloss |
|---|---|
| *ya - eat a* | 'she ate' |
| *ya - drink a* | 'she drank' |
| *ya - fight a* | 'he fought' |
| *ya - break a* | 'she broke' |
| *ya - bring a* | 'he brought' |
| *ya - leave a* | 'he left' |
| *ya - drowa a* | 'he drew' |
| *ya - fly a* | 'she flew' |
| *ya - understand a* | 'he understood' |

Table 2.9 Regularisation of borrowed irregular verbs

The process of regularising borrowed English irregular verbs in Luhyia is paralleled by the treatment of strong or irregular verbs in Luhyia English.

In example (ix) a woman who once had a thriving business in Kampala but now retired and has come to Kakamega was interviewed about her past experiences. She is identified as D.S. Part of the interview is reproduced here:

(ix). **Luhyia English**

C.S. Later you went to London?

D.S. To London. I did my two diplomas in dress design because dresses used to pay a lot in Kampala. I knew women would pay more for a dress, so I *sticked* to it.

Of the nine subjects whose language is under more detailed study only two showed regularisation of strong verbs in their repertoire. The following sentences were used:

9. Mbekhu *digged* my farm without my authority.
10. It is the changaa [cane-spirits] which he *drinked*.
11. I knew the women would pay more for a dress, so I *sticked* to it.
12. My duck *flyed* away.
13. He *breaked* my boundary marker.
14. It is why they *bringed* the cows for dowry.

**2.9. Progressive aspect**

Verbs that describe a state are known as *stative verbs*. These verbs do not take the progressive form or *-ing* form; for example: *know, doubt, be, have, understand, remain.*

Hancock and Agogo (1982:306) note that in Kenyan English, generally, the progressive aspect is extended to items that usually do not accept it. Williams (1987:172) observes that giving a progressive to a verbal system is a common feature of non-native Englishes. Schmied (1991:67) states that the use of **be + verb + ing** constructions is extended to all verbs. This affects the distinction between the stative and non-stative use of verbs and applies particularly to some verbs that are used with **-ing** forms only in marked, specific forms, e.g.

15. I **am having** your book.
16. I **was** not **liking** the food.

(Schmied 1991:67)

| borrowed word Present tense | gloss | Progressive aspect | gloss |
|---|---|---|---|
| u - understand - e (con - understand - Pres. ) | 'understand' | u - understand - nga | 'understanding' |
| u - liki - i ( con - like - Pres. ) | 'like' | u - lika - nga | 'liking' |
| u - remain - i ( con - remain - Pres. ) | 'remain' | u - remain - nga | 'remaining' |

Table 2.10 Borrowed stative verbs which are made to take the progressive aspect in Luhyia

From the above it can be concluded that since Luhyia verbs accept the progressive and since Luhyia does not have 'stative' and 'non-stative' verb contrast, the progressive aspect is extended to most verbs in people's speech.



## 2.10. Semantic Shift and Broadening

Trudgill (1990:3) and Holm (1988:108) compare semantic shift which represents an extension of a word's meaning with the loss of its earlier meaning with semantic broadening in which such an extension with the original meaning is retained. Sey (1973:95) notes that semantic broadening in Ghanaian English involves adding meaning to a standard English word.

In Luhyia English the word *tea* has been broadened to include 'cocoa' and 'coffee'. It is also the name of the amount of *money* government officials receive in the form of a bribe. The broadening of the word 'tea' was a source of inspiration for a primary school poem recited during a drama competition at Kakamega Provincial headquarters. The organisers of the event kindly permitted me to record it and the

Several years after the colonial era, the word *musungu* has now acquired the extended meaning of 'benefactor', 'employer' or 'someone who is dependable'. In other words, what started as a term of ethnic slander has undergone some semantic upgrading. Anecdotal evidence is available to show the word *musungu* or 'European' is a word commonly applied in both Luhyia and Luhyia English.

| Luhyia | Luhyia English | Gloss |
|---|---|---|
| *musungu wanje* | my European | my employer |
| *ni - musungu* | he/she is a European | he/she is arrogant or dependable |



In a recording partly transcribed here , a man aged about forty-two who has a high-school education was found making arrangements for his father's funeral. He allowed me to make a recording as arrangements for the funeral progressed. In his speech he uses the word *animal* to mean 'cow' or 'bull'. The word *veges* is a Luhyia English word shortened for 'vegetables'. Culturally someone's success during life is reflected by the size of the funeral crowd of mourners and the number of cattle slaughtered for mourners to consume. By asking why the man needed so many animals for slaughter I risked exposing myself as doubting the importance of the man's father during his lifetime on earth. But the question elicited a response where the interviewee equates *beef* with *vegetables*; also the *living* cow too is itself referred to as *vegetables*. The extension of vegetables to mean 'beef', 'sheep' or 'cow' is a common way of showing semantic extension. The man whose father had died is identified as L.S.

(x). **Luhyia English**

C.S. I am sorry to hear that.

L.S. Yea! That is the world. What to do? We leave it to God. **Mzee** (old man) was well known and I am sure many people will turn up. My only problem is that I do not have enough *veges*. Jotham gave me an animal but it will not make enough *vegetables*. It is not easy to borrow these *veges*.

C.S. What do you need all the cattle for?

L.S. (surprised) For *veges*. These animals will be used as *vegetables*.

Because of language contact and changes in the patterns of social survival and competition, politeness terms in Luhyia English have undergone a lot of semantic broadening. Personal competitiveness is often reflected in the basic forms of greetings. It is usual to find in Luhyia English opening remarks such as:

17. Where are you these days?
18. What do you do nowadays?
19. What are you eating these days?
20. You are lost.

The last remark is often exchanged between friends who have not met for a while. The four forms of greetings have replaced the traditional opening remark: 'how are you?' The forms of greetings above in some way express the latent anxiety of the speaker in a fast changing world where what one's neighbour has to offer is of more

relevance than his/her health - which used to be the traditional politeness reference point.

An example of forms of greetings and politeness can be seen in this letter from a school girl of sixteen to her uncle.

21. **Luhyia English**

Dear Uncle,

Get much greetings from me with a hope that you are doing well. *Now, how is your job?* I am fine but Kenya is very dry. And all the plans are not running in a line. Now, *what are you eating or drinking? Get something so that I can bring your face in my sight.*

Alice.

A Luhyia musician composed a song in the nineteen sixties based on the implied rudeness within these politeness terms. In his song he noted that when the police intervened to separate two men who were fighting along River Road in Nairobi, one of the combatants (who was non-Luhyia), said, panting; that he had decided to make an end to the insults he had been subjected to. Every time he met his opponent, who knew very well that he was unemployed, he insulted him by asking: *Give me something. What do you do nowadays? What are you eating?*

However, because of contact with outsiders Luhyia speakers have shifted to these forms of politeness that are likely to sound rude to other non-Luhyia English speakers.

## 2.11. Translation Equivalents

One of the commonest features of Luhyia English is the use of Luhyia structures with English lexical items. Bamiro (1994:14) notes that many Nigerian users of English find it expedient to translate Nigerian expressions into English and he gives the following examples:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| wash - mouth | **foenn** | 'to brush the teeth' |
| month - end | **ipari - osu** | 'pay day' |
| market - people | **ara - oja** | 'traders' |
| big - man | **enia nla** | 'important person' |

Bamgbose (1982:105) also notes that the difference between Nigerian and other Englishes is that new lexical items and idioms are introduced from existing lexical items from local languages. This phenomenon however, is not unique to Nigerians. Tripathi (1990: 35) notes that in Zambia some words and expressions of local origin, unlikely to occur in English from other parts of the world are frequently used in both formal and informal, written or spoken varieties of English. In my observation some expressions that have been translated from Luhyia into English are as follows:

| Luhyia English | Gloss |
|---|---|
| 21. He drinks cigarette. | 'He smokes' |
| 22. I looked but where. | 'I looked but did not see him' |
| 23. You can be rubbed. | 'You can be sacked' |
| 24. How are you with me. | 'Why are you against me?' |
| 25. He ate my money. | 'He tricked me out of my money' |

| | |
|---|---|
| 26. I met him dead. | 'I found him dead' |
| 27. You have started me again | 'You are provoking me once again' |
| 28. A small man whose head is spoilt. | 'Insignificant man full of himself' |
| 29. You will give me bad hands. | 'You will force me to do something bad to you' |

## 2.12. Conclusion

In this chapter I have attempted to comment on common features found in Luhyia English involving grammar e.g. gender, articles, number and verb regularisation. I have also looked at semantic extensions and transfer of meaning. There are many more features found in non-native Englishes that are not covered here. For example, there was no evidence of reduplication as reported by Bokamba (1982) when commenting on Lingala and Hausa, or by Mesthrie (1992:14) while commenting on South African Indian English. This is all the more interesting since reduplication does occur in Luhyia.

Of interest here is the fact that the use of 'big' words seems to have diminished with time. Chishimba (1984:69) suggested that in the early stages English was used to impress listeners, to sound intellectual and of a higher status. Quoting chief Enahoro, he notes that the more confusing you are the higher is your intellect.

There is evidence to confirm this in the material I gathered dating before 1966. But English spoken by the interviewees tended to use ordinary words devoid of bombastic terms. It appears that English in the form of Luhyia English is no longer used to impress but is a serious tool of communication.

## CHAPTER THREE

# THE PROCESS OF CODE-SWITCHING

### 3.1. Definition of Code-Switching

Hymes (1972:38) suggests that no normal person and no normal community is limited to a single way of speaking, to an unchanging monotony that would preclude indications of respect, insolence, mock seriousness, humour, role distance and intimacy by switching from one mode of speech to another. Relations of social intimacy or social distance may be signalled by switching between distinct languages or between varieties of a single language.

Heller (1988) defines code-switching as the use of more than one language in the course of a single communicative episode. It violates a strong expectation among monolinguals that only one language will be used at any given time. It is seen as something to be explained, whereas the use of one language is considered normal. Accordingly the notion of code-switching amongst lay people can be so powerful that even those who code-switch can be unaware of their behaviour and may vigorously deny doing anything of the kind.

Woolard (1988:69) stresses the role of code-switching as a device used to affirm participants' claim to membership and the solidarity of the group in contrast to outsiders. The use of two languages in a way that does not obscure critical information from any listeners eases rather than emphasises group boundaries.

inquiries about family members tend to be exchanged in the local dialect; while the business part of the transaction is carried out in standard Norwegian.

Gal (1988:246) notes that in some bilingual populations strict separation or compartmentalisation of codes is observed. Heller (1989:130) observes that in Canada many people posses bilingual verbal repertoires, but that their political strategy entails a re-enforcement rather than a levelling of linguistic boundaries.

In the linguistic environment under consideration Luhyia occupies an L position while English is generally the H language. Depending on circumstances, Kiswahili may play the role of L or H. However, the code-switching being considered in this chapter does not involve switching codes between compartmentalised languages. Whereas the code-switching described by Gumperz in Norway and Heller in Canada involved the separation of the two codes, that is to say code choice is dependent on domain, Luhyia speakers generally use all possible codes in the same utterance. Therefore, elements from two or three languages are employed in the same sentence, phrase or word. This pattern is referred sometimes in the literature as code-mixing.



### 3.3. Reasons for Code-Switching

Myers-Scotton (1992:169) notes that selection among linguistic alternates is automatic and therefore not readily available to conscious recall, much like grammatical rules which are not subject to conscious awareness. In this case code-switching is like any other $L_1$ performance.

When a speaker is uncertain about which code to employ, the choice made must be as neutral as possible. Myers-Scotton (1976:919) argues that uncertainty regarding language choice arises not because the components of the situation are unknown but it is unclear which is more important. In such a case the speaker may choose a linguistic variety which has the value 'neutral'.

Sometimes a speaker, according to Myers-Scotton (1976:919), may switch codes in order to neutralise those potentially salient attributes of one variety which may not always carry certain desired connotations. In this case by code-switching the speaker continually redefines the situation in respect to attribute saliency. As an example of this, Heller (1989:126) proposes that in Canada it is one of the linguistic practices to switch as a means of altering or coping with relations of dominance in order to achieve particular social and political goals.

Another reason for code-switching according to Heller (1988) is to ensure that at least some individuals have access to all domains in question and therefore have access to their linguistic resources, multiple roles and relationships (1988:8).

Does code-switching have a grammar of its own different from the contributing languages? According to Annamalai (1989:17) no new grammar is created beyond the grammar of the two codes involved. Romaine (1989:149) notes that mixed codes have their own rule constraints and that the behaviour of mixed constituents will not be predictable from the

constituent structure rules of the two systems involved. In this case code-switching may in time develop into a mixed language with an independent grammar.

Bakker and Muysken (1995:41) discuss cases of mixed languages that have grammar (phonology, morphology and syntax) based in one language and lexis from another. Such mixed languages, according to Bakker and Muysken are themselves first languages.

The birth of such mixed languages may presuppose an earlier period of heavy code-switching. Though Haarmann (1986) does not categorically state that code-switching as a process may culminate in a mixed language, his reference to Yiddish and Romany illustrates the same process. It is generally agreed that Yiddish is a mixed language, a *Mischsprache* or so called fusion language. The evolution of Yiddish can best be described as a constant fusion process in the course of which different linguistic determinants shaped all structural aspects of the language. Similarly, the example of the styles in the Gypsy language or Romany in Finland shows that whenever one speaks of Romany as a massive contact language one has to characterize it with special reference to the distinctiveness of local variants (1986:157 - 8). Romaine (1989:147) stresses that a mixed code has its own rules and constraints. Thus while code-switching is a process drawing upon two or more languages, mixed languages involve an $L_1$ state whose grammar cannot be predicted from the constituent structure rules of the contributing languages.

However, Myers-Scotton (1994) advanced the theory of the Embedded Language (EL) and Matrix Language (ML) as key constructs in the *analysis* of the grammar of code-switched units. The ML has the more structurally influential role, as the language of the 'frame' of code-switching. Code-switching can involve units at all levels from a single morpheme up to several or more sentences. The ML can be identified on the basis of relative frequency of morphemes. In turn, psycho- and socio-linguistic factors influence the choice of the ML. According to Myers-Scotton, one or more languages may serve as an embedded language.

### 3.4. Is Code-Switching a norm?

Is code-switching a norm or is it to be viewed only as an *ad hoc* linguistic strategy? Scholars are divided in their responses to the above. Heller (1988:82) views code-switching as a boundary levelling strategy; alternatively it is a boundary maintaining one. This is repeated in Heller (1989) in an attempt at linking code-switching to the means by which those who hold valued resources in society may call into play specific forms of linguistic and cultural knowledge which conventionally possesses certain kinds of value. In effect, code-switching can be used to narrow the gap between group membership: Should group membership be implicated in access to power then code-switching is a powerful tool for the inclusion or exclusion of others (1989:126).

Knowledge of cultural values according to Gumperz (1982:73) are starting points for any study of code-switching. One needs therefore to study such sociolinguistic features of the situation such as the locale and the relationships of interlocutors.

Therefore code-switching should be studied along with the culture of the people who use it. Indeed this is the basis of Myers-Scotton's (1992) observation that psycho- and socio-linguistic factors influence the choice of the ML.

Myers-Scotton (1992:167) notes that the unmarked code is a normal or the expected code in everyday usage. Eastman (1992:1) notes that in circumstances where people use mixed languages then code-switching is the *norm*.

### 3.5. Does the norm become $L_1$?

Heller (1988:270) suggests that we need to discover where the sense that switching makes comes from, and what consequences it has for the interlocutor's understanding of the multiple levels of message embedded in code-switching discourse. For instance, some of the hypotheses assign immense importance to the speaker rather than to the addressee (Zembele et al.1992:73). On the other hand this study includes many examples of code-switching initiated as much by the addressee as the speaker, suggesting that both are equally important in code-switching. Consequently, Myers-Scotton's term *negotiation* is of significance to this discussion. The term deserves elaboration as to how it works and what its processes are. Is negotiation a continous process or does it end once an acceptable code has been established? How would one negotiate with a stranger for a code choice? Do speakers rely only on physical features in order to identify interlocutors before they start code-switching? It seems natural that outside of established networks code-switching is full of risks of misunderstandings just as much as using a language unknown to a stranger is. According to Burt (1989:29) misunderstandings are produced when speakers use code-switching in different communities whose norms they do not know.

One of the prevailing views in this thesis is that code-switching is a feature of the Luhyia language because it is an embattled language. Gal (1988:247) observes that code-switching frequently involves the use of a state-supported and powerfully legitimated language in opposition to a stigmatised minority language that has considerably less institutional support. It is a way in which speakers respond symbolically to relations of domination between groups within a state. Because Kiswahili and English enjoy State support they command prestige, whereas no such support in any significant amount is given to Luhyia as a language. It is not a language of the media, nor is it taught to any significant degree in schools. Added to the language's embattled position its speakers are surrounded by non-Bantu speakers who show no interest in learning it; nor does it feature as a language of code-switching outside its linguistic-birth place.

