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FORMS AND FUNCTIONS OF BORROWED HONORIFICS AMONG GIKUYU SPEAKERS OF NAIROBI COUNTY.

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A RESEARCH PROPOSAL SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS OF KENYATTA UNIVERSITY.
DECLARATION

This proposal is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university.

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Abstract

This is a sociolinguistic study of language use in society. The study aimed at establishing the honorifics that Gikuyu speakers have borrowed from other languages as a result of language contact. The study also investigated how the social variables of age, education and social context influence the use of these honorifics. It further sought to determine their functions. The Borrowing Transfer Theory and the Communicative Competence Theory guided the data collection, analysis, interpretation and discussion. The data for the study was collected from Kasarani Constituency of Nairobi County which was purposively selected. The data was obtained through Participant observation, interviews and tape recording of spontaneous speech. A total of 24 respondents selected purposively was interviewed, observed and recorded as they interacted in their social networks. The qualitative and quantitative research designs were used in this study. The data was analysed qualitatively through linguistic descriptions and quantitatively through percentages and frequencies which were presented in tables in order to give a clear picture of the use of borrowed honorifics in view of the age and education of the respondents.
List of Abbreviations

PE – Primary Education

SE – Secondary Education

PSE – Post-Secondary Education

SL – Source language

TL – Target language

M.C.A- Member of County Assembly.
Operational Definitions of Terms

Nonce borrowing – A type of borrowing where words are introduced into the target language in an ad hoc fashion.

Loan word – A lexical item derived from another language.

Borrowing – This is a technical term for the incorporation of a linguistic item from one language into another.

Social deixis – refers to social roles played by an individual in a speech event.

Marked function – the intentionally controlled honorific usage employed by a speaker to pursue specific motives.

Unmarked functions – the honorific uses that express and recognize personal relationships.

Source language – a language from which a word is borrowed.

Target language – a language into which a word is borrowed.

Multilingualism – the use of more than two languages by a society.

Bilingualism – the use of two or more languages by a speaker.

Language contact – Co-occurrence of two or more languages either in the individual or in society.
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

In this section, the preliminaries of the study are dealt with. These include the background to the study, statement of the problem, research questions, objectives, and assumptions, rationale of the study and scope and limitations.

1.1 Background to the Study.

The way people address each other plays a big role in fostering human communication. The importance of addressing people appropriately is reflected in the different resources available in different communities and cultures. One of these resources is honorifics. Lucien (2010:4) defines honorifics as “linguistic forms for indexing the relative position of interlocutors, referents and bystanders either in the lexicon or the morpho-syntax of a language.”

Honorifics are classified under social deixis. Social deixis refers to aspects of language structure that encode the social identities of participants or the social relationship between them or between one of them and persons and entities referred (Levinson, 1983:89). There are two basic types of socially deitic information that seem to be encoded in the languages around the world: relational and absolute. Honorifics are therefore divided into two major categories; relational honorifics and absolute honorifics. The most common types of relational honorifics are referent honorifics and addressee honorifics.

According to Comrie (1976), in referent honorifics, respect can only be conveyed by referring to the ‘target’ of the respect. The French Tu/vous type of distinction in singular pronouns is an example of a referent honorific system where the referent happens to be the addressee. Other languages have lexical items in which the honorary titles are used in conjunction with a name. Examples of these are the English form Mr. and the German form
Herr. Also common are titles deriving from the names of kin terms or of occupations that are considered high in standing or ranks in specific social groups such as the military. In addressee honorifics, it is possible to encode respect to the addressee without referring to him or her. For example, in languages such as Korean, Japanese and Javanese, a word like ‘soup’ will have different terms and the choice of a particular term depends on the social status of the addressee. Absolute honorifics are forms reserved for authorized speakers and authorized recipients. In absolute usages, the addressee earns the right to receive one title of address over another. Other examples of this are ‘Your Honour’ and ‘Your Majesty’.

The use of honorifics in all societies is constrained by the social status of individuals to whom deference is paid but is also sensitive to interactional variables (Agha, 1993). Some studies have shown that different macro-sociological measures of social status can be ranked relative to each other in determining levels of deference. Singh (1989) describes the following ranking for honorific usage in Maithili: kinship > socioeconomic status > sex > age. He, however, notes that violations of these socio-cultural norms also occur based on interactions of variables not interpreted in macro-sociological terms (for example, speaker’s mood, social setting and a particular speaker’s attitude towards a particular addressee).

According to Hudson (2001), every language has some way of signalling relationships of power and solidarity and those that do not show the Tu/Vous distinction may have other devices to signal these relations. Irvine (2009) observes that linguistic honorifics are more widespread in the world’s languages, more varied in form and more creatively deployed than was once supposed. Honorific forms can be indigenous or borrowed. The borrowing of honorifics is as a result of the interaction of cultures and languages. According to Sankoff
‘language contact is part of the social fabric of everyday life for hundreds of millions of people the world over.’

This interaction of languages and cultures is clearly exemplified in the Kenyan situation. The country has over forty indigenous languages which are classified into four linguistic families namely: the Bantu, the Nilotic, Para-Nilotic and the Cushitic (Whitely 1974). In addition to these, there is the official language; English and the official cum national language; Kiswahili. As a result of this multilingual situation, borrowing has become a common phenomenon and therefore no speech community in an urban setting in Kenya can claim to be truly homogeneous with respect to language use. Among the languages that have hosted borrowed honorifics is Gikuyu.

The Gikuyu people speak the Gikuyu language. It is a Bantu language that falls under the Niger-Congo sub-family of languages. According to Guthrie (1967), it falls in zone E group 50, and is language number 51. It is one of the five Thagichu subgroups of the Bantu languages which stretch from Kenya to Tanzania. It boasts of four mutually intelligible dialects which are Kirinyaga, Maragua, Nyeri and Kiambu. Gikuyu speakers of Kirinyaga are further divided into two sub-dialects that is the Ndia and Gichugu (http://www.absoluteastronomy.com/topics/Gikuyulanguage). Speakers of Gikuyu are estimated at 6.7 million according to the 2009 census. Its speakers are mainly located in the central region of Kenya but a sizeable number is also found in Rift Valley particularly in Nakuru and Transnzoia County. They are also found in the major cities and towns of Kenya where they interact with other communities and this result in the borrowing of words into the language (Gikuyu).
Among the Gikuyu, respect is regarded so highly that children are taught from a tender age to avoid what is considered disrespectful. A child, for example, should never address senior members of the society by their name. The child is instead expected to refer to him/her by a respect term (honorific). Proper use of honorifics among the Gikuyu is a measure of one’s communicative competence. Gikuyu has native as well as borrowed honorifics as a result of language contact. For example mwarimù (teacher) is borrowed from Swahili while mūrutani is indigenous.

Studies carried out on honorifics have focused on oriental and European languages. Philpsen (2002:52) argues that personal address and reference terms are taken-for-granted sociolinguistic resources that reflect a universal communicative activity. However, these are structured by cultural codes that are in turn assumed to vary across cultures. Gikūyū has not benefited from a scholarly investigation on honorification. Consequently, this study intends to contribute towards redressing this discrepancy by investigating the use of borrowed honorifics by Gikuyu speakers of Nairobi County.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Honorifics play important social functions in communication such as denoting honour or social esteem. These functions and factors influencing them are interpreted differently in different communities and cultures. Indeed, Braun (1988) notes that the factors governing address behaviour are so varied and so culture specific, that it is hard to fit them into a general theoretical framework. Thus, it is worth investigating how Gikuyu borrowed honorifics fit in the picture. The description and analysis of honorifics has been conducted in European and oriental languages such as Javanese, Japanese and Vietnamese. Little attention has been given to Kenyan indigenous languages especially on the influence of language
contact on honorifics despite the fact that borrowed honorifics do indeed occur in these languages. The proposed study therefore hopes to narrow this gap by investigating the honorifics that Gikuyu speakers of Nairobi County have borrowed from the other languages that they are in contact with.

1.3 Objectives of the study

The study will seek to achieve the following objectives:

(a) To establish the honorifics that Gikuyu speakers have borrowed from other languages.

(b) To investigate how the social variables of age, education and social context influence the use of borrowed honorifics.