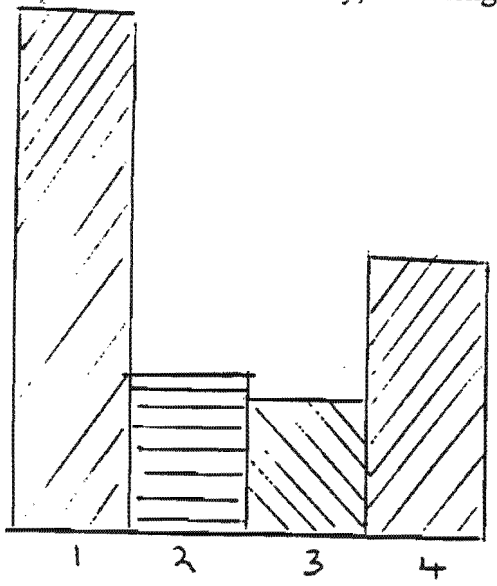
Closely connected with the lack of support is what Trudgill (1990:14) terms *intellectualisation*. Luhyia has not undergone any reasonable process of standardisation and modernisation. Could code-switching be a logical (if informal) social attempt to intellectualise the language in order to enable it to compete with well established languages, at least at the level of conversation? If there is some validity in this then the line of demarcation between code-switching and the $L_1$ in some cases, becomes blurred.



### 3.6. 'COSCO'

A general idea of what languages Luhyia speakers usually use in their daily transactions can be deduced form the codes people actually employed in their interviews with me.

A breakdown of the speakers according to the languages which came to them naturally in informal encounters gives: 11 who responded entirely in Luhyia; 10 who responded in Kiswahili only; 20 in English only and 39 in a mixed English-Luhyia-




KEY
1 - MIXED CODE - 48.7%
2 - LUHYIA - 13.7%
3. KISWAHILI - 12.5%
4. ENGLISH 25%

Table: 3.1 Languages used by interviewees in the informal interviews

Speakers of the mixed code are people born after 1940 who have been to school and/or have lived for sometime outside their home areas either because of work or travel. This mixed code is a possible move towards intellectualisation and also self-preservation of Luhyia.

The social conditions for such a mixing may not be the same as those which prevailed during the formation of mixed or 'intertwined' languages such as Romani or Ma'a. The Gypsies who speak Romani used it originally as an in-group language which gradually receded as a first language amongst later generations. The Luhyia who speak a 'mixed code' still have Luhyia available as a community language and it is not easy to predict whether the mixed code will become an independent language the way Ma'a or Romani have been. At the same time, it is not easy to predict how long Luhyia will remain distinct from the emerging mixed new language.

Bakker and Muysken (1995:49) note that by using the language of the surrounding people one can more easily hide the fact that one has a 'secret' language; just as the children in schools who use the mixed code 'sound like they are speaking in English'. Amongst the Luhyia a mixed code is found in schools, homes, offices and businesses. Since there is no specific name for it I will use the name 'code-switching code' or 'COSCO'. 'COSCO' as a code consists of elements of Luhyia and/or English /Kiswahili code-switching.

### 3.7. COSCO as a Continuum

Of the roughly 48% who speak COSCO as their usual code of exchange there are those whose language contained more Luhyia elements and system morphemes. There is evidently some kind of convergence of the three languages to sound more Luhyia like. On the other hand, other COSCO speakers used a code which kept the grammars of each of the two or three languages separate even if they were used in the same utterance.



In the following exchange, Luhyia has supplied the grammatical frame with insertions of content words from English. The strategy of turning English words in order for them to sound Luhyia-like appears to signal [+ solidarity + informality] both of which features cannot be found in the use of English. The speaker in this example is narrating how he received news of his brother's death. He is identified as S. L.

(i). S.L. At last *va-manya va-nzinifoma vambolela vu* your last born brother *akhutsi. Akhutsili mu sivitali. Shindu shinesho shia interifaya ma incidendi yeneyo ishili khurula mu* my mind *tawe.*

| core borrowings | gloss |
|---|---|
| *vanzi-ni-foma* | 'they informed me' |
| *sha-i-nteri-faya* | 'it terrified me' |
| *incidenti* | 'incident' |
| *sivitali* | 'hospital' |

Luhyia number marker '*va*'(plural) and pronoun – *nzi* – (English – I) have been used. The final syllable – *ma* – is in line with Luhyia phonotactic rules which allow only open syllables in word-final positon. Similarly *sha* 'it' precedes the verb 'interfere' and '*ya*' in the Luhyianized word is also in line with Luhyia phonotactic rules.

S. L.'s text can be translated as follows: 'At last they informed me telling me that your last born brother has died. He died the previous night in hospital. I was terrified by the incident and it is still in my mind'.

In the next example (ii) the speaker uses Luhyia separate from English except when he refers to his uncle [*khotsa*]. In this case the Luhyia based word *khotsa* is more endearing than the English word 'uncle' and indexes [+solidarity]. It can be noted that when the speaker comes to the most important point in his narrative i.e. *Mulilu kwali kunziri* 'fire' (i.e. 'electric current nearly killed me'), he switches to Luhyia in order to draw maximum sympathy.

(ii). S. L.

> My *khotsa's* efforts made me get a job *nende* Smith Mackenzie *manya* store-keeper *wavo*. *Mu* stores there was a lot of theft. They could

bring machines *inamba indahi*. *Lekha mwana* the first time *khutsia khu* duty someone had connected live wires on the door handle. *Mundu yandeka ni stima shinamanyang tawe*. When I tried to open the door, *khu nzi mu* store, *mulilu kwali kunziri*. I only found myself in Kenyatta Hospital.

'My uncle's efforts made it possible for me to get a job with Smith Mackenzie as their store-keeper. In the stores there was a lot of theft. They would bring many machines and soon they were stolen. I tell you brother; the first time to arrive on duty, someone had connected live wires on the door handle in order for me to be electrocuted. When I tried to open the door so that I may enter the store I was nearly killed. I only found myself in Kenyatta Hosital'

One of the issues that needs further study is why COSCO sometimes contains more Luhyia-like elements and other times not. But it was noted that fluency in COSCO depended on the amount of education a speaker had.



### 3.8. Negotiations

Myers-Scotton (1983:116) notes that code-switching rests on the principle of negotiation where the speaker chooses the form of contribution such that it symbolises sets rights and obligations which are to be in force between the speaker and the addressee for the current exchange. While conveying referential information is often the overt purpose of conversation; all talk is a negotiation of rights and obligations between the speaker and the addressee (Myers-Scotton 1992:116).

The impression one gets is that negotiations for rights and obligations seem always to succeed. In my view, outside established social networks, code-switching wholly depends on 'negotiations'. Failure or success of code-switching depends on the kind of negotiations the speaker makes.

Heller (1988:93) notes that code-switching can backfire if interlocutors do not share a frame of reference, since it is only on the basis of shared background knowledge that the strategies are successfully deployed. If interlocutors share background knowledge then narrowing down the options of what code-switching might mean is less tricky. Heller (1989) notes that the staff at a Montreal Hospital were always in a dilemma as to the best ways to engage in interactions without incurring the wrath of patients through inappropriate language choice. It is impossible to tell at a glance whether someone speaks French or English. One solution to code-switch and another was to look at the name on the hospital card and guess (1989:132).

Wardhaugh (1992:106) notes that asking the other which language is preferred often does not work very well in practice. Social and political relationships are too complicated to be resolved by such a simple linguistic choice.

Myers-Scotton (1976:919) notes that when speakers have to choose a language under conditions of uncertainty, certain strategies dominate. People seek a linguistic variety which avoids commitment to socially meaningful attributes that may be salient in the situation. The salient attributes may include ethnicity, education, authority or communality.

herself is Luo speaking. Luhyia is a Bantu language whereas Luo is a Nilotic language both mutually unintelligible.

The man is complaining to the secretary in English about the delay in getting his cheque. In stating his demand the man starts with Luo formulaic expression *a-penji* which means 'I say'. In itself it is a word with no significant message content. To defuse an uncomfortable situation the secretary makes a comment on the man's knowledge of the Luo language. The man is identified as J.B. and the secretary as G.A. in this exchange.

(iv). J.B. Good morning *Apenji*, why has my cheque not been processed?
It is two months now. Inform Mr. S. that I am not happy about this.
G.A. Who taught you Luo?

An important (though obvious) point is that the above exchange is in English except for the formulaic *apenji*. The use of a single formulaic expression need not convince an interlocutor that the speaker knows the language being signalled. Yet it appears that *apenji* in her view was signalling Luo ethnicity which should lead to a change of code in the exchange.

In the third example the researcher visited a school in order to interview a group of teachers and students. One of the teachers had a Luo sounding name and on this basis the researcher attributed [+ Luo ethnicity] to the teacher and consequently used the formulaic word *apenji*. The teacher in this exchange is identified as O.O.

(v). C.S. Good morning. Could tell me your name?

O.O. My name is Ouma Ochieng.

C.S. *Apenji*, where were you born?

O.O. I was born in North Wanga, Khavala sub location.

C.S. Uhm. You are therefore a Luhyia?

O.O. Yes.

C.S. I thought you were a Luo from the sounding of your name.

O.O. You are not the first to say that. I am not a Luo nor do I know the language nor even want to learn it.

There are more questions raised than answered when one closely observes the three examples. What was it in the formulaic *apenji* that identified J.B. as a Luo speaker to the secretary but proved so insignificant to O.O. who had a Luo sounding name but turned out to be not a Luo speaker. The secretary - a Luo speaker was able to identify the signalling unit *apenji*, whereas O.O., who does not share the ethnic identity, was not even aware that a Luo signal word had been used. J.A. on the other hand terminated the interview after an overt signalling of Luhyia identity was made by code-switching.

It appears as if sight, name of interlocutor or overt switching to a new code are not suitable instruments of negotiating for a change of code. There must be neutral and formulaic words within a commonly accepted code of discourse which are neutral and insignificant enough so as not be noted by non-speakers of the language in question.

These neutral units are then usually employed in the negotiation of change of code. 'Going by sight' does not involve negotiations, as it involves a decision on the choice of code without going through any preliminary stage of negotiation.

In analysing conversation Gumperz (1982:131) notes that a message contains surface features with which a speaker can signal to the listener what the activity is all about. These contextualised cues could be any feature of linguistic form which contributes to the signalling of contextual presuppositions. Gumperz further notes that the cue's signalling value depends on the participants' tacit awareness of their meaningfulness. When all participants understand and notice the relevant cues, interpretive processes are then taken for granted.

Although Gumperz was discussing conversation in general, his arguments are especially relevant to the process of initial negotiations in code-switching, as it is a process that is dependent on language specific cues of which *'apenji'* is just one of the many available in Luo or any other language.



### 3.9. A framework for negotiations

1. Contextual cues or signals are the primary linguistic tools for negotiation at what may be categorised as 'covert level of negotiation one'. When negotiations for change of code are done at this level there are no serious risks involved.

2. After negotiation of a code of exchange has been successfully done at 'covert level of negotiation level one' further negotiations in the same encounter are for other factors than the right choice of code(s) in the same encounter.

3. Within closed networks or speech communities, negotiation for code may happen at 'overt negotiation level two' where reliance on cues is not important. For example, J.A. (iii) terminated the exchange since her interlocutor was negotiating at 'overt negotiation level two' appropriate in closed networks, that is to say, without reference to any cues which are available only at level one.

With this framework the failure of the interview can be explained. It also explains why G.A. (iv) noted the formulaic cue which was enough for her to start code-switching. The same cue was not significant enough to be noticed by O.O. in (v).

What makes code-switching an acceptable code of exchange outside of networks is the speakers' adept manipulation of linguistic cues at covert negotiation level one. Or as Heller (1988:92) suggests, using the linguistically empty words and noises specific to each language and culture. These are the naturally endowed 'radio' signals the human race has in seeking others of like language and culture. In themselves they are 'empty' or useless to monolinguals but of incalculable value to bilinguals and the survival of code-switching.



### 3.10. Negotiations for change of Code

Myers-Scotton (1988:156) notes that in cases where people use code-switching as a norm the unmarked choice in the conventionalised exchange is a negotiation to recognise the status quo as the basis for the present speech event. This is so because it is indexical of the rights and obligation balance which is expected, given the salient factors. She further notes that the unmarked choice is safer and conveys no surprises because it indexes an expected personal relationship (Myers-Scotton 1993:75).

It is argued here that unless interlocutors are known to each other well enough, the initial exchange is likely to be in a language that is the unmarked ingredient in code-switching. However, in a society that uses code-switching as a code for communication, early attempts will be made by either of the interlocutors for the commencement of unmarked code-switching in the current exchange.

In this section attempts will be made to show how negotiations for change of code are embarked upon within closed networtks where 'COSCO' is a medium of linguistic exchange. The examples illustrate stages of negotiation for the change of code initiated by either the speaker or the interlocutor.



In the following example I interviewed a man who had retired as a carpenter after having worked in that capacity in various establishments in Nairobi. After introduction it became apparent to him that we shared a common mother tongue. But since my research was on English mainly, I asked him if our exchange could be in English, which he assented to. In exchanges where people share Luhyia as a common language, English is not the norm; it is a distance - creating code in the circumstances that index [+ ethnicity]. The interviewee persistently appealed at 'level two' to be allowed to change the code from English to COSCO as a preferred medium of exchange. The carpenter is in his late fifties and he is identified as L.S.L.

(vi). C.S. What is your name?

L.S.L. My name is L.S.L. from Kimingini African Church. I born forty-two. Since nineteen forty-two *ninzia mu school*. *Naranga* standard one *ha Masiyenze* (My name is L.S.L. from Kimingini

African Church. I was born in nineteen forty-two. Since nineteen forty-two I went to school. I started in standard one at Masiyenze School).

C.S. I see. Which year was that, again.

L.S.L. Nineteen forty-nine. Nineteen fifty-eight after school *ninzia khusoma vufundi miaka chinne* (Nineteen forty nine. Nineteen fifty-eight after I went to study to be artisan or **fundi).**

C.S. *Vwali vu-fundi shina?* (What kind of artisan?).

L.S.L. Carpentry. *Kapenta.* So, *ninzia khu-khola i-trade* test *ma ninyola* grade three (Carpentry, Carpenter. So I went to do a trade test and obtained grade three).

It was not until the third exchange that the interviewer relented to the continuous appeal for a negotiated change of code. From now on the conversation was on track and no questions were asked entirely in English. It can be assumed that the Luhyia used by the interviewee was collectively signalling overtly for a change in the use of code by the interviewer.

In the example (vi) negotiations at 'overt level of negotiation two' is initiated by the speaker and not the interlocutor as in the above case. Both interviewer and the interviewee have identified themselves as belonging to the same linguistic community by using the unreliable method of correlation of names with ethnic identity. This strategy as seen earlier, may work quite well within closed networks. Therefore, when the interviewer signalled for a change of code from English to COSCO as the unmarked choice, it worked quite well. The interviewee who worked with the Tsetse

Survey and Control Unit is identified as E.I. After questions in English the interviewer suddenly switched codes as a negotiating strategy that may enable the interlocutors abandon English in preference to COSCO in the rest of the exchange.

(vii) C.S. What is your name?

E.I. My name is E.I.

C.S. Where were you born?

E.I. I was born in the year nineteen forty-one at Milimani Village in Idakho.

C.S. What schools did you attend?

E.I. I attended Busali Union School for my intermediate school and later I joined Kakamega High School in nineteen sixty-four up to six-seven.

C.S. Did you go for any training?

E.I. I joined the Ministry of Agriculture, the Tsetse Survey and Control Unit. I was taken to Mbita Point at a place called Luanda.

C.S. *I weneyo i-li mu District shina?* ( In which District is the place? ).

E.I. *I li mu South Nyanza* (It is in South Nyanza).

The last question asked by the interviewer was an overt negotiation strategy in order for a change of code to take place; and it did as (vii) shows.

Not all the time my assistant and I negotiated for change of code or commencement of code-switching were we successful. For example, if an interview took place in an office the interviewee may ignore linguistic 'cues' at level 'one' for change of code and persist in the use of English throughout the interview. This was common if the subject was discussing the nature of his/her job and problems connected with it. There was also a question of difference in dialects between the interlocutors. If the differences appeared to be significant the subject usually ignored the linguistic cues and continued to use monolingual English or Kiswahili repertoire.

At negotiation level two, failure depended on whether or not there was a shared first language. Linguistic differences excite a great deal of feelings in Kenya and when an encounter fails on account of an inappropriate code the speech event may end in acrimony. On the other hand negotiation for code failed in some cases when the subject was a public figure who was used to responding to interviews entirely in English or Kiswahili. In this case abrupt change of code at level two, was ignored and the subject persisted in the use of English or Kiswahili to the end of the encounter. For the majority of the subjects negotiation for change of code at either level one or two always brought positive responses.



### 3.11. Marked Code-switching

A marked choice, according Myers-Scotton (1992:167), may be used to negotiate different rights and obligation balance than the one indexed by the unmarked choice. The premise of the markedness model is that all linguistic choices can be seen as indexical of a projected rights and obligations balance in interpersonal relations. Heller (1988:5) similarly notes that a marked or unmarked code-switching variety can

signal altered meanings and assumptions operative and indexed through the language situation.