(c) To determine the functions of borrowed honorifics among Gikuyu speakers.

1.4 Research Questions

The study will seek to answer the following questions:

(1) What are the honorifics that Gikuyu speakers have borrowed from other languages?

(2) How do the social variables of age, education and social context influence the use of borrowed honorifics among Gikuyu speakers?

(3) Why do Gikuyu speakers use borrowed honorifics?

1.5 Research Assumptions

The study will be guided by the following assumptions:

(1) That Gikuyu speakers use honorifics borrowed from other languages.

(2) That the use of borrowed honorifics among Gikuyu speakers is influenced by the social variables of age, education and social context.

(3) That borrowed honorific terms serve certain social functions among Gikuyu speakers.
1.6 Justification and Significance.

Fasold (1990) observes that address systems in non European languages of the western hemisphere and African languages, have received much less attention. The study will therefore seek to narrow this gap by investigating the use of borrowed honorifics by Gikuyu speakers.

Studies have shown that language use may vary according to the sex of the participants, the social status, education, age and ethnicity (Labov, 1972; Milroy, 1980; Trudgil, 1986). This study sought to investigate how the social variables of age, education and social context do influence the use of borrowed honorifics among Gikuyu speakers of Nairobi County.

Considering the limited studies on the field of honorifics, the researcher hopes to encourage other students to carry out more research on honorific form variations according to other sociolinguistic parameters.

It is hoped that the study will contribute to the existing knowledge on sociolinguistic studies on linguistic borrowing. Since borrowing continues to be an important source of new words in Gikuyu, it is hoped that the study will provide valuable information to Gikuyu dictionary compilers and users of the language in general.

It is hoped that the study will shed some light on the effect of language contact on Gikuyu honorifics given Kenya’s linguistic diversity. The study will avail knowledge of honorific
expressions. That is, the understanding of the different functions that honorifics play in different contexts.

1.7 Scope and Limitations

As noted in the background to the study, honorifics are linguistic categories that mark social relationships involving social status, respect or deference. The honorific phenomenon is of several types including honorific pronouns, verbs, affixes and nouns. The study will be limited to nominal expressions. This is because studying the other forms of honorifics will broaden the scope of the study.

The general purpose of this research is to examine how Gikuyu speakers use borrowed honorifics in different social contexts. To achieve this purpose, this study will adopt the interactional approach that focuses on individuals rather than groups. Observing persons as individuals requires a lot of time since one has to follow the individual and tape record speech samples from them as they interact with others. For practical reasons therefore, it would be difficult to study more respondents than the twenty-four that will be observed.

The study will not deal with all the social factors that could influence the borrowing of honorifics, for doing so will result into the study being unmanageable. In order to carry out a systematic analysis, the study will limit itself to the analysis of the social factors of age, education and social context.

The study will be carried out in Nairobi County as Nairobi being the capital city of Kenya is cosmopolitan and thus provides a representation of the complex language situation in the urban areas in Kenya. Specifically, the study will be carried out in Kasarani Constituency,
because Nairobi County being a very large area cannot be covered within the available time and resources.

The borrowing Transfer Theory by Terence (1989) and the Communicative Competence Theory by Hymes (1987) have been identified as relevant to this study. The former theory asserts that when languages come into contact, transfer or diffusion of materials from one language takes place. Hymes asserts that communicative competence enables language users to convey and interpret messages and to convey meanings interpersonally within specific social contexts. The Politeness theory by Brown and Levinson (1987) which has been used by other researchers in the study of honorifics has much strength but will not be used in this study as it ties honorifics to a single social meaning of politeness; Negative politeness Strategies.

This chapter focused on the background to the study, the three objectives and questions of the study were identified, and the problem statement outlined. This was followed by a short outline and discussion of the justification and significance, and the scope and limitations of the study.
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This section explores in some detail general studies on honorifics, studies on borrowing of honorifics, studies on functions of honorifics and the theoretical background on which the research is based.

2.1 General Studies on Honorifics.

As Wardhaugh (1986) observes, when we use language, we make use of the devices that the language provides to show certain relationships with other people and our attitudes towards them. These devices could be morphological as is the case with Japanese, Vietnamese and Korean languages but could also be lexical as is the case with English (Brown and Levinson, 1987; Crystal, 2003). Agha (1998) notes that every language has honorifics. However, these linguistic items vary greatly across languages, particularly in terms of their grammatical range: some languages differentiate honorific lexemes only in the grammatical domain of titles and terms of address; others differentiate distinct honorific forms for many parts of speech including pronouns, nouns, verbs and adverbs. The study hoped to determine the honorific lexemes in the form of titles and terms of address that Gikuyu has borrowed from other languages.

Habwe (2010) points out that an honorific is to be viewed as different from a rank or just a title which is not associated with social esteem like *askari* ‘soldier’. An honorific term must of necessity show that the person to whom it is used is shown respect. Honorifics are used whether the referee is present or not.
Levinson (1983) asserts that the single most obvious way in which the relationship between language and context is reflected in the structure of languages themselves is through the phenomenon of deixis. He notes that Social deixis includes honorifics. He also points out that the study of honorifics suffers from a lack of observational data on the use of honorifics in actual discourse (Levinson, 1978). This study therefore hoped to study the use of honorifics by Gikuyu speakers in actual discourse situations.

Friedrich (1986), in his study of pronominal usage in Russia, argues that actual usage cannot be explained by micro sociological variables such as age, sex, generation, kinship status, group membership and relative authority alone but also by speech event variables which include the topic, context, and affective relation between speaker and addressee. This implies that a comprehensive interpretation of honorific usage requires both social and interactional variables. The study therefore examined the actual usage of Gikuyu borrowed honorifics in relation to the micro sociological variables of age and education and also the speech event variable of social context.

2.2 Literature on Borrowing of terms of Address

Lexical borrowing is defined as the adoption of individual words from another language that happens when two or more languages are in contact and one language borrows from the other language(s) (Mantras and Baker, 2003). Borrowed linguistic items originate from a different linguistic system or variety and their introduction in the receiver language or variety is often socially motivated. According to Ngom (2000), two types of linguistic borrowings are generally identified: those considered to be foreign words by speakers (known also as spontaneous borrowing, momentary borrowing or nonce borrowings) and those that are
completely naturalized in the borrowing language (nativized loans). The study sought to determine whether both forms of borrowing are realised in Gikuyu.

In a borrowing situation, the first foreign elements to enter the borrowing language are words. Scotton (2002) argues that two types of content morphemes can become borrowed; cultural borrowings, which are words for objects and concepts new to the culture of the recipient language and core borrowings which duplicate already existing words in the first language. The study sought to investigate whether the two are realized in Gikuyu with regard to honorifics.

Studies on lexical borrowing have examined the various linguistic processes involved in lexical studies (Haugen, 1956; Mwihaki, 1998; Owino, 2003; Furaha, 2011). Lexical borrowings are considered to be used equally by all social groups in the borrowing communities. However, Ngom (2000) argues that such researches have much strength but have not shown how lexical borrowings and linguistic processes involved in linguistic borrowing reflect the social stratification of speech communities, the power and prestige relations between individuals, social classes and social groups. His argument informed this study on how the social variables of age and education influence the borrowing of honorifics by Gikuyu speakers of Nairobi County.

Irvine (2009) identifies two possible bases on which honorific expressions are constructed. These are: tropes (or circumlocution: that is expressions constructed from elements occurring in non-honorific registers and accorded conventionally honorific meanings) and linguistic borrowing. In many languages, an honorific register poaches on non-honorific expressions of plurality and/or size, to create honorific tropes. A good example is the French pronoun ‘vous’
which though literally plural, is also used as respectful or socially distant singular. An example of linguistic borrowing as a source of honorific items is in Javanese (a language spoken in East and Central Java in Indonesia) where some lexical alternants, as well as some affixes attaching to a stem and making it honorific, derive from Sanskrit.

In Persia, many honorific expressions such as haji, karbalali and mashadi which are respect terms used to refer to people who have been to Mecca, Karbala and Mashhad respectively were borrowed from Arabic, the language of religious texts (Beeman, 1986).