Speakers also can make marked choices in conventionalised exchanges. Such a choice is a misidentification with the expected . It is a call for some balance other than the expected one, since it indexes a rights and obligation set which is unusually given the salient situational factors (Myers-Scotton 1988:156). The theory behind the markedness model proposes that speakers have a sense of markedness which is used in a gradient manner from marked to unmarked (Myers-Scotton 1993:75).

Myers-Scotton (1988:152) noted that any code choice points to a particular interpersonal balance. It is partly because of their indexical qualities that different languages and dialects are maintained in a community. Speakers have tacit knowledge of this indexicality as part of their communicative competence.

In the following exchange the women took notice of the salient features of English which to them appeared to index 'arrogance'. The use of English in the exchange made it a marked code. The encounter took place in a street in Kakamega between a man who sought directions from two women. The man appeared to be in hurry. He approached the two women, greeted them in Kiswahili then switched to English when he asked for directions. On Kenyan streets Kiswahili is the unmarked code indexing [+ communality, + solidarity]. English on the other indexes [- solidarity, - communality, + official].

(viii) Man: **Ham-jambo mama** (Good - day ladies).

In which hall is the Christian rally being held?

Woman: **Ana sema nini**? (What is he saying?)

Man: The hall where the rally is. Do you know?

Woman: **Hatu-jui** (We do not know). **Anaringa nini huyu**? (Why is he so arrogant?).

In this exchange English seems to index [+ authority + arrogance] to the women. There is evidence that these women are bilingual in English-Kiswahili, from the way they answered the man's question. But this did not stop them from evaluating the man's linguistic etiquette negatively. It can not be established whether the man was a Kiswahili speaker. The extent of his vocabulary could possibly be as far as the form of greeting, but he was judged by the signal he gave. Nevertheless, choice of English violated the interlocutors norms and expectations. For Myers-Scotton (1992:166) code choices reflect the fact that speakers are rational actors. Conversely in this situation to insist on using an unexpected code may not reflect on the speaker as being 'rational' at least as far as the women are concerned.

The marked code need not necessarily be English elements in COSCO. There are times when Luhyia elements in COSCO can index [+ authority, + cultural knowledge]. In the following example an assistant chief was interviewed about the nature of his work. The interview questions were asked in English, while the responses were made in COSCO. An assistant chief in Kenya usually administers justice in low-key disputes, while the more serious ones are taken to the police. The assistant Chief's authority is exercised, depending on his proficiency, either in Luhyia, Kiswahili or

COSCO - rarely is it done in English. The assumption in the interview, however, is that English as used by the interviewee is unmarked, while Luhyia elements are marked. These elements are marked in order to reflect the cultural source of the chief's authority. The assistant is identified as A.S.

(ix). C.S. Later after your army days, you became the assistant chief of this location.

A.S. Of this location.

C.S. What was the nature of your work?

A.S. The nature of my work involved mainly listening to cases:

*Mundu wivi likondi*
'Someone has stolen a sheep'.

*Mundu wivi mavuyu*
'someone has stolen eggs'.

*Mundu wihi lwakho*
'Someone has uprooted a boundary marker'.

*Natsio tsi-cases tsia khu-vetsanga na-tsio*
'Those are the kind of cases we usually handle'.



### 3.12. Code-switching for Pedagogical Purposes

Code-switching for pedagogical purposes is one of the classical motivations of the phenomenon. It involves a second or even a third code being employed in the discourse, side by side with the primary language of the community. Faced with the official requirement that English be used as a medium of instruction in the Primary Schools, teachers often resort to code-switching in order to make their lessons more meaningful to the monolingual pupils in the lower primary classes. In this way it is hoped that the children will attach meaning to the English words or sentences the

teacher exposes them to through code-switching. This strategy of arriving at meaning is similar to what Giles (1995:77) terms 'free translation'. Free translation or interpretation as a discourse render response as the overriding criteria. That is to say, the teacher is concerned with the pupils' understanding even though he/she uses English, which is a code still widely unknown to the pupils.

Code-switching in the classroom enables the pupil to introduce bits and pieces or 'catch words' into their discourse, even if the language of the catch words is still little known to them. A teacher asks a question in English, repeats it in Kiswahili and if possible in Luhyia and expects the answer given by the pupil to be in the limited English items known to them. Pedagogical code-switching strikes a compromise between the pupils' expectations of meaningful learning and the official requirement to teach the pupil in English - a language the pupil is coming across for the first time.

Sometimes a question is asked in English and then repeated in Kiswahili or even in Luhyia also. Kulick (1992:77) notes that in Papua New Guinea one common use of code-switching is self repetition in order to convey emphatic agreement with the previous speaker.

In example (x) a man is teaching class-two Mathematics. The teacher comes into the classroom with a metre-long stick which he breaks into pieces to aid him in teaching the concept of *fractions*. The children, aged between seven and eight, have been taught in 'English' for one year already. These children learn and use English in school, in contrast they are able to speak Kiswahili and their mother tongue before

they come to school. The teacher identified as A.L. and he has been teaching for the last twenty years (Kiswahili is in bold).

(x). A.L. Today we are going to learn about fractions
**Kugawa vitu vipande vipande**.
'to divide things into pieces'.

**Nikiwa na kijiti kimajo namna hivi**
'when I have stick like this',

*Shisala shilala shiri ma ndongo la nyi nyi*
'One stick like this then I break it'.

How many pieces have I divided the stick into?

*Chorus*: Two

A.L. Two. Two pieces. What do I call these two pieces? ( writing on the blackboard ).

**Hii imekuwa** one over....
'This one is'

*Chorus*: Two

A.L. Two. **Hiyo** ( that is ) one over two is given a name called a half. Everybody say a half:

*Chorus*: A half

A.L. A half is the same as saying one over two. How many halves make one whole?

**Ni nusu ngapi zinatengeneza kijiti kimoja?**
'How many halves form one whole stick'.

*Chorus*: **Mbili**
'two'.

A.L. **Mbili** (two). *Nimbukula shisala shindi ma ngavemu vidonye vivaga* (If I take another stick and I divide into three pieces).

**sasa** (now). I have divided it into three pieces. What shall we call one of the three?

**Mikono Juu!**
'Hands up'

Pupil. One over three.

A.L. Very good, one over - ?

*Chorus*: Three

Code-switching has enabled the teacher to build up in the pupils' minds new concepts; first by stating them in English and then repeating them into other codes known to the pupils. The pupils are thus able to contribute in fragments from a language less know to them but which the learner wishes to identify with. The pupils' performance in this exchange help satisfy their teachers' demand for them to speak in English. Teachers in rural schools code-switch in three languages, while their urban counterparts code-switch in only English and Kiswahili. Pedagogical code-switching in the classroom diminishes as the pupils get more proficient in their use of English in the upper classes.

### 3.13. Units of Analysis for Code-switching

Myers-Scotton (1993:125) defines a Matrix language as the more dominant one supplying the morphemes for the discourse. More importantly it supplies all the 'system' morphemes, i.e. inflections and functional words. In some communities the

Matrix language may change from one conversation to another. In Africa it is always an indigenous language, not the international one which is the Matrix language. Eastman (1992:2) similarly notes that the term 'Matrix' refers to the language in which the majority of morphemes in a given conversation occur.

In example (xi) a headmaster of a primary school identified as P.W. was interviewed. The final question he was asked was to recount one of the most terrible experiences he has had in his life. The preceding exchange had been in English but this question was repeated in Luhyia. P.W. chose to respond in COSCO whose tense and plural morphemes are English based. In the light of the description of the Matrix language; English in P.W's COSCO serves as the Matrix language.



(xi) C.S. I would like to hear from you what you would consider to have been the most unusual or terrible event to have happened in your life. *Nishina shikholekha khwivi shiu khuchenyinya*?
'What happened to you which was surprising?'

P.W. Alright. Thank you. I can recall my time when I was at Musingu High School. Something happened which I consider to be a very terrible experience. Student *Mulala yali khu*

*mulwale* (One of them was sick)
*Yali nende Malaria.*
'He had malaria'

He was not feeling well, when he tried to cough teachers thought maybe these students had planned a strike. The first person *wali* (who was) shaken was the headmaster of the school. He started running away. **Basi** (then) in that process

students started running away, breaking windows and doors and everything. At the end some student lost their teeth in process of running away.

Myers-Scotton (1993:125) defines an embedded language as the one from which material enters a Matrix language. Thus in example (xi) Kiswahili elements as well as Luhyia are embedded in the Matrix language, English. Kiswahili and Luhyia are thought to be embedded language since they provide fewer system morphemes. The Matrix language can be contrasted with the one used in the folowing example. In example (xii) a man who works in a hotel in Nairobi was asked what he considered to have been a terrible experience he had undergone. In his response he used three languages: English and Kiswahili as embedded languages and Luhyia as the Matrix language. The man is identified as Z.B.

(xii). C.S. Can you tell me if any anything shocking has happened to you?

Z.B. *Shindu shikholekha khu shiukhu chenyia*(The thing that happened which was surprising) **ni kwamba** (was that) a bomb **ililipuka** (exploded) in the Norfolk Hotel in Nairobi.

*Ni yiira vandu* (it killed people) ten *vacheni* (visitors) **yaani** (that is) guests *vali* (were people) seven *na* (and) staff *vandu* (people) **tatu** (three).

'Something which was shocking was that a bomb exploded in the Norfolk Hotel and killed ten people. Guests who were among the dead were seven people and three staff'

Finlayson et al. (1998) stress that the Matrix language does not change within a speaker's turn. In example (xi) P.W. did not change the English Matrix language nor did Z.B. in (xii) change the Luhyia Matrix language.

### 3.14. Embedded Language Islands

Myers-Scotton (1993:125) noted that there are two kinds of islands in a code-switching code. There are ML islands which are constituents in which all morphemes come from the ML. EL islands on the other involve all morphemes from the EL. In contrast to mixed constituents EL islands are well formed according to EL requirements (Finlayson et al. 1998). In the following example a man identified as L.S. was asked during the interview what he thought was the most terrible experience he has gone through. The following is part of his response.

(xiii). L.S. *Nanyola* (I found) **bwana** (man) *vindu vyanje vivilwi*

*munzu. Vindu munzu vitsili,* TV radio *ni tsinguvu* (my things were stolen from the house all gone, TV radio and clothes).

Almost all those essential things were taken by those thieves.

*Namanya natsia mu polisi* (What I did was to go to police)

**kupiga ripoti** (to make a report).

In the first sentence above the ML is Luhyia with three islands: **bwana** 'man' Kiswahili based EL; TV, *radio* - English based EL islands.

According to Finlayson et al. (1998) embedded language proficiency correlates positively with the use of embedded language islands as opposed to singly occuring lexemes. The single occuring lexemes in 'code-switching for pedagogical purposes'

(3.12) do not positively correlates with the pupils' proficiency. Sometimes the EL islands may reflect the number of languages known to the bilingual as in (xiii) above.

A janitor at Maseno shows how in an utterance the EL islands may be manipulated for special effect. The janitor is a Luo married to a Luhyia woman and the islands in his utterance signal his attempt to identify with the two communities. English or Kiswahili are the usual medium of exchange between the two communities.

(xiv). *Mukhwasi* you must see him KINYI **asubuhi**

*Mukhwasi* is Luhyia for brother-in-law and it may be used as a honorific term between men. KINYI is Nilotic-Luo for tomorrow. **Asubuhi** is Kiswahili for early morning.



## 3.16. Conclusion

Romaine (1989:112) noted that more attention needs to be paid to the people's attitudes to code-switching and also the question of what status is assigned to it as part of the community members' perception of competence. Swigart (1992:84) notes that Wolof speakers think that code-switched French and Wolof is a debased code. The speakers we interviewed showed no tacit awareness that they were doing anything different from speaking Luhyia, English or Kiswahili depending on the prevailing circumstances. Teachers who use code-switching in class also believe that they are using English. Similarly, traders who code-switch believe that they are speaking Kiswahili and so are people who code-switch in their interaction with members of their family believe they are speaking Luhyia.

About half of the people we interviewed use code-switching as their normal code of communication in their daily transactions. The name COSCO has been used in order to delineate a fourth code available to the people which incorporates all the three codes. Code-switching among speakers in Kenya usually depends on 'negotiations' in view of linguistic sensitivity among various ethnic groups. 'Negotiations' are not always successful on some occasions.

Code-switching in many cases is used in schools in order to introduce beginners to English. Much illuminating work on the grammar of code-switching in the form of ML and EL units of analysis has been advanced by Myers-Scotton. Heller (1988:270) notes that there is more work to be done on the sense which switching makes, where it comes from and the consequences it has for interlocutors' understanding of the multiple levels of messages embedded in its discourse.

## CHAPTER FOUR

## COHERENCE AND CODE CHOICE IN CONTACT: ENGLISH, LUHYIA AND KISWAHILI

The focus of this chapter will be on the effect of contact between Luhyia, Kiswahili and English in Luhyia English discourse. Forms of coherence, cohesion and other features of text interpretation will be examined in a situation where three languages are employed in the same speech event.

Crystal (1991:6) notes that coherence refers to underlying functional connectedness in spoken or written text. It involves the study of such factors as the language users' knowledge of the word, inferences and assumptions. Rankema (1993) describes coherence as knowledge outside the current exchange.

In addition other devices such as *substitution* as a cohesive strategy will be discussed. Next I will examine *interpretation* which in my view is code-switching at the level of discourse. An example of interpretation will be reported on involving a speaker whose duty is to translate a speech into a second language for the benefit of an audience which is equally competent in both languages being used. Finally, I will examine *code- switching* and *signalling* as strategies used in a contact situation.

### 4.1. Coherence and Cohesion

According to Halliday and Hassan (1976) the concept of cohesion involves a semantic relationship between an element in a text and some other element that is crucial to its interpretation. The two elements: the *presupposing* and the *presupposed* may be

structurally related to each other or they may not, it makes no difference to the meaning of the *cohesive* relationship (Halliday nad Hassan 1976:48).

Other insights into the twin concept of *coherence* and *cohesion* come from Garrod and Sanford (1994), who observe that much of text coherence can be accounted for in terms of the structural knowledge of situations that a reader, speaker or listener brings to bear during comprehension, and a manner in which they fill in gaps in the text to yield a coherent interpretation. On the other hand cohesion involves the use of various linguistic devices to hold sentences together (Garrod and Sanford 1994:600-3). Similar observations on coherence as a unit in relation to existing knowledge have been made by Rankema (1993), Bouton (1988), Callow and Callow (1992).

The outside knowledge a reader or listener brings to the text belongs to an 'etic' system (Pike 1992:225). The key to understanding these propositions are the words: *relations* and *units*. Callow and Callow (1992:9) noted that *relations* enabling units to cohere are referred to as *coherence relations* and at propositional level they may be realised by such forms as: *because, after, for example,* or $\phi$. On the other hand Bouton (1988) labels these coherence relations as *cohesive devices* which are surface level ties which show relationships among elements in the discourse. The cohesive devices are for example, back channels of acknowledgement, personal cues, pronominalization, subordination, lexical and phrasal repetition, which include intensification and restatements (1988:144). Another description of *relations* and *units* by Mann et al. (1992) introduces *rhetorical structure theory* as a framework which can describe rhetorical relations among parts of a text. The structure of a text has a symmetrical relationship whose common type of structure relationship is known

as *nucleus- satellite* relationship. That is to say one member of a pair of a text span is more central (nucleus) and the other peripheral (satellite) (Mann et al. 1992:42).

In other words, a text contains a nucleus and a satellite and what holds between the two is a particular relationship. The naturally prominent elements constitute the structural *core* of the unit to which the less prominent elements relate. In Rhetorical Structure Theory (RST) *prominence* is inevitably associated with the element concerned simply by virtue of its import and relationship (Mann et al. 1992).

Callow and Callow use several terms to refer to what in RST is known as *nucleus.* The former refers to it as *core unit* or *prominent element* whose main characteristic is *import* carrying. The *import* contains the main communicative purposes for doing so, in RST a speaker could mean numerous things at the same time. For example he/she may be informing and expressing emotions in the same unit. As it is, the unit that carries the *prominence, import or reason* is necessarily the *nucleus.*

Additional information given concerning the *import* is the fact that though there are a number of purposes only about three categories of *imports* define human personality and experience: informative, expressive and conative imports (Callow and Callow 1992). *Informative* import involves the knowledge store of a speaker or hearer; the expressive involves their emotions and values, and connotative involves their desire, intentions and wills (Callow and Callow 1992:9).

Next to be isolated is the *satellite* of a text. Mann et al (1992:4) noted that the principal function of a language is not necessarily to inform. Some elements of a

language have little informative value. Orientational elements or message support units are what Callow and Callow (1992:12) term *satellite* elements in a text. The communicator's main communicative purposes gives rise to the structural *core* of the message or *nucleus* while the audience awareness gives rise to orientational elements or *satellites.*

In summary, the *nucleus* of a text is a unit that contains the *import* or *core element.* The satellite, on the other hand, comprises *orientational* elements of little information value. *Coherence* is what holds between the *nucleus* and the *satellite.* Coherence has been given other labels such as *evidence* by Mann et al. Fig.4.1 summarises the basic concept of coherence.

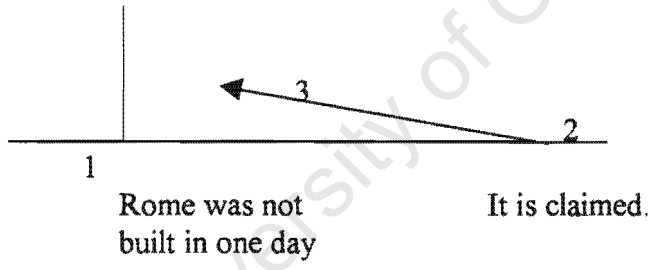



Fig.4.1. Nucleus - satellite relations.

where: 1= nucleus unit
2= satellite(s)
3= relationship or evidence

In the interviews carried out there were occasions when the nucleus was in one language and its satellite in another. In a bilingual situation speakers often repeat the main claim in two or more languages either for emphasis or clarity. This in itself is reason for the commencement of code switching in an exchange, especially in a pedagogical setting.

On the other hand, there were times, contrary to coherence theory, when extensive communication was carried out without speakers supplying nucleus and satellites in their texts. At a time such as this, a speaker and hearer would 'help' each other in building up a single nucleus in a face - to - face encounter. Sometimes the nucleus may be stated by a speaker as the satellites are supplied by the interlocator without any loss of coherence. These are some of the observations that suggest some modification or fine tuning of the tenets of coherence theory as it currently exists. An example of nucleus and satellites spoken in different languages in the same utterance is shown in (i). The speaker aged about fifty six, did his primary education in 1958 before he trained as a carpenter. Afterwards he worked in various furniture companies in Nairobi until two years ago when he retired. He is identified as S.L.

(i). S.L: *Navelenje* (I have been) National treasurer *wa* (of) African church of the holy spirit up to now. *Nachio mihinzi chia nakho le langa livukana* (that is the job I have been doing for the church) as National treasurer of the African Church of the Holy Spirit.



The quotation can be divided into nucleus and satellite material as follows:

**Luhyia/ English nucleus**: *Navelenje* (I have been) national treasurer *wa* (of) African Church of the Holy Spirit.

**English satellite**: up to now

**Luhyia satellite**: *Nachio mihinzi chia nakho lelanga livukana* (that is the job I have been doing for the church).

**English nucleus**: (repeated) as a national treasurer of the African Church of the Holy Spirit.

The allocation for the above quotation would be one nucleus in Luhyia and English each. Also a satellite in each language making this a *balanced* code-switched utterance. However such balanced code-switching is not the norm.

Usually speakers repeat the nucleus in a different language for emphasis while there is no alteration in the language of the satellite. In the next example a clinical assistant who has now retired was interviewed about this past. He is aged about sixty and at one time worked in a rural clinic in the nineteen fifties. He is identified as E.O. E.O frequently uses English in his family transactions. Part of my interview with him is reproduced in (ii).

(ii). C.S. What in their view caused diseases?

E.O. *Tsisila* (abomination). If for example you lie on your father's bed. You will give birth to children who are sickly yourself. Eh? eh? You see.



The nucleus in the text is first stated in Luhyia and then exemplified in English. All satellites are in English which reflects on the speaker's familiarity or level of competence in use of English. E.O.'s text can be divided into satellite-nucleus material as follows:

**Nucleus:** *Tsisila* (abomination)

**Nucleus:** if you lie on your father's bed.

**Satellite:** you will give birth to children who are sickly yourself.

**Satellite:** Eh? eh?

**Satellite:** You see?

On occasion a speaker might use first language satellites in order to draw on the listener's sympathy. The unfavourable experience would be given an English nucleus followed by first language satellites. The language of the satellite in a situation such as this would index [+ solidarity, + ethnicity] and therefore the bilingual speaker may not draw the same feelings from their listeners if their linguistic repertoire did not vary in this manner.

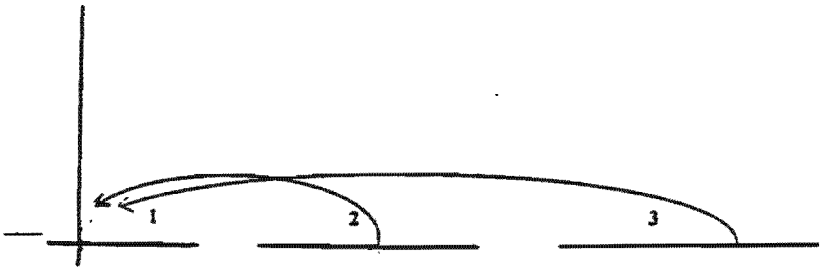
In this example a subject who has had a temporary job with a company in Nairobi is recounting some of his experiences. He has had primary education but little experience working in a large city. The more Luhyia satellites there are, the more sympathy he is likely to draw from his listeners. The man is identified as N.M aged thirty and he is currently unemployed.



(iii) C.S. What happened when you went to Nairobi?

N.M. I worked with a company known as Cadbury Schweppes. *Nali mundu wu-mukhono* 'I was doing menial work'. *Nakhola kha barua kupanga tsichupa.* 'My job involved arranging bottles'.

N.M.'s utterance can be diagrammatically represented as follows:




| | | |
|---|---|---|
| I was working with a Co. known as Cadbury Schweppes. | *Nali mundu wu mukhono*. 'I was unskilled labourer. | *Khabarua khukhu panga tsichupa*. 'a job involving arranging bottles' |

Figure 4.2 N.M.'s utterance in terms of nucleus and satellite.

1= nucleus. 2= satellite. 3=satellite.

The nucleus made in English indexes [+ status] and for stylistic reasons the code is changed in order to heighten N.M's helplessness in a job that had no prospects. Sometimes a bilingual speaker might employ a stylistic strategy whereby he/she builds up satellites in their first language and on approaching a 'climax' or nucleus of the utterance the code is changed. This strategy draws attention to the nucleus in order to make it even more prominent than the preceding part of the discourse.

In the following example Z.V. is a man aged about forty five, who became a builder's apprentice in Nairobi after his primary education. He is currently unemployed. Part of my interview with him is reproduced below:

(iv). C.S. What was the nature of your job?

Z.V. (satellite) *Nali Nairobi ninyinzilanga khughorofa ikulu* (I was once in Nairobi working at the top of a tall building)
(satellite) *Nali nikhaseni vulahi tawe* (I did not see where I was stepping)

(satellite) *Nakukha ma ningwa.* (I dropped and fell)

(nucleus) and I broke a leg.

It is worth noting that the majority of speakers who used code-switching as a strategy in their discourse formed their nucleus material in English or they had to repeat or exemplify it in English. It is therefore of interest that elements of less informative value, orientational elements or message support units are assigned to the $L_1$. It appears that whenever speakers use their first language in the formation of satellites, the stylistic effect is to keep the encounter less formal and establish the speaker's common ethnicity with his/her interlocutor without affecting coherence in any significant way. In the same way, by forming an English-based nucleus supported by first language satellites, code- switching is made an informal mode of communication. The informality and ethnicity are provided for by the first language elements, of less informative value, contained in the satellites.

### 4.2. Sentence Completion

The corpus reveals an interesting situation where coherence is not necessarily the burden of the speaker alone. The speaker may take the responsibility of producing the nucleus while the listener supplies the satellite(s) in a co-operative endeavour as the exchange progresses. According to Callow and Callow (1992:7) the speaker's purpose determines both the structural form and detailed expression of the discourse. But at times in my research there have been speakers who provide the structural form while the details of the discourse are supplied by the interlocutor. As already noted, the nucleus establishes the purpose or reason for the message and as such, some speakers think it is superfluous to go any further than stating the nucleus. Further investigation revealed that this strategy is common in face-to-face encounters. One likely explanation is that it is a strategy whose origins are in the classroom, where for pedagogical reasons teachers expect learners to supply satellite material to each nucleus they make. Younger speakers who have gone through the school system appear to have extended this pedagogical strategy into a conversational form for their daily exchange.



This strategy seems to be at variance with the hypothesis that cohesion is a measure of the syntactic or semantic *connectivity* of linguistic forms at surface structure level of analysis (Crystal, 1991:60). Cohesion has been seen as one of the prime conditions of a text. Garrod and Sanford (1994) note that without coherence a text is not properly a text. Written texts most obviously illustrate coherence but even conversation has coherence in the sense that each utterance is expected to be relevant and communicatively clear...and hearers expect relevance and clarity (1994:603).

The scholars appear to be stating that a unit in itself cannot constitute coherence; it

should be units and their relationships. Nevertheless, the corpus shows that social identification and co-operation between speaker and listener is important in establishing meaning and coherence. Thus we have a situation where part of meaning is supplied by the speaker and the other part by the listener on the basis of co-operation and social identification.

Of interest in the research were times when the production of the nucleus was a shared endeavour between interlocutors. Here is part of a recording of two men (unidentified) in an animated discussion. The two were part of a large group who were holding a meeting in a school office. The purpose of the meeting was to plan for new school buildings. Apparently the group was not getting enough assistance from the area chief:

(v). Man 1: The chief was very...

Man 2: Unfair, I know.

Not only is the nucleus produced in a joint *endeavour*, but words are built up syllable by syllable as the speaker and listener exhibit unusual co-operation. A speaker sometimes provides the first syllable in a word expecting the interlocutor to come to his aid and complete the rest of the word in question. This is reminiscent of a classroom situation where a teacher may come to the aid of a hesitant pupil in tackling an unfamiliar word. It is a new way of speaking, unrelated to the complexity or simplicity of a word.

In this example a woman aged 30 had recently walked away from her job as a cook in a school canteen. She is identified as (L.K).

(vi). C.S. Were you unhappy in your job as a cook?

L.K. Yes. I got fe...

C.S. Fed up?

L.K. Yes. Fed up so that I left.

The last utterance from L.K. is confirmatory in that the listener's response is acceptable. In the case where the listener declines to supply a missing word or syllable, the speaker would go ahead and supply it himself/herself. This would indicate that some speakers are aware of the fact that not all interlocutors are adept in taking words out of the 'speaker's mouth'.

In this example the interviewee is discussing some of the problems he has encountered in finding a training or employment for his children. He is identified as A.M. aged fifty. Part of the interview is reproduced below:

(vii). C.S. Did your daughter get the training?

A.M. *Luchendo lweru* (our journey) was not good.

C.S. is that so?

A.M. They only wanted married *wo...*

C.S. (silence)

A.M. Yes. Married women.

### 4.3 Question and Answer

According to Mann et al (1992:2) in order to be recognised as a unit a text must create a sense of over-all unity to which every part contributes. The underlying assumption here is that it is the burden of the speaker to create a sense of 'overall' unity' in his/her production for the sake of coherence.

The corpus shows examples where in a question and answer situation, the speaker's question or nucleus is 'usurped' or repeated by the listener. Sometimes the listener may use this nucleus thus 'usurped' in order to orientate himself/herself and 'launch' their own satellites. By turning the speaker's question which carries the *nucleus* or *import* into their own, the speaker is transforming somebody else's nucleus into an 'orientation' unit and therefore a satellite. In this case the distinction between the established notions of satellite and nucleus becomes blurred. When a speaker's nucleus is turned into a satellite or orientation material, the speaker is echoing the process already alluded to, where production of meaning is a shared endeavour.

In the following example, a local member of parliament identified as B.M. was interviewed on a wide range of issues. At times B.M. would use the *nucleus* material provided by interviewer in two stages: firstly, by reducing it to an orientation unit in order to organise his responses and secondly, by using the same unit as his own *nucleus* around which to organise his *satellites.*

One way of explaining this conversation strategy is to recall that speakers of English in the community acquired it in the classroom. A learner may in some way have answered half his/her teacher's question by simply repeating the question. However, it has been given wider application beyond the classroom. Part of the interview with B.M. is reproduced

in (viii).

(viii). C.S. Do you have any regrets about the inadequate instructions you received in your mother tongue?

B.M. Inadequate instructions in my mother tongue. Yes. But as a politician I have recovered the lost ground.

The intonation pattern of the repeated unit is that of a declarative rather than interrogative utterance.

Table 4.1 shows the way nine interviewees responded to questions put to them during our field work. Two variables are important to this analysis: level of education i.e. primary school or secondary school education. The number of times a subject repeated a question was noted. Also noted was the language in which the question was repeated.

Questions asked in English tended to be repeated in English before being answered. Questions asked in Kiswahili were usually answered without the interlocutor repeating them in Kiswahili. Younger people generally tended to repeat the question before answering it. This was less apparent in older people. The majority of those who

repeated the question before answering it were those with secondary school education, and above.

The overall view of the scores is that there is more repeating of the question in English than in Luhyia and Kiswahili: English average is 9; Luhyia is 6 and Kiswahili is 1. These figures point to a strong school-based influence on the speaker's discourse.

| Subject | Level of Education | Year of birth | English | Luhyia | Kiswahili | No. of sentences |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| S1 | P | 1941 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10 |
| S2 | P | 1944 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 10 |
| S3 | P | 1974 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 7 |
| S4 | M | 1915 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 12 |
| S5 | M | 1965 | 6 | 2 | 0 | 15 |
| S6 | M | 1966 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 12 |
| S7 | M | 1970 | 6 | 1 | 0 | 10 |
| S8 | P | 1944 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 8 |
| S9 | P | 1962 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 9 |
| **Average** | | | 25 | 9 | 2 | 93 |

Table 4.1 Repeating a question before answering it; age and level of education compared

When an interlocutor appropriates a speaker's *nucleus* without providing alternative *nucleus* forming material in their repertoire, an interview or interaction can stall. On the other hand when an interlocutor repeats a question and then adds their own nucleus material, it will reflect on the positive interest the interlocutor has shown in the exchange. In this sense repeating a question and adding to it shows politeness - the kind of politeness teachers are likely to note positively.

In example (ix) a high school teacher aged about thirty was interviewed concerning his work. Rather than produce his own *nucleus* material in his responses, he persistently repeated the interviewer's one with the result that the interview took only five minutes instead of the intended twenty minutes.

In the following extract the teacher who is identified as J.M. discusses his ups and downs in his teaching career.

(ix). C.S. What happened after University?

J.M. I was posted to Kisii. A school in Kisii.

C.S. Was it remote?

J.M. Very remote.

C.S. You used to walk part of the distance?

J.M. Used to walk part of the distance.

C.S. It must have been a terrible experience especially if it rains.

J.M. Terrible if it rains.

C.S. So you must have thought of getting a transfer.

J.M. A transfer

C.S. And you are happy now?

J.M. Yes, happy now.



Politeness and co-operative talk is not achieved by the interlocutor repeating the question he/she hears, but by the amount of nucleus material they add to it during the exchange as shown in the following example. The interviewee identified as O.O. recounts the story of Mumia, the Luhyia Paramount chief. O.O. is aged about thirty

and a teacher at a high school. In O.O's narrative Mumia had been invited to Buckingham Palace towards the end of the 19th century. He and his entourage took an uneventful journey by train to Mombasa, where a major problem occurred which changed the history of the Luhyia.

(xi). C.S. Mumia did not send his children to school?

O.O. To school. Indeed he himself had been called by the Europeans to go to London.

C.S. What happened?

O.O. Happened. The story goes that they went with his advisors down to the coast.

C.S. Mombasa?

O.O. Mombasa. But when his advisors saw the mass of water in front of them, they advised the King not to go.

C.S. So, by seeing the ocean for the first time it was a shock to them?

O.O. A shock to them. It was much bigger than the river at home they were used to. They thought it was not safe for the King to travel that way.

C.S. So they turned back?

O.O. They turned back and Queen Victoria did not confirm Mumias' Kingdom.

What is particularly unsual is the repeated element 'happened', which is not a grammatical unit on its own (i.e. it is not a full V ). Such a repetition appears to be exceptional in my data base.

### 4.4. Substitution

Substitution is a cohesive strategy that involves the replacement of a word or group of words by a *dummy* word. It is up to the reader or listener to replace the *dummy* with an appropriate element based on the preceding information (Rankema 1993:37). Dummies are placed in the discourse by the speakers in order to hold their listener's attention during the rest of the telling. By leaving space in the discourse filled with dummies, the speaker avoids dominating the production of meaning. The listener is given a chance to work out what the dummies stand for.

In my data English-based dummies appear to function as a means of glossing over what appears to be minor details or 'juicy' bits of the story. On the other hand Luhyia and Kiswahili dummies appear to be signalling ethnicity.

The commonly used dummies amongst of nine selected speakers are noted in Table 4.2.

| English | Kiswahili | Gloss | Luhyia | Gloss |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| right | | | mwana | 'brother' |
| zig zag | | | weru | 'our brother' |
| a b c d | | | so | 'you know' |
| what what | | | ulo-langa | 'you see' |
| you know | unajua | 'you know' | | |
| you see | ona | 'you see' | | |
| now | sasa | 'now' | | |
| bits and pieces | | | | |
| here and there | lakini una | 'but' | | |

Table 4.2 Commonly used dummies by nine selected speakers

One of the highest number of English-based dummies appeared in the speech of an interviewee, aged twenty six, who is employed as a junior university administrator. In the following exchange the interviewee recounts the story of a police corporal who was hard put in explaining to his inspector why he had not booked a case involving a woman who had been assaulted. According to the interviewee, the lady had gone with him to the police station in order to report the assault but the corporal had turned her away. He is identified as T.M.