Herbert (1990) observes that the Nguni languages (Zulu, Xhosa, SeSwatti) of Southern Africa borrowed the click consonants from Khoisan languages into their respect vocabulary commonly known as Hlonipha. This was done as a means of avoiding uttering the names of particular Kinsmen. A click consonant substituted one or more of the consonants occurring in the to-be-avoided-name. The Xhosa are said to have borrowed some vocabulary from Zulu as shown in the example below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hlonipha</th>
<th>Xhosa</th>
<th>Zulu</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Izambane</td>
<td>Itapile</td>
<td>Izambane</td>
<td>Potato</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukukhuluma</td>
<td>Ukuthetha</td>
<td>Ukukhuluma</td>
<td>To speak</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Abiodun (1992) argues that the phenomenon of honorific pronoun in Ekiti, Owo, Ijesa, Oyi and Igbomina (Yoruba dialects) is not an inherent feature in Yoruba, and that its use in the language might perhaps be a borrowing from English. The study seeks to identify the honorifics that Gikuyu has borrowed from other language.

Essizewa (2010:27), who studies the borrowing of terms of address and social honorifics in Ewe, observes that with the advent of western education and close contact with Ewe, many
younger speakers address individuals with borrowed terms such as frère, 
soeure tanti (French via Ewe) fofovi, dadavi, atavi (Ewe) and sista (English via Ewe). His study shows that in the present Kabiye community, there is a shift in the use of terms of address from kabiye to Ewe (languages spoken in Northern Togo) and from Kabiye to French. He argues that the new terms of address from Ewe to French allow variation in the language within Kabiye community. This study informed this study on the influence of other languages on Gikuyu honorifics. 

Taha (2010) examines the nature and origin of the most common types of address terms used by members of a Nubian community speaking Dongolawi Nubian (a Nilo-saharan language variety spoken in Sudan) and analyzes the origins and the socio-cultural and sociolinguistic constraints governing their uses. He identifies four sources namely: (1) Native (2) Arabic/Islamic (3) Turkish and (4) English. He notes that imprints that different political and cultural forces have left on the speech community over the years is reflected in the use of borrowed terms in intriguing ways. His study however focuses on the etymology of Dongolawi Nubian terms of address while the proposed study focused on determining the honorifics Gikuyu has borrowed from other languages and how they are used in communicative events. 

2.4 Studies on Functions of Honorifics. 

Levinson (2004:121) notes that, “systems of address of any kind – pronouns, titles, kin terms, nicknames and social honorifics are guided by the social deictic contrasts made by alternate forms.” Hence relationships among participants in conversation could often be encoded in language through the employment of a variety of terms that can for example, reflect the social
status of an interlocutor such as Sir., Mr., Mrs. and Dr. The ways in which different forms of address are or are not used in different cultures vary considerably.

Oishi (1974), as cited in Okushi (1997) categorizes honorific expressions functionally. Under his approach, honorifics express the following: (1) a speaker’s attitude towards the addressee (or the referent) who is superior in status, skill or knowledge, and from whom the speaker will benefit – in this case, using honorific expressions does not always mean that the speaker actually respects the addressee (2) distance, both close and far, between the interlocutors (3) situational formality (4) the speaker’s dignity and class, and contempt or irony towards the addressee (or the referent) and (5) intimacy. He further argues that the use of honorific expressions is decided by the social and interpersonal relationship between the speaker and the addressee, or a third person who is referred to in a conversation.

Okushi (1997), in his examination of honorific use by four Japanese women, argues that speakers often choose the use and non use of honorifics as a means of active and creative communication in ways which the traditional description of honorifics does not include. For example, according to the Politeness Theory, honorifics express politeness. However the participants often used honorifics in situations in which their use was not necessary.

According to Habwe (2010), honorifics are a central and conspicuous means of enhancing politeness and making sure that polite behaviour is expressed in Nairobi Kiswahili. He also observes that the meaning of particular honorifics was to be understood within some specific context. Change of context for some honorific terms yielded different results. For example, the use of bwana (sir) among boys of the same age group yielded no or very little honorific results and did not have politeness implication. Agha (1998) points out that honorific speech
are not only for paying respect or honouring the addressee but serve many other purposes in the communicative event. Their studies prompted the present study to investigate the other functions of honorifics other than indicating politeness among Gikuyu speakers.