(xi). T.M. 'Corporal. You never do that. This lady is bleeding. Have you booked the case?

No.

Why?

She was drunk.

Why haven't you put that in your report?

Then the corporal just *uhm uhm uhm*, *what what what*. Now do you know what happened? The corporal was interdicted.'

In the next example a former school headmaster recounts his efforts to improve the teaching of English in his school. He is identified as S.M. The interview with S.M. was done in English and his responses were in English, which, howerver, included dummies which had both English and Luhyia elements. Luhyia dummies in this discourse appear to reflect or to be appealing to common ethnicity. Part of the interview is reproduced as follows:

(xii). C.S. As a headmaster of a primary school, what efforts did you make in order to improve the standard of English in your school?

S.M. Yes. We used to sit as a staff and decide on *A B C D ways and means* of improving English in the school.

C.S. Did you use a bone?

S.M. (laugh) No. **mwana** (brother). We never used a bone. But there were *one two three* things we used instead. We used discs, not to humiliate any child. We taught during public holidays, Sundays and school holidays. We taught *on and on and on* without stopping.



**4.5. Interpretation and Discourse**

Translation as an activity usually presumes the existence of speech that is not properly understood by some listeners. During field work I encountered sessions where audiences were given a message in English which was then translated into Kiswahili and Luhyia successively. My attention would not have been drawn in what appears to be an obvious linguistic transaction had I not come across a situation where bilinguals who apparently had equal competence in English, Kiswahili and Luhyia were still keen on using the services of an interpreter.

Younger people generally with high school education or above, have broken away from what to them appears to be dull, run- of- the- mill churches. They have formed their own congregations which usually meet in the open air. Occasionally they use loud hailers, drums and guitars accompanied by loud singing, making the event a lively encounter almost similar to a rock concert. The younger people have broken away ,

not only physically with the established churches, but linguistically as well. Established churches usually do not make use of interpreters in their transactions. At least interpreters are not a usual feature of their day- to- day activities. It is likely that in the age of the pioneer missionaries, interpreters had been extensively used by the same churches. This is a feature of the past which seem to have found currency with younger people in their new-found churches.

When asked why they need an interpreter, the response was: not everyone understands English. This does not tally with the members' competence in English, Luhyia and Kiswahili. My interest was aroused when an interpreter made linguistic errors, sometimes making the services of an interpreter a hindrance rather than a help in the transmission of the message being conveyed. It appears that, inspite of the resultant errors, the use of an interpreter amongst people who have competence in the relevant languages has a basis in discourse and it has the same motivation as code-switching. As long as these speakers use code-switching in their repertoire, interpreters will continue to be of use in their contribution to the religious discourse of the young people.



### 4.5.1. Theory of interpretation.

Hatim and Mason (1990) note that translation (and therefore interpretation) is a useful test case for examining the whole issue of the role of language in social life, by creating a new act of communication out of a previously existing one. In creating such a new act, translators are inevitably acting under the pressure of their own social conditioning while at the same time trying to assist in the negotiation of meaning (Hatim and Mason 1990:1). Giles (1995:29) describes a translator or interpreter as

someone whose role rotates. To serve the author or speaker, the translator or interpreter should be biased in their favour but should not be blind to the possible reaction of the receiver.

Translation or interpretation takes two broad forms: free and literal translation or interpretation. Al-Safadi, a fourteenth century translator cited by Hatim and Mason (1990) faulted the method of literal translation by saying:

> They look at each Greek word and what it means. They seek an equivalent term in Arabic and write it down. Then they take the next word and do the same (1990:5).

Among the problems of this method according to Al-Safadi, are the erroneous assumption that there are one-to-one equivalents in all lexical items in Greek as well as Arabic. A further erroneous assumption is that the sentence structure of one language matches the other. Literal translation has the problem which involves linguistic features being language specific and one would risk in comprehensibility by being literal in translation. On the other hand, free translation or interpretation has discourse and reader/listener response as the overriding criteria.

Another factor salient to interpretation is comprehension, given that there is no one-to-one correspondence between the words and structures of many languages. Giles (1995) notes that transcoding or automatic word-for-word interpretation may result in a target language text or discourse that is clumsy, erroneous or even nonsensical. Two components make up comprehension or C in the formula C = KL + E L K. Here

C stands for comprehension, KL stands for linguistic knowledge and ELK stands for extra-linguistic knowledge (Giles 1995:50).

With knowledge of language (KL), one is aware of the characteristics of the source language (SL) conventions which might be at variance with the target language (TL) norms with the consequence of obscuring the message (Hatim and Mason 1990:8)

The third factor is what Giles (1995) terms 'fidelity'. Given exactly the same message, presented under exactly identical conditions at the same point in time, individuals sharing the same mother tongue, tend to write or speak different sentences in order to express it. If therefore different sentences can correspond to the same message and if this is applicable in both the source language and the target language, then in translation, different sentences in the target language may reflect the same message as the one initially generated in the source language (1995:52).



For example if we take the primary message (PM) to be the English word *death*; different people would use different words to express it. Similarly there may be more than one interpretation involved. In essence this is the source of problems for the interpreter. If we take Giles's (1995) formula for areas of potential problems for the interpreter, they will number 1- 4 as shown as follows:

$$\underset{1}{\text{SL text}} = \underset{1}{\text{PM}} + \underset{2}{F_I} + \underset{3}{L_{II}} + \underset{4}{P_I}$$

The formula is explained as follows:

SL text means source language text which comprises of (1), the primary message or

(PM), which in turn contains the *nucleus* of the message as produced by the speaker. The source language text also contains elements 2, 3 and 4 which carry the collective name of 'secondary information'.

$F_I$ stands for framing information which is selected by the sender for the purpose of facilitating comprehension of the message by the receiver.

$L_{II}$ stands for linguistically induced information which is not selected by the sender, but is made mandatory or induced by the rules of the language.

$P_I$ refers to personal information which is neither selected by the sender nor induced by linguistic constraints but associated with idiosyncratic characteristics of the sender (Giles 1995:61-5). Often during or after an interpretation, the formula would be something like this:

$$\text{TL text} = PM + F_I + L_{II}\,(\text{of SL}) + L_{II}\,(\text{of TL}) + P_I$$

The fourth and final factor that has a hand in the interpretation of a text is the question of loyalty. Giles (1995) notes that the basic and probably the most widely accepted position in translation or interpretation is the alter ego of the author or speaker. The translator or interpreter should consider as his/her own the intentions or claims of the author or speaker and act accordingly even if it is against the interest of the reader or listener. Hatim and Mason (1990:17) similarly note that for many translators (or interpreters) of religious texts, the first loyalty is at all times with the source although there are others in the same field whose concern is with the reader or listener.

In my survey of religious congregations where interpretation was used, loyalty was expressed in the text of the Bible irrespective of topics, speaker or audience. Indeed there was congenial fellowship with members loudly agreeing to what was being said by the interpreter even though it was at times at variance with the speaker's message. Liberman (1982:40) when writing about the Pitjantjara people noted that when all are in agreement, the congeniality transcends the current topic and accord...becomes a medium for fellowship with all persons present offering a resounding chorus of vocal gesture which may sound like chaos to a novice observer but it is quite the opposite.

In example 4.5.(i) loyalty to the text is illustrated. The text here is the Bible which for many Christians 'never lies'. Even if an interpreter makes a slip that could amount to some kind of blasphemy, the audience who are loyal to the Biblical text accept the interpreters' message favourably. A dramatist demonstrated this faith in the text despite an interpreters' blunder in the following exchange (Kiswahili is in bold type).



(xiii). Speaker: Yes. You Luhyia!

Interpreter: **Yesu yu mu- Luhyia**.
'Jesus is a Luhyia'

Speaker: Aleluya!

Interpreter: **ni Mu Luhyia**.
'He is a Luhyia'

( Kakamega Schools Drama Competition: 1995 ).

### 4.5.2. Language of religion

Ten recordings of religious events were made. Not always were interpreters used as an aid to communication as shown in Table 4.3.

| Event. | English translated into Kiswahili | English translated into Kiswahili and Luhyia | Luhyia translated into Luo |
|---|---|---|---|
| At funerals | none | none | 1 |
| Open air service in Luhyia area. | 3 | none | none |
| Open air service in non-Luhyia area. | 2 | none | none |
| Service at school | 3 | none | none |
| Service in established churches | none | none | none |

Table 4.3 Occasions when interpretation is used as a feature of language of religion



An analysis of errors made and corrected in the process of interpretation in the ten recordings is given in Table 4.4.

| Problem Area | Speaker errors made | self correction | Interpreter errors made | correction |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| PM | 15 | - | 12 | 10 |
| $F_I$ | 11 | - | - | 10 |
| $L_{II}$ of SL | 12 | - | - | 8 |
| $L_{II}$ of TL | - | - | 12 | - |
| $P_I$ | - | - | 10 | - |
| n | **38** | - | **34** | **28** |

Table: 4.4 Errors and correction of errors during interpretation

n (errors) = 72
n (corrections) = 28
speakers' errors = 52.7%
interpreters' errors = 47.3%
errors corrected by interpreter = 38.8%

Although more detailed studies are needed, the figures in Table 4.4 suggest that the division of labour between the speaker and the interpreter is clearly demarcated. The speaker makes errors that could be corrected if she/he was working alone but she/he leaves correction of errors to the interpreter. Of the total number of errors made speakers' errors amounted to 52%, whereas the interpreters' accounted for 47.3%. Out of the total number of errors only 38.8% were corrected by the interpreters. The efficacy of such a system fraught with errors might seem questionable. However I will examine in detail some of the motivations for this practice.



### 4.6. Advantages of interpretation

There are times when a speaker gives a blunt or inappropriate remark and in solidarity with him/her, the interpreter would tactfully modify the offending remark and therefore render the overall message acceptable to the audience. The following is an extract which was taken from an open air rally in Kakamega town.

(xiv) Speaker: You are behind there sleeping!

Interpreter: **Wewe uko nyuma Bwana asifiwe!**
'You are behind there Praise the Lord'.

During this exchange the speaker was not happy with the interpreter's face saving tactics. It seemed that the speaker was determined to admonish members of the flock who were continuing to sleep as the rally was in progress. In order to deliver the desired admonishment to the women who were sleeping, the speaker switched from speaking in English and spoke in Kiswahili and therefore deprived the interpreter of

the language which justified his presence. Nevertheless in a show of loyalty the interpreter expressed congeniality and thus roused the whole congregation into wakeful attentiveness. The exchange can be seen in the following extract.

(xv). Speaker: **Haleluya wamelala wa- dada**
'Haleluya the sisters are sleeping'.

Interpreter: mm mm mm aleluya! Aleluya!

All: **Aleluya! Aleluya!**

In both cases the interpreter has successfully managed to remove the 'sting' implicit in the speaker's primary information. Similarly the speaker's primary message may contain linguistic errors of a grammatical or lexical nature, that need correction. The interpreter may then 'smooth over' and correct any such error. The following extract was recorded during a religious rally at a high school.

(xvi) Speaker: I would borrow tea from a kiosk and I would praise the Lord.

Interpreter: **Nilikopa chai kwa kiosk na kushukuru mungu**
'I took tea on *credit* from a kiosk and I would praise the Lord'



### 4.7. Weakness of interpretation

There were a number of occasions where the interpreters introduced errors of their own into the discourse. Considering the speed at which the entire transaction is made such errors are not corrected and in such cases the listener may then rely on the earlier information as given by the speaker. Sometimes an interpreter was called upon to translate information that was beyond his/her knowledge. It is therefore important

that an interpreter's personal information or extra linguistic knowledge be at his/her finger tips. The researcher was introduced to an open air congregation and the interpreter found himself at a loss owing to gaps in his *personal information* **or** *extra linguistic knowledge*. The following is part of the exchange.

(xvii) Speaker: Mr C.S. and I met at the Rotary club.

Interpreter: **Tuli kutana kule kwa chama ingine.**
'we met at a certain organisation'

Speaker: He talked about working under a great grandson of the Mahatma Gandhi.

Interpreter: **Ambae alifanya huko na uhm uhm...**
'Where he worked with uhm uhm...'

Speaker: (whisper to the interpreter). Great Mahatma Gandhi the great Indian statesman.

Interpreter: **Yule Mahatma Gandhi ambaye alikuwa mtu uhm ambaye ali elemika sana kwa bara Hindi**.

'That Mahatma Gandhi who was a man uhm who was very highly educated on the Indian sub-continent'

Speaker: He was staying with him there. He was doing sociolinguistics.

Interpreter: **Alikuwa anaishi naye kule uhm...**
'He was staying with him there uhm...'



In this exchange the interpreter appears to have limited knowledge of Mahatma Gandhi. Lexical items such as *statesman*, *Rotary club* and *sociolinguistics* were also a source of problems to him. My view was that as these lexical items were known to the interpreter as well as the audience in their English form, coherence was not in anyway inhibited by the interpreter's inability to find their Kiswahili equivalents. Had the interpreter found their Kiswahili or Arabic equivalents then his reputation would have been enhanced. There were times when linguistically induced information of the

interpreter differed a great deal from that of the speaker. In the following example the interpreter made a slip with the Kiswahili word **kumureje- shea** which means to *return something to someone.* This differs from **kurejea** which is Kiswahili for *go back to.*

(xviii) Speaker: Won't you return to God?

Interpreter: **Je, unaweza kumurejeshea leo**?
'Can you return it to him now?'

There were times when the speaker's framing information was misunderstood forcing the interpreter to introduce into the message ideas not quite similar to what the speaker had in mind. Because of this , the interpreter can either make an overstatement or understatement as the case may be. The following exchange illustrates this:

(xix) Speaker: I used to earn something small as my salary.

Interpreter: **Nilikuwa ninapata shilingi arobaini kama mshahara**.
'I was getting forty shillings as my salary'.

Finally the speakers' primary message may be distorted by an interpreter. In the example which follows the speaker used the word *qualification,* which has been interpreted to mean *responsible job.* Likewise the word *favour* has been interpreted to mean *authority.*

(xx). Speaker: Although I do not have any qualification.

Interpreter: **Ata kama sina cheo**
'Although I do not have a responsible job'

Speaker: God has found *favour* in me.

Interpreter: **Lakini nina *kibali* mbele ya mungu.**
'but I have been given authority before God'

### 4.8. Why is an interpreter necessary?

I have cited various excerpts from recordings in order to demonstrate the weakness as well as advantages of using the services of an interpreter during religious gatherings among young people. The brief statistics I have been able to gather, point at more disadvantages than advantages for using an interpreter in these transactions. Inspite of these obstacles in an apparently *serious* speech event as preaching, interpreters are as popular as ever during open air religious gatherings.

Part of the interpreter's predicament is to embark on word-for-word translation in circumstances where their ability can be called to question. The audience nevertheless, is sympathetic to the interpreter's endeavours having followed the English version of the message anyway. An interpreter's worth is in what van Dijk (1984:146) terms the ability to have retrieval capacity; that is to say the ability to receive, process and produce appropriate equivalents to whatever the speaker is saying as quickly and as fast as the speaker's production. With experience most of the interpreters gain partly or wholly the capacity to do so.

It is now time to explore the most important reason why interpreters are in demand. The most likely reason why interpreters are used, is that English serves as the *transactional* language, and Kiswahili is taken to be the *interactional* language; both languages being juxtaposed in the same speech event. The function which a language

serves in the expression of content is described as *transactional.* That function involved in expressing social relationships and personal attitudes is described as *interactional* (Brown and Yule 1983:1). In the circumstances therefore, by using either Kiswahili or Luhyia the interpreter, brings to the discourse an interactional aspect. Inspite of some mis-interpretations that may amount to unintended blasphemy, the balance tips firmly in favour of the services of an interpreter.

For example in (xiv) where a preacher was admonishing his inattentive audience, the interactive function of maintaining social harmony was played by the interpreter to the full. He glossed over the inappropriately 'sharp' language of the precher. Sometimes an interpreter may improve on the speaker's grammar. By and large interpreters are used because bilinguals tend to employ all their linguistic knowledge of codes in one and the same utterance. Investigating the reasons for using the service of an interpreter is similar to investigating code-switching phenomena. Romaine (1989:157) observes that code-switching is a mode of bilingual performance which allows bilinguals to display their full communicative competence. In this case the only modification to her observation is that two people (speaker and interpreter), are doing the *displaying* rather than one individual alone. The question arises: why shouldn't the speaker preach in a mixed code, since he/she knows both languages anyway. The answer lies in the notion of domain. Religion indexes [+ solemnity – informality]. One reason the younger people broke away from established churches was to be able to mix solemnity and informality without compromising the seriousness of the event. The choice therefore fell on two 'actors': one to represent the solemn tones appropriate to religion and the other to introduce interaction or 'a human face' to religion. Being bilingual themselves the audience is at the same time fulfilling a

bilingual's urge to employ all their codes in the same communicative event. Established churches 'frown' on this as 'play acting' and unless compelling circumstances prevail, they avoid this form of preaching. Preachers in the young peoples' congregations also avoid communicating by 'outright' code-switching, as this removes the index + solemnity]. Clearly the special kind of code-switching here involving interpretation is a discourse phenomenon where the switching takes place at the level of discourse units rather than at the strictly grammatical, sentence or phrase structure level.

**4.9. Code-switching: The discourse of signalling.**

Romaine (1989:7) notes that a bilingual is the ultimate locus of language contact and that bilingualism is not a phenomenon of languages but of their use. Of interest is a situation when one or more of a bilingual's code(s) is suppressed for some reason or the other. It is not easy to predict the consequences of such linguistic suppression. In the last forty years, schools in Kenya have used various methods to discourage the use of the first languages spoken by their bilingual pupils.



Apparently it is not altogether easy to eliminate Luhyia from school environments as it is being used under a different form. When asked whether code-switching between English, Kiswahili and Luhyia was discouraged, pupils and teachers were surprised: 'But that is English' was their response. Code-switching as a result of this attitude has found acceptance as a code of communication or even as a medium of instruction in schools. This makes code-switching or 'COSCO' as a compromise code in the circumstances. As already noted, communication strategies acquired at school tend to have a long-life expectancy and continue to be of use in later life. Though code-

switching is a strategy of communication in schools there are certain constraints one encounters in life outside the school networks.

### 4.9.1. Signalling

A code which includes ethnically marked elements is a source of emotionally charged negative or positive responses in the Kenyan environment. It is therefore necessary to rely on discreet linguistic cues and signals before anyone commences code-switching. This is a necessary approach to code-switching outside the secure networks of school, home and friends. Heller (1988) notes that signalling is composed of linguistically *empty* words and noises specific to each language and culture. They are the naturally endowed 'radio' signals the human race has, in seeking others of like language and culture. In themselves they are 'useless' or 'empty' to monolinguals but are of incalculable value to bilinguals (1988:92)



As an indication of how seriously people take signalling; the old generation of Luos used to remove four lower front teeth in their initiation ceremonies. Older Masai on the other hand had both ear-lobes lacerated and tied into beautiful and intricate knots interwoven with beads. The Kuria group of people straddling the Kenya-Tanzania border had all their front teeth filed away into pin points. Apart from the immediate reasons for doing something to their faces, it was basically a system of identification essential for the preservation of the tribe in an environment where it was otherwise dangerous to approach and interact with a stranger whose language or culture was unknown to you. Ndukwe (1990) notes that there is a frightening kind of non-reciprocity whereby the *Uneme* disallow *Kuluso* in markets and other public places in that part of Nigeria. In many homes chairs used by *Unemenokwa* in a *Kuluso* house

are immediately removed for burning. It is not surprising that other mother tongue groups do not learn *Unene* (1990:87). It was therefore an age old habit in Africa to identify oneself with the group from which one expected to obtain protection.

This identification usually took the form of physical markings, conspicuous enough to be noticed by ones' interlocutors. Facial or other cultural markers identified someone as being of ones' linguistic background or a potential enemy to be avoided. This was the state of affairs in an environment where communication was limited only to people of one's culture and language.

It is no longer fashionable in Kenya for one to indulge in facial markings. Nevertheless, the need to identify an interlocutor is fulfilled through linguistic means. Both linguistic and non-linguistic signals increase what Milroy (1984:13) terms 'pragmatic intelligence'. Pragmatic intelligence is an invaluable asset to a bilingual in their everyday quest for the right code to employ in varying circumstances. Ndukwe (1990:86) notes that the phenomenon of hearers refusing to acknowledge that they understand the speech of those whom they disapprove and with whom they do not wish to be identified is familiar.

In the absence of any form of physical identification, the subjects interviewed agreed that the neutral code to use in the circumstances would be English and Kiswahili. A number of subjects declared that they were 'experts' in telling the ethnic background of their interlocutors. Where appropriate they may revert to code-switching after establishing common ethnicity in this manner. But it was increasingly clear that identification of common ethnicity was based on linguistic cues. As either English or

Kiswahili is used in situations of uncertain ethnic background enough 'empty' signals would be included in the discourse indicative of a potential code that could be brought into play. In the course of the research, five subjects who live on the Luhyia and Luo boundary were interviewed. Two of them who were Luhyia claimed to speak Luo fluently. No Luo claimed to speak Luhyia. A similar situation is reported by Parkin (1977) where in a suburb of Nairobi over a quarter of Luhyia male household heads were able to speak Luo in addition to their own vernacular, but no Luo was able to speak Luhyia (1977:93).

Usually it is not appropriate for a Luhyia to address a fellow Luhyia in Luo and vice versa. The two communities usually use English or Kiswahili when communicating with each other. A summary of the languages and mixed languages available to each of the five subjects is given in Table 4.5.

| **Languages Spoken** | $S_1$ | $S_2$ | $S_3$ | $S_4$ | $S_5$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Main Language**: English | + | + | + | + | + |
| **Mixed Languages**: English/Kiswahili | + | + | + | + | + |
| **Mixed Languages**: English/Kiswahili/ Luhyia | + | + | + | + | + |
| **Mixed Languages**: English/Luhyia | + | + | + | + | + |
| **Main Language**: Luhyia | + | + | + | + | + |
| **Mixed Languages**: | + | + | + | + | + |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Luhyia/Kiswahili | | | | | |
| **Main Language**: Luo | - | - | + | - | + |
| **Mixed Language**: English/Luo | - | - | + | - | + |
| **Mixed Languages**: English/Luo/ Kiswahilli/Luo/English | - | - | + | - | + |
| **Mixed Languages**: Kiswahili/Luo | - | - | + | - | + |
| **Mixed Languages:** Kiswahili/Luo/English | - | - | + | - | + |
| **Main Language**: Kiswahili | - | + | + | + | + |

Table 4.5 Code repertoires of 5 selected speakers

L = Languages
M = Languages known
Mix L = Mixed languages



The subjects above have various language combinations. Borrowing Romaine's (1989:26) formula the linguistic repertoire for subjects 3 and 5 is:

L= 4 ML +7 Mix L

Subjects 1,2 and 4 have a linguistic combination of L= 3 ML +4 Mix L.

Of interest is the difference in the way each of the subjects speak the 'neutral' languages i.e. English and Kiswahili. Basically the 'neutral' codes whenever used, contain one or more ethnicity cues. $S_1$ for example speaks Luhyia and no Luo,

therefore their 'neutral' languages did not contain any Luo ethnicity cues but only those from Luhyia. But $S_3$ and $S_5$ who speak Luo and Luhyia used one or more cues from both ethnic groups during the time they spoke in their 'neutral' codes.

Typical language cues in Luo and Luhyia are noted in the table 4.6.

| Luo | Gloss | Luhyia | Gloss |
|---|---|---|---|
| Apenji | 'I say' | Koo | 'I say' |
| Omera | 'Brother' | Mwana | 'Brother' |
| Ne | 'Look' | Enga | 'Look' |
| Ineno | 'Look here' | Yivi | 'You' |
| Ginene | 'What you call' | Inindu | 'What you call' |

Table 4.6 Signal words in Luo and Luhyia

The significance of the above observations is that the identification of an interlocutor is done more and more by use of linguistic cues. The subjects who speak only Luo were found to employ Luo-based ethnicity marking cues in their English or Kiswahili repertoire. The Luo speakers were unaware of the presence of or the meaning of Luhyia based cues. Luo's speakers did not use any of the Luhyia linguistic cues. Luhyia who spoke Luo used items from both sets of cues without code switching between Luo and Luhyia. Whenever they use Luo based cues, their Luhyia listeners are unlikely to notice them owing to the insignificance of the cues to them. The same is true of Luhyia cues which though used, are unlikely to mean anything to Luo speakers. By using one or more Luo or Luhyia cues in either English or Kiswahili $S_3$ and $S_5$ are able to signal to their interlocutors the possibility of switching to a potential code yet to be fully disclosed. The speakers are aware that in the practical world it is risky to embark on code- switching as some of the languages may not be well

received. But armed with signals or cues from each of the languages known to them, $S_3$ and $S_5$ are in a way being able to manipulate their discourse so as to become all things to all people at the Luhyia-Luo language divide. It is therefore argued that the commencement of code-switching among bilingual strangers is not by domains, but by such cues.

### 4.10. Summary.

Coherence and how it is achieved in a situation where there is a multiplicity of codes has been the purpose of this chapter. The fact that coherence may depend on the nucleus, the satellite as well as knowledge outside the text makes it possible for it to be achieved even if a bilingual employs *all* the codes known to them. Dummies which are language and cultural specific, like linguistic cues, are used in order to make code-switching acceptable. Thus the system seems to feed on itself, making it possible for speakers to achieve coherence in a situation where several languages are used at the same time in the same word, phrase, sentence or the larger unit of discourse. This analysis in some way throws some doubts on the universal application of some of the established theories on coherence and cohesion.

## CHAPTER FIVE

# LANGUAGE ATTRACTION: ATTRITION OR SURVIVAL?

## 5.1. Introduction

I have chosen the word *attraction* to describe a situation where speakers of one of the languages are drawn towards the use of a more powerful and prestigious language. Accompanying such an attraction is a feeling of inadequacy towards their own $L_1$. In other words without the pull of *attraction* emanating from somewhere else the speakers are unlikely to show lack of confidence towards their own code. Languages can be in contact without showing *attraction* just as two pieces of metal may be put side by side without attracting each other. For example, in Kenya, *Luo* speakers though neighbours to *Luhyia* speakers show no *attraction* towards the *Luhyia* and vice-versa. *Attraction* is not the same as *acculturation* since *acculturation* is a consequence or product of *attraction.*

Luhyia speakers appear *attracted* to English and Kiswahili in that order, paying less and less attention to their own first language. One of the consequences was the decline in the numbers of people able to read and write in the indigenous language. In terms of structure, areas of decline include morphology, syntax and lexis. Borrowing of core items has furthered the likely attrition of Luhyia. These points will form the basis of this chapter.

## 5.2. Language Attrition

Smith and Buren (1991:22) noted that *attrition* occurs because of $L_1$ deprivation and cross-linguistic influence from another language. Indeed, the clearest *attrition*

situation one can conceive of is 'the desert island': left alone with no opportunity to hear or read one's $L_1$ and making no effort to write or speak it aloud the native speaker might lose fluency and show modifications of structure which might amount to attrition or loss.

In most cases involving attrition speakers receive considerable exposure to the $L_2$, at the expense of $L_1$. Language attrition is therefore a feature of many bilingual individuals or communities. Seliger and Vago (1991:4) noted that languages spoken by the bilingual may be said metaphorically to coexist in a state of competition for a finite amount of memory and processing space in the mind of the speaker.

One likely consequence is for speakers to pay less and less attention to the dominated language. Dressler (1988:185) notes that speakers of a language cease to create new words from native rules, ceding to the dominant language the process of encoding cultural, fashion and scientific reality. Markey (1987:5) notes that the lexical content in the dying language is increasingly replaced by that of its competitor. Huffines (1989) notes that within a community shifting from one language to another, proficiency in the receding language varies. Some of the bilinguals who use the language only in certain circumstances exhibit altered grammar and large gaps in their lexicon. Hence the receding language will experience loss of grammatical categories, syntactic options and reduced phonological distinctions (Huffines 1989:211 - 12).

However, loss of grammatical categories and syntactic options are not enough to cause the demise of a language. Sasse (1992:11) calls into question the idea of a language making itself vanish by becoming impoverished as a means of

communication. Structural impoverishment and attrition may only help to accelerate the process of language death in the final stage, but will always be the consequence rather than the reason for linguistic obsolescence (Sasse 1992). Non-linguistic factors are decisive in language attrition. Sasse (1992) notes that cultural, sociological, ethno-historical and economic processes can create within a speech community a situation of pressure for it to give up its language. These conditions are termed 'the External Setting' (ES) which serve to trigger the process of attrition (1992:10).

Dorian (1987:63) notes that one of the commonest reasons for the failure of a language to survive is the negative attitudes internalised by the speakers or potential speakers themselves towards promoting their language. On the other hand, Romaine (1994:54) notes that in some cases speakers may be forbidden to use their language altogether as in the case the Kurds in Turkey. In a community whose language is under threat it is difficult for children to acquire the language fully (Dorian 1987).

Often the speakers may not be even aware that their language is under threat of attrition. Schmidt (1991:22) notes that a speaker's perception of language loss often differs markedly from that of the linguist analysing the same phenomenon. While a linguistic analysis may reveal widespread changes on many levels of the language system speakers may perceive that their language is healthy and not under threat.

Attitudes towards a language brings us to the second category in the study of attrition which Sasse calls 'Speech Behaviour' or (SB). SB includes styles and attitudes. The third category according to Sasse (1992) is the 'structural consequence'. Once a new language becomes dominant in a certain speech community the old language is in

potential danger unless there exists a strong motivation to retain it. Danger here would manifest itself as attrition within the linguistic structures of the dominated language. The 'Structural Consequences' or ( SC ) of a dying language include changes in the phonology, morphology, lexical and syntactic units of the language in danger.

In investigating possible *attrition* within the Luhyia language all three facets of potential causes of obsolescence External Setting (ES); Speech Behaviour (SB) and Structural Consequences (SC) will be considered.

The external setting involved the spread of Kiswahili first by slavers, then by missionaries in Luhyia speaking areas. It also included the coming of the British colonialists and other white people who taught English in schools. Luhyia speakers learnt English not only in schools but also by their close proximity with English native speakers as was the case in the army or other places of work. The impetus to edge out Luhyia from many domains come from the attitude of the people within and government policy without, soon after independence in Kenya. Through the ES Luhyia is losing ground as a written code, thus losing an important aspect of communication and prestige.



### 5.3. Attrition in Speech Behaviour?

As a result of societal pressure English has overtaken Luhyia as a dominant code in many day-to-day transactions among the speakers. Dressler (1988:185) notes that several phenomena which accompany the demise of a language can then be identified, for example, massive lexical loans from the dominant language reflecting the general

social psychological, economic and political subordination of the recessive speech community to the dominant one. Romaine (1989:127) describes a time not long ago when minority children in Australia, USA, Britain and Scandinavian countries were subjected to physical violence in schools for speaking their home language. Ironically in phase III of Luhyia attrition 'violence' is inflicted on Luhyia speaking children in order to induce them to abandon the use of their mother tongue at least while in school environment by people who share with them the same mother tongue. It is a period when there is pressure from parents and society in general directed at children to do well in school. Doing well in school is associated with competence in the English language. It is a period when the struggle for shrinking economic opportunities causes speakers to distance themselves from any liability. The speech behaviour of parents will in many ways foster complete or incomplete language acquisition. Gal (1989:314) writes that the notion of incomplete acquisition can easily be used to explain loss of lexical inventory and loss of productivity, which are features observed in obsolescent languages. In addition to inadequate teaching of the mother tongue to children the parents' attitude to the threatened language is important. Watson (1989:42) observes that the Irish and Scots Gaelic speaking communities have individuals within their societies who frequently dissociate themselves from Gaelic *behaviour* as if they are virtually monoglot English speakers.

I came across many parents who were attracted to English and insisted on teaching it to their children by organising all their domestic activities in English. Typical of such families is A.L. who lives in a rural part of Vihiga, Western Province. He teaches at a local school together with his wife. Mr. A. L's children are exposed to English and Kiswahili at home and school. The only Luhiyia they learn is found outside these two

establishments. An extract from the interview with A.L. follows:

(i) C.S. You are married with children.

A.L. Yes, I am married with four children.

C.S. What language do you teach your children?

A.L. As a matter of fact I come from that part of Luhyia known as *Maragoli* and my wife comes from another Luhyia clan which is *Kabras*. Therefore the children have had a problem in speaking either of the two dialects, but they have started to speak more of Kiswahili and English. As of now one of them is in standard two the other two are in nursery school but they are not conversant with our vernacular (Luhyia).

C.S. So, because your dialect is different from your wife's you do not use it with your children?

A.L. Even when we have used it they have not shown much interest in the language.

C.S. So, in the home you use mainly English and Kiswahili.

A.L. And Kiswahili.

In this family the attitude is of *attraction* towards English and Kiswahili and children are unlikely to acquire complete mastery of Luhyia. Commenting on Mexican parents, Ryan and Carranza (1977:68) observe that there was a common occurrence of parents with limited English ability speaking it with their children in order to make them acquire a language that would increase their social and economic opportunities.

### 5.4. Speech Behaviour and language decay

Speech behaviour changes begin to be noted during phase III of language decay. Batibo (1992:90) observes that during phase III of language decay there will be a lot of code mixing, code-switching and extensive borrowing from $L_2$ when members of the community speak their first language. During phase IV many first language functions become greatly reduced. The $L_1$ may be used in specific situations with the community showing obvious incompetence in their first language (1992:110). Brezinger (1992:289) notes that the language would then undergo lexical reduction which causes word-finding difficulties. Phase V according to Batibo means that the language has become a substratum and has been completely replaced.

In this chapter the view is held that the language has undergone phases I and II and currently is at phase III in its obsolescence. It is not easy to predict the progress of this process or its reversal since a lot depends on the external factors that prevail now and in future.

A new feature at phase III in Luhyia attrition is the introduction of code-switching referred to here as Code-switching Code or 'COSCO' as a fourth player in the linguistic scene. Luhyia speakers who use COSCO have no specific name given to it nor are they usually aware that they are switching codes. Teachers categorise COSCO as *English* and it is the medium of instruction in the lower Primary School as noted. Sasse (1992:21) notes that during the time that a new language becomes dominant in certain speech communities the old one is potentially endangered unless there exists a very strong motivation to retain it. There is no evidence so far of a movement towards the strengthening of Luhyia – at least in the field of standardisation

or its general intellectualisation. Instead the speakers are under the spell of *attraction* in the direction of Kiswahili and English.

### 5.5. Structural Consequences

Evidence of structural consequences on Luhyia in the lexical, morphological and syntactic domains were noted. Some of these changes are common to all languages threatened with attrition.

#### 5.5.1. Acculturation

Haarmann (1986) notes six boundary crossing systems that mark out whether or not one language is moving towards the other language's system. These are the main elements which play a key role in making one language acculturated to the other. These typical boundary crossing features are:

| | **Feature** | **Component** |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Counting (numerals) | morphology. |
| 2. | Reference (pronouns) | morphology. |
| 3. | Structuring sentences (conjunctions) | syntax. |
| 4. | Structuring speech acts. i.e., Particles, interjections. | discourse/pragmatics |
| 5. | Designation of parts of the body and body condition. | lexicon. |
| 6. | Kinship relations. | lexicon. |

(Haarmann 1986:161).

According to Haarmann these six are boundary-crossing features which are not normally *borrowed* since they involve cognate words in Indo-European languages. This is accordingly a Eurocentric characterisation. Not included in Haarmann's features, but salient to the analysis of acculturation of Luhyia in relation to the other two languages are features such as time and designation of colour.

### 5.5.2. Counting

An elaborate counting system or the apparent lack of it was a source of slander of Africans by white people who came into contact with them. Wyndham (1936:130) notes that no Dinka had ever counted beyond *ten*. Bland-Sutton (1911:144) notes that when Major Powell-Cotton was among the *Turkana* and *Suk* tribes he noticed curious little tattoo marks on the bodies of individual warriors. It was 'explained' to him that they were a *tally* of the *number* of people the man had killed. For the first man slain a series of little scars is made on the right arm by thrusting a needle through the skin and snipping off the pieces so raised. For the second victim a path of similar scars is made on the shoulder for the third on the chest and so on. When the man's body is so covered his own *record* is considered complete and he continues the process on the body of his wife.

According to Haarmann even in a contact language like Romany the system of numerals is still basically indigenous and not borrowed. The African numeral system was too elaborate and complex or even too painful to be easily understood by foreigners. Luhyia had a counting system tied up in knots of numerous complexities.

The first complexity to be considered is the use of prefixes when counting from one to six. The prefix will indicate the class of whatever item is being counted whether human, artifact or animal as shown in Table 5.1

| Number | | Class 9/10 | Class 7/8 | Class 1/2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| English | Kiswahili | Animal | Artifact | Human |
| one | moja | i-ndala | shi-lala | mu-lala |
| two | mbili | tsi-vili | vi-vili | va-vili |
| three | tatu | tsi-vaga | vi-vaga | va-vaga |
| four | nne | tsi-nne | vi-nne | va-nne |
| five | tano | tsi-ranu | vi-ranu | va-ranu |
| six | sita | tsi-sasava | vi-sasava | va-sasava |

Table 5.1 Luhyia numerals up to six

The second complexity involves number as a product of an earlier addition of smaller numbers. This affects numbers seven and nine as shown in Table 5.2.

| Luhyia | Gloss | Kiswahili | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| tsine-na-tsivaga | 'four add three' | saba | seven |
| munane | – | nane | eight |
| tsiranu-na-tsine | 'five add four' | tisa | nine |
| ekhumi | – | kumi | ten |

Table 5.2 Luhyia number system by addition

It appears that numbers *eight* and *ten* are earlier borrowings from Luganda and as result they are not tied down by prefixes. In Luganda the number *eight* is *munana* and the number *ten* is *ekumi.* Later borrowings, from Kiswahili or English had to follow this pattern: that is, an entire English or Kiswahili word for a number was adopted without Luhyia prefixes.

The third complexity of numbering involved the process of arriving at a value after multiplying a smaller number by a coefficient of ten. This system affects number values after nineteen as shown in Table 5.3.

| English | Luhyia | Gloss |
|---|---|---|
| eleven | ekhumi-na-ndala | 'ten add one' |
| twelve | ekhumi-na-tsi-vili | 'ten add two' |
| thirteen | ekhumi-na-tsi-vaga | 'ten add three' |
| fourteen | ekhumi-na-tsi-nne | 'ten add four' |
| fifteen | ekhumi-na-tsi-rano | 'ten add five' |
| sixteen | ekhumi-na-tsi-sasava | 'ten add six' |
| seventeen | ekhumi-na-tsi-nne-tsi-vaga | 'ten add four add three' |
| eighteen | ekhumi-na-munane | 'ten add eight' |
| nineteen | ekhumi-na-tsi-rano-na-tsi-nne | 'ten add five add four' |
| twenty | makhumi-ka-vili | 'ten times two' |
| twenty-one | makhumi-ka-vili-na-ndala | 'ten times two add one' |
| twenty-two | makhumi-ka-vili-na-tsi-vili | 'ten times two add two' |
| fifty | makhumi-ka-rano | 'ten times five' |
| sixty-nine | makhumi-kassasava-na-tsi-rano-na- tsi-nne | 'ten times six add five add four' |
| seventy-seven | makhumi-kanne-na-tsi-vaga-na-tsinne-na-tsi-vaga | 'ten times four add ten times three add four add three |

Table 5.3 Luhyia number system by multiplication and addition

It was these complexities in counting based on prefixes to mark concord, plural or singular, noun class, counting by multiplication and additions, that led early explorers and colonialists to declare that Africans do not know how to count beyond six. In any case it was easier for a Luhyia speaker to abandon this indigenous method of counting in preference to Kiswahili and English numerals; showing that the speaker had crossed a typical boundary marking language feature, which according to Haarmann is indicative of language attrition.

### 5.5.6. Conjunctions

Compared to Luhyia, English has a wide range of conjunctions which do have one - to - one equivalents in Luhyia. Because of this, a Luhyia speaker tends to use three sets of conjunctions i.e., from English, Kiswahili and indigenous ones in their discourse. Usually if a Luhyia conjunction is not readily available a speaker may switch to either a Kiswahili or an English one. The effect on this discourse is that many Luhyia sentences are structured by English or Kiswahili conjunctions. The following shows the conjunctions used by individuals during the interviews.

| Conjunction | Kiswahili | Luhyia |
|---|---|---|
| and | tena | nende |
| although | ingawa | khali |
| because | kwasababu | shichila |
| in order to | – | – |
| also | tena | khaandi |
| if | ikiwa | nikava |
| but | lakini | nikhali |
| in case | ikiwa | nikava |
| even if | atakama | – |
| though | ingawa | – |
| even though | ata ingawa | – |
| than | kuliko | khuvira |

Table 5.4 Conjunctions used in the speech of the interviewees

Nine subjects are selected on the basis of their age, level of education and sex in order to represent each of the three major socio-linguistic variables. The text of their speeches during the interview was analysed for the use of conjunctions. The results are in Table 5.5.

| Subject No. | Age | Sex | Education | English Conjunction | Kiswahili | Luhyia |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 25 | M | Primary | 2 | 6 | 2 |
| 2 | 26 | F | Secondary | 7 | 2 | - |
| 3 | 27 | F | Secondary | 5 | 3 | - |
| 4 | 37 | M | Secondary | 7 | 4 | 2 |
| 5 | 47 | M | Primary | 3 | 5 | 3 |
| 6 | 40 | F | Primary | 2 | 4 | 2 |
| 7 | 45 | M | Secondary | 7 | 2 | 2 |
| 8 | 70 | M | Primary | - | 5 | 4 |
| 9 | 75 | M | secondary | 2 | 7 | 3 |
| | | n | | 35 | 38 | 18 |

Table 5.5. Number of different conjunctions used by a sample of nine speakers

Kiswahili was frequently used by the nine speakers represented above. The repertoire of the nine speakers appears to be less organised around Luhyia conjunctions and they depend on either English or Kiswahili conjunctions. There are no differences in the use of conjunctions based on sex. The level of education seems to influence the use of English conjunctions. However, older speakers appear to use more Luhyia-based conjunctions than the other speakers who are younger. The fact that all older speakers significantly organise their discourse by using Luhyia conjunctions more than younger speakers means that the overall threat of attrition in this area is worth noting.



### 5.6. Time

Although time is not one of Haarmann's features of acculturation, it is an important unit in the measurement of how much one language has influenced the other. Africans were stigmatised for their apparent lack of the sense of, or inability to tell time. Huxley (1959) notes that the Kikuyu did not work on time in years, new or old or in any way cut it up into sections. It flowed like a stream. They had rainy seasons and

dry seasons; *millet rains* which were short and *bean rains* which were longer (Huxley 1959:94). Bland-Sutton (1911:102) notes that the Masai reckoned time by the sun and fixed dates by the moon and rain; of which there are two rainy seasons annually.

Writing on the 'natives' of Southern Ethiopia Wyndham (1936) notes that *love, hunger,* and *fatigue* are easily satisfied and there is neither jealousy nor greed. Even *time* ceases to trouble any one. No one cares or knows what age he is. The sun rises at six and sets at six so that everyday is the same length. As a result these 'natives' and even wild animals lead an ordered life and their punctuality is a natural rhythm of life (Wyndham 1936:129). These travellers seem to base their assessment of the so called 'natives' on the 'natives' apparent lack of telling time.



### 5.6.1. Luhyia notions of time

The precise divisions of day into hours, minutes and seconds was a new concept that was brought into the culture by Kiswahili and English speakers. Luhyia speakers divided their day into chunks whose names are still in use today. Borrowing from Kiswahili and English in the sphere of time was complete.

The Kiswahili notion of time was borrowed entirely with an occasional Luhyia prefix added to some of the units. The following are Luhyia terms for time.

| Time | Gloss |
|---|---|
| *mbasu* | 'day time' |
| *mugolova* | 'evening: between 3.00pm - 6.00pm' |

| | |
|---|---|
| *vutukhu* | 'night: between night fall and dawn i.e., 8.00pm - 5.00am |
| *mudaywa* | 'cock-crow: between 4.00am - 6.00am' |
| *ma vwe vwe* | 'morning: 6.00am - 9.00am' |

Table 5.6 Luhyia division of the day

This was fairly reasonable and adequate way of dividing a 24 hour day in circumstances where the hours of the day equalled those of night throughout the year.

The system of naming infants after an important event was used as a means of fixing a person's age. It follows that important events were of necessity given names. Times of drought, hunger or war were given names and children born during or after such an event were given a name corresponding to such an event. There have been such periods in recent memory. In 1907 for example, there was a recorded famine in the then British East Africa which the Luhyia named the *Demesi*. Consequently those children born during the time were given the same name. The first colonial Provincial Commissioner at *Kisumu* was Mr. C. W. Hobley and children born during his time at Kisumu were named after him; that is to say *Ubulu*. The system of naming children after an important event still persists today. We have people named *Lumumba, Kaunda, Mandela* etc in order for the babies to relate to the 'big' event when they grow up.

### 5.6.3. English and Kiswahili notions of time

In Table 5.7 are references to time in English and Kiswahili none of which has indigenous equivalence and therefore English and/or Kiswahili versions have been adopted for daily usage.

| English | Kiswahili | Luhyia |
|---|---|---|
| Six a.m | saa-kumi-na-mbili | all these |
| Seven " | saa-moja | mean the same as |
| Eight " | saa-mbili | *mavwevwe* 'morning' |
| Nine " | saa-tatu | |
| Ten " | saa-nne | |
| Eleven " | saa-tano | all these mean the |
| Twelve-noon | saa-sita | same as *mbasu* |
| One p.m | saa-saba | 'day time' |
| Two " | saa-nane | |
| Three " | saa-tisa | |
| Four " | saa-kumi | these mean |
| Five " | saa-kumi-na-moja | *mugolova* |
| Six " | saa-kumi-na-mbili | 'evening' |
| Seven " | saa-moja | all these mean |
| Eight " | saa-mbili | *vutukhu* 'night' |
| Nine " | saa-tatu | |
| Ten " | saa-nne | |
| Eleven " | saa-tano | |
| Twelve-midnight | saa-sita-usiku | |
| One a.m. | saa-saba | |
| Two " | saa-nane | |
| Three " | saa-tisa | |
| Four " | saa-kumi | these mean |
| Five " | saa-kumi-na-moja | *mudaywa* 'cock-crow' |

Table 5.7 Telling time in English, Kiswahili and Luhyia

Kiswahili speakers name their time from *hour one* 'the equivalent of seven a.m.' in the morning to *hour twelve* 'the equivalent of six p.m. in the evening. Night hours are similarly named as *hour one* 'seven p.m.' in the evening to *hour twelve* 'six in the morning'.

As a result of these differences in the semantic implications in the notion of time Luhyia speakers who have adopted the two systems of time notation get 'confused' in telling them apart as these examples show.

| **English time** | **Kiswahili time** |
|---|---|
| 1. six am | saa-kumi-na-mbili<br>'hour ten add two'<br>i.e. Twelve hours. |
| 2. seven am | saa-moja<br>'hour one' |

In practical terms the following are some of the ways speakers who use the two systems tell time:

3. I take my lunch at *seven*. (Kiswahili: *hour seven* means English 1 p.m.).
4. Every morning I wake up at *twelve*. (Kiswahili: *hour twelve* means English 6 am).
5. We usually end work at *eleven*. (Kiswahili: *hour eleven* means English 5 pm).

The semantic field of 'time' thus shows total acceptance of non-Luhyia units without evidence of attempts to develop further the indigenous system. A combination of number and time notation no doubt makes Luhyia speakers refer to future, present and past activities via non-indigenous terminology and as such, showing possible *attrition* and likely *acculturation* in these areas of their language.

## 5.7. Adverbs

The range of adverbs in Luhyia is not as extensive as that of English. In Table 5.8 an empty space indicates where there is no one-to-one equivalent of the English adverb.

| English Adverb | Luhyia equivalent |
|---|---|
| only | – |
| with pleasure | nu vuyanzi |
| already | – |
| perhaps | fwana |
| hardly | – |
| very | muno |
| by no means | – |
| no doubt | – |
| yet | – |
| until | khutukha |
| until now | khutukha-nunu |
| now | nunu |
| always | khase |

| | |
|---|---|
| for sure | – |
| certainty | toto |
| soon | vwangu |

Table 5.8 English and Luhyia adverbs compared

To make up for the limited range in adverbs Luhyia speakers use reduplication strategies so as to add different shades of meaning to adverbs in their repertoire. Reduplication adds the notion of frequency and intensity to adverb meaning. Table 5.9 below shows this phenomenon.

| English | Luhyia | English | Luhyia |
|---|---|---|---|
| soon | vwangu | very soon | vwangu-vwangu |
| much | muno | very much | muno-muno |
| now | nunu | just now | nunu-nunu |
| always | khase | – | khase-khase |

Table 5.9 Reduplication as a means of adding meaning to Luhyia adverbs

Sometimes instead of using reduplication as a strategy of increasing the total number of Luhyia adverbs, speakers borrow adverbs from English without integrating them. Dressler (1988:185) notes that in language decay words or loans from the dominant language tend to be treated as citation words with little phonological and morphological integration. Accordingly these loan words do not enrich the recessive language. In other words, adverbs which are borrowed into Luhyia are not usually

accompanied by such markers as prefixes and so on. Some of the adverbs so borrowed which appear in my data base are shown in the examples below:

1. Vamba *enough* maduma.
   ( 2 cl. gave ) ( 3 cl. maize )
   'They gave me enough maize'.
2. *Until now* va-lomolomanga-mu-Lusungu.
   (2 cl. speak + continuos in English)
   'Until now they have been speaking in English'.

3. Ndo-langa *perhaps* na-tsia.
   (1 cl. see) (1 cl. go)
   'I think perhaps I will go'.

4. *Always* a-li-langa.
   (1 cl. cry + continuos)
   'Always he/she is crying'.

**5.8. Designation of colour**

Naming of colours is not as elaborate in Luhyia as it is in English and Kiswahili. In addition, the few colour names in Luhyia are complicated by the use of class prefixes in the same way that number functions in Luhyia.

It is likely to be because of this or other considerations, that colour system was not developed from indigenous sources but borrowed without much modifications from either English or Kiswahili. Table 5.10 shows colours which have Luhyia names together with their class prefixes.

| Colour | Class 9/10 Animal | Class 7/8 Artifact | Class 1/2 Human |
|---|---|---|---|
| white | i-ndavu | shi-lavu | mu-lavu |
| black | i-mwamu | shi-mwamu | mu-mwamu |
| brown | i-rendevule | shi-rendevule | mu-rendevule |
| red | i-muchi | shi-muchi | mu-muchi |

Table 5.10 Indigenous Luhyia colour terms with their noun class prefixes

The remaining colours of the spectrum have no one-to-one equivalents in Luhyia. Modern Luhyia has borrowed terms with little modifications from English. Table 5.11 shows these new colour terms. The colour system therefore shows acculturation towards English.



| Colour | Kiswahili | Luhyia |
|---|---|---|
| Yellow | Njano | Yelo |
| Green | Kijanikibichi | Gurini |
| Magenta | Udhurungi | Majenda |
| Pink | Kapinki | Pingi |
| Orange | Rangi-ya-chungwa | Orenji |
| Blue | Kibluu | Bulu |
| Grey | Kijivu | Gureyi |

Table 5.11 Luhyia colour terms borrowed from English that do not add class prefixes

## 5.9. Stable acculturation features

### 5.9.1. Kinship terms

According to Haarmann (1986:779) kinship terms present a section of vocabulary which is restricted to indigenous words in which borrowings are seldom found. English does not have elaborate terms for kinship relationships. Because of this it is an area of the English language that appears to have limited use to Luhyia speakers. On the other hand, some Kiswahili kinship terms are used side by side with Luhyia ones. Where no standard English word exists to describe a kinship term, a new one is coined in Luhyia English, based on indigenous concepts blended with English word formation rules. This section is concerned with the retention of key Luhyia terms in Luhyia English. These can be thought of as a kind of borrowing. Two types of loans can be identified. There are loans that are formed by English items but denote a Luhyia kinship concept and there are loans that are formed by elements from both English and Luhyia which also denote a Luhyia concept. Table 5.12 show Luhyia kinship terms with English words.



| Luhyia | Kiswahili | Luhyia English | Gloss |
|---|---|---|---|
| mama-muti | mama-mdogo | small-mother | mother's younger sister |
| baba-muti | baba-mdogo | small-father | father's younger brother |
| vakoji | rika | age-mate | a person with whom one has undergone ritual circumcision |

Table 5.12 New kinship terms in Luhyia English

Sometimes speakers add an English plural marker to an indigenous kinship term. Such cultural relations are quite numerous in Luhyia English but cannot be adequately identified in standard English.

| Luhyia English kinship terms | Gloss |
|---|---|
| Shangazi | father's sister. |
| Baba | father's brother, and all father's male cousin. |
| Mama | mother's sister and uncle's wife. |
| Khotsa | mother's brother and mother's male cousin. |
| Kuka | maternal/paternal grandfather and his male cousin. |
| Kukhu | sister to one's paternal/maternal grandfather. Also it applies to one's paternal or maternal grandmother. |
| Va-koji | all those with whom one has undergone the ritual of circumcision |



Table 5.13 Kinship terms in Luhyia English

All the kinship terms in Table 5.13 can be considered part of Luhyia English in so far as they admit English morphology, i.e. the plural marker.

Words with African roots or meaning used whenever speakers use a local variety of English are termed 'Africanisms'. Schmied (1991) notes that an important domain for *Africanisms* today is politics. Many politicians wish to demonstrate their local roots

by including African vocabulary in their speeches even when they are talking English (1991:79). It is a strategy which enables Luhyia English to handle subjects even in areas that feature [+ solidarity]. Attrition in this case may be indicated by the incursion of Luhyia English into domains with attributes [+ ethnicity, + solidarity] hitherto a preserve of Luhyia only. *Africanisms* or 'loans to the giant' can be further found in the wider Kenyan English as shown in Table 5.14.

| Word | Origin | Gloss |
|---|---|---|
| Harambee | Kiswahili | 'fund-raising' |
| Mwananchi | " | 'citizen' |
| Follow nyayo | " | 'follow leader's footsteps' |
| Umoja | " | 'unity' |
| Utu | " | 'humanity' |
| Ukweli | " | 'truth' |
| Maendeleo | Kiswahili | 'development' |
| Matatu | Kikuyu | 'passenger taxi' |
| Isikuti | Luhyia | 'traditional drums' |
| Omena | Luo | 'small fry (minnows)' |
| Chai | Kiswahili | 'tea' |
| Madaraka | " | 'internal self government' |
| Uhuru | " | 'independence' |
| Mzee | " | 'old man - usually honorific' |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Taifa | " | 'nation' |
| Safari | " | 'tour - for hunting or pleasure' |
| Simba | " | 'lion' |

Table 5.14 *Africanisms* in Kenyan English

It can be noted that most Africanisms in Kenyan English are Kiswahili based.



### 5.10. Other boundary crossing words

Other boundary-crossing words not dealt with so far are particles and interjections. Particles and interjections are dealt with in 4.9.1 under *signalling*. There are important units in language which can signal important features in discourse and these are fundamental in starting code-switching outside of networks.

### 5.11. Borrowing and structural consequences

Borrowing is one overt way a language can show attraction towards the other. Myers-Scotton (1992:33) describes borrowing as the incorporation into one language material from another language. *Lexical* borrowing involves borrowing names of objects or concepts new to the borrowing language's culture. On the other hand, *core* borrowing denotes the borrowing of names of objects or concepts already encoded by the borrowing language.

'Core borrowing' is what Woolard (1989) terms as 'gratuitous' borrowing or 'loan to loss' borrowing. Extensive particularly *gratuitous* borrowing can be taken to indicate an openness to English influence, perhaps even an eagerness for assimilation to the English language and some of the cultural practices it encodes, which is termed *attraction* in this chapter.

If early generations with little opportunity for contact and thus little occasion for borrowing show such accomplishment then later generations with increased opportunities can be expected to accomplish more (Woolard 1989:356). Cultural loans are borrowed forms that fulfil the growth requirements of the language that borrows, although in this case when a language is *attracted* to the other, growth is assured in the borrowing language. It may be difficult to give a bill of health to a language so *attracted* that it abandons its own linguistic items one after the other in preference for others. The borrowing language is bound to show signs of attrition. This is not the same as saying that the language cannot survive. Hoenigswald (1989:347) notes that nobody appears ever having suggested that some changes will make a language not to survive.

One way in which *core* borrowed forms enter a language is through code switching. Myers-Scotton (1992) notes that although core borrowed forms may enter a language without widespread code-switching; code-switching itself contains borrowed forms. A *core* borrowed form typically starts out as a *code-switch* form. There is often a continuum between borrowed forms and code-switched forms (1992:34).

Core borrowed forms whether they have entered a recessive language as code-switches or borrowed forms embody a potential threat of attrition to the borrowing language. The following are some expressions and lexical items that show code-switching which in time may lead to core borrowing in Luhyia. Some of the lexemes appear in the corpus and others though not recorded are frequently used by Luhyia speakers including the researcher.

| Core borrowed form | Indigenous form | Gloss |
|---|---|---|
| tsi-klotsi | tsi-nguvu | clothes |
| tsi-chikeni | tsi-ngokho | chickens |
| tsi-ripulai | majibu | replies |
| i-miti | i-nyama | meat |
| i-futi | shilenje | foot |
| tsi-jani | tsi-njendo | journeys |
| i-probulemu | vu-tinyu | problem |
| u-mbokisi | u-nduyi | he/she has boxed me |
| va-mpey-anga | va-ndunga-nga | they are paying me |
| va-fayita-nga | va-nwana-nga | they are fighting me |
| va-sing'a-nga | vi-mab nga - | they are singing |
| a-feinta-nga | a-shinda-nga | he/she is fainting |
| va-mpuromoti | va-sundi-hikulu | they have promoted me |
| a-nturita-nga | a-shilikha-nga | he/she is treating me |
| u-rasha-nga | wi-lukha-nga | you are rushing |
| fee-la-nga | mbu-li-la-nga | I am feeling |
| i-feeda-nga | i-litsa-nga | it is feeding |
| u-la-na-nga | u-soma-nga | you are learning |
| meka-shuwa | u-haki-kishe | make sure |
| khu-boda | khu-menya | to board |
| wa-kaswa | wa-shienwa | he/she is cursed |

Table 5.15 Core borrowed forms from English into Luhyia and indigenous items they have replaced

In the following example a woman who works on a government experimental farm explains the nature of her work. Core borrowed items which appear in her repertoire as code switches are italicised. The woman is identified as E.M.

5.a. **Ikasi** yeneyo sasa yamanyanga yava lwandulangayo nakha *speshalisa* muma vele manya *dairy in-charge* khu *mekashuwa* khu *purodusi clean milk* **yaani** hygienic milk. (The job required that when I leave training after specialising in milk production I become dairy-in-charge to make sure that we produce clean milk which is hygienic).

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *i-kasi* | (Kiswahili: kazi) | 'job' | (Luhyia: Milimu) |
| *speshalisa* | (English) | 'to specialise' | (Luhyia: Umanye) |
| *mekashuwa* | (English) | 'make sure' | (Luhyia: Uhakikishi) |
| *produsi* | (English) | 'produce' | (Luhyia: Ushele) |



### 5.12. Structural Consequences and phonology

Adjustments in phonology ensures that a borrowed word sounds less foreign and therefore easily and readily accepted in the linguistic repertoire of the borrower. One of the most frequently used strategies employed by Luhyia speakers is to break down consonant clusters by inserting a vowel inbetween the cluster and thus making the borrowed word indigenous. Using data collected by Bavin (1989:271) on the Warlpiri who live at Yeundumu in a remote settlement 300 kilometres from Alice Springs, Australia one gets a striking similarity in the phonological processing of a borrowed English word.

| English | Warlpiri | Luhyia |
|---|---|---|
| lunch | [lanji] | [lanji] |
| light | [layiti] | [layiti] |
| wire | [waya] | [waya] |
| town | [tawunu] | [tawuni] |
| picture | [pija] | [pija] |
| bicycle | [pajikirli] | [pasikirli] |

Table 5.16 Luhyia and Warlpiri words borrowed from English compared

The capacity to 'nativize' a borrowed word has far reaching consequences on the survival of indigenous words. It shows how easy it is to replace an indigenous word with a word that does not sound foreign and therefore a word that is easily acceptable as if it is native to the community of speakers. On one the hand, phonological integration appears to be a sure way of rendering a new word acceptable even if it is replacing an indigenous one. By phonologically 'nativizing' someone else's word the speaker is showing to be *attracted* to the other language while at the same time his or her own language suffers loss through *attrition.* On the other hand, 'nativizing' other people's language by phonological and other adjustments show that there are limits to the prestige language's influence over the borrowing language. The speakers appear to be trying to retain something they deem valuable in their native language.

## 5.13. Conclusion

In this chapter I have attempted to show that because of one language being excessively attracted to the other forces of attrition may also come into play. If an indigenous language is *attracted* to an international one its speakers may neglect to develop their own language system and accept that of the more developed one. Because of contact between Luhyia, English and Kiswahili, Luhyia seems to have lost indigenous means of reference to time, number, and to lesser extent conjunctions and adverbs.

However, Luhyia has maintained strong kinship terms to the extent that some of these terms are retained even in the local variety of English. In order to relate to modern ideas Luhyia has borrowed lexical items from English or Kiswahili which in some way is a strategy of survival. However, core borrowing has gone a step further by replacing some of the indigenous words with English based words; thus accelerating attrition even further.

I must point out, however, that changes in Luhyia as presented in this chapter alone cannot prove a case of absolescence in the language. Rouchdy (1989:101) and Mertz (1989:109) mention the 'tipping' of the linguistic balance of Nubian and Breton towards the more dominant Arabic or English respectively. The issues discussed in this chapter represent either the beginning of such a 'tip' towards Kiswahili and English or the creativity of Luhyia in its struggle to survive.

# EPILOGUE

It seems a short while ago since the 1880s when the first Swahili-Arab slave traders made camp at Mumias. They were closely followed by missionaries from England. Little did the two groups of strangers realise that their differing motives behind their presence among Luhyia would start a chain reaction in the social and cultural lives of their hosts. The least idea on their agenda was to change the people's language and ways of speaking.

The spread of English and Kiswahili has been accompanied by neglect of the indigenous people's language. At first, colonial reluctance to encourage the use of English made the few Kenyans who acquired it, either through the army or the very few schools opened to boys only, to assume an air of importance. English was a source of pride to those who could use 'bombastic' vocabulary, even if they did not understand its meaning.

With the coming of independence, English was made available to both men and women. As a result it was no longer a source of 'pride' or means to 'dazzle' those who did not know it. Rather, it became a code of daily communication. Instead speakers 'mixed' English with indigenous words. Of socio-linguistic significance is the 'creation' of this new code which comprises components from English, Luhyia and Kiswahili. The resulting 'mixed' code is evident in informal as well as formal domains of the once monoglot Luhyia.

English has acquired a position of dominance in matters relating to schooling, employment, domestic affairs and religion. As English is increasingly accepted in these domains, certain features that are non-native to it are now evident. It therefore qualifies as an indigenised variety of English, similar to others known collectively as 'New Englishes'.

Luhyia with the least support from government and also its own speakers, has undergone attrition in some areas. Of significance is the on-going replacement of indigenous vocabulary with borrowed forms from English and/or Kiswahili. To study Luhyia is to study a language under threat, with its related change and attrition.

Slavers are long gone and so are the colonialists and missionaries who started it all. But their legacy continues to have unlimited influence on Luhyia in the form of the languages which were first heard at Mumias less than one hundred and fifty years ago.

## APPENDIX A

### LUHYIA ENGLISH: SHOWING THE ABSENCE OF THE GENITIVE

The councillor address is lost.

The pastor prayer is healing him.

My election is due to my youth winger sacrifice.

Kaimosi hospital fee is high due to the clerk problem of stealing money.

She is the village most learned girl.

David sold his land but the wife land remained.

Mwangi is cunning enough he spend his brother money on the powermill.

Osita nylon dress was stolen.

One of the cattle eye was missing.

The assistant chief knows my mother name.

No. Only his sister box was taken.

This is Mary certificate.

She is Samson wife.

That is the assistant chief case.

Arthur sheep was killed.

When I received the District officer letter...

Those children lessons are over.

Edgar house is burned.

The children officer came.

The headmaster promises are not true.

The car problem is the tyres.

This teacher habit of reporting me to your office...

Shikutwa plot at Makhokho market...

My mother report to the chief was not true.

It is a kind of Alfayo land.

The bearer sheep is stolen.

The boy school fees needs Harambee.

His father land was snatched from him.

Write to friends, but the big men promises are lies.

## APPENDIX B

### LUHYIA ENGLISH: THE USE OF THE DEFINITE ARTICLE 'THE'

I reported to the sub-chief of the area and also the chief.

I have been attacked by the people in the night whom I did not know.

I therefore need the protection.

I need peace in order to enjoy the teaching and the work.

I should be free from the kind of the intimidation and the fear and the tribalism.

Please the case in the court to be solved.

This the son of the chairman in the sub-location.

I witnessed the sell of the land in the sub-location.

He has refused to reach the land office in the Province at Kakamega.

He paid the cash for the land.

He paid the price of ten thousand Shillings for the land.

The efforts to collect the money failed.

The man sold the cow and went to the town.

The man lives on the father's land so please find him for me.

The bad the smell the beer.

They sing the English.

The son sing in the English...

The elders the parents...

The elders the parents were happy.

Mrs ...is the rightful person for the heirs for the above for the succession.

## APPENDIX C

## INTERVIEWEES WHOSE LANGUAGE WAS SUBJECT TO DETAILED ANALYSIS

S1. Aged 55 at the time of the interview. He completed his primary education in a local school before training as a carpenter. Later he worked for various workshops in Nairobi. His specialisation was furniture making. He retired three years ago and he is currently an elder in a local church. The interview with S1 was done at his home in Shiveye in Kakamega District.

S2. Aged 57 at the time of interview. He did his primary education in a local school before going to the Provincial High School at Kakamega. After high school trained as a Tsetse Control Scout with the Ministry of Agriculture. He worked with this department until his retirement. Currently he is a peasant farmer. The interview with S2 was similarly done at Shiveye Village in Kakamega District.

S3. Is a Primary School Headmaster. He completed his high school education before training as a teacher. He is aged 30. The interview was carried out at Hanaliava Primary School in Kakamega District.

S4. He is aged 45. After dropping out of Primary School he left for Nairobi. He worked in various low grade hotels before moving to an international tourist hotel. His family lives in the village and cannot join him in Nairobi since it is expensive to do so. He therefore frequently isits them. It is during one of his visits that I found him when I interviewed him.

S5. The interviewee is a girl of 16. She has not been able to go to high school owing to her parents' inability to pay for her education. She is planning to go for a home science course when the opportunity arises. She was interviewed at Busakami in Vihiga District

S6. She is a retired nurse who started work after her standard 8 education. She trained on the job and rose through the ranks to become a clinical officer before her retirement. Now aged 70, she has opened her own clinic in the village. She was interviewed at Sunrise near Maseno in Vihaga District.

S7. The interviewee is an education officer after having worked as a primary school teacher. He is responsible for re-training teachers on the job in order to improve their skills. He is aged 47. He was interviewed at Lusui in Kakamega District.

S8. She attended primary school in 1930s. She left home for Kampala where she established a successful tailoring shop. She trained as a tailor in London. Now she has retired from her business and lives at her farm near Kakamega. She was interviewed at Ivonda School in Kakamega District.

S9. Was a Primary School Headmaster. Later he became a teacher training tutor. He moved on to become a trade unionist. With this exposure he later became a memebr of Parliament. He was interviewed at Malinya Village in Kakamega District.

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