According to Morford (1997), native French speakers are usually keenly aware of the social indexical values of pronominal address; they instinctively and often explicitly recognize the various kinds of social significance generated through the use of *tu* and *Vous* in relation to particular contexts. When they talk about pronominal address, they often describe their own or other’s language as inherently ‘strategic’ or toward the achievement of particular goals. It would be interesting to find out what Gikuyu speakers aim at achieving in their use of honorifics.

Dunn (2005) argues that referent honorifics were used in ceremonial speeches given at a Japanese wedding reception as tools for creating social realities. For instance, he observes that the bride’s former college professors and superiors at their work place, who are perceived as higher in status and powerful outside of the wedding ceremony, used the humble forms for their own actions and feelings in order to foreground the higher status of the bride at the wedding reception.

In his study of the use of referent honorifics in political debates, Sibamoto-Smith (2011), outlines three strategic uses. These are: (1) to appeal to the television audience in order to shield themselves from them the opposition party’s attack, (2) to elevate the opposition party members for purpose of attacking their arguments, (3) to demonstrate the their higher status.
Cook (2011) examines the use of referent honorifics in a company’s committee meeting and argues that they foreground the institutional identity of the speaker and that their primary function is not to show politeness to the addressee but to index the speaker’s institutional identity. Users of referent honorifics choose to construct their identity against the institutional role that they assess they are expected to play. He argues that functions of referent honorifics differ from context to context. Faurer (1996) identifies two functions of honorific markers that characterize the use of honorifics in Lhasa. The first function is that of defining and affirming a social superior and expressing politeness, respect or deference while the second is the use of honorifics as a manipulation of relations for personal reasons. It would be interesting to discover how Gikuyu speakers manipulate honorifics in different contexts in order to achieve certain goals.

2.5 Theoretical Framework

The study will be guided by the following theories: The Communicative Competence Theory and The Borrowing Transfer Theory. These theories are discussed below.

2.5.1 The Communicative Competence Theory

This theory was propounded by Hymes (1961, 1972 and 1987). Hymes observes that during the process of acquiring the ability to produce and understand a language, children acquire not only the system of grammar but also a system of its use regarding all the components of communicative events such as participants, place, purposes, and other modes of communication. Hymes is particularly critical of Chomsky’s idea of linguistic competence and his failure to account for linguistic variation. Hymes emphasized that what is essential is not so much what language is, as what language is for.
According to Hymes, locating language within a priori mental grammar does not account or even acknowledge the enormous role of the socially contextualized ways we use language in determining the shape of utterances. He noted that ungrammatical utterances may be socially appropriate, just as grammatical utterances can be socially inappropriate. He argues that within the social matrix in which a child acquires a system of grammar, a child acquires also a system of its use. The acquisition of a system of language use is an aspect of sociolinguistic competence.

Hymes points out that whereas linguists usually treat language in terms of just one broad type of elementary function called the referential function, language is in fact constituted of a second function called the stylistic function which serves to illuminate the creative aspects of language use. He points out that this happens when the values of form and context do not match; for instance, when a [–formal] form is used in a context defined or interpreted as [+formal]. This use is appropriate in a sense more adequate to the competence and creativity of the speaker. He refers to this as marked uses. These uses may define an attitude, signal a change in social relationship or be a way of accomplishing many things by way of humour, irony, insult, or praise.

He argues that these functions can be analysed in terms of: (1) a set of alternative linguistic forms (2) a set of contexts (specified in terms of participants (3) unmarked values of forms and contexts (4) a set of relations between forms and contexts.

Hymes (1972) further states that the functions of communication at the level of individuals or groups are directly related to the participants’ needs and purposes. He categorizes these functions as:
Expressive – conveying feelings or emotions
Directive – requesting or demanding
Referential – true or false proposition
Poetic – aesthetic
Phatic – empathy and solidarity

The major tenets of this theory are:
(1) that the study of language must concern itself with describing and analyzing the ability of
native speakers to use language for communication in real situations and that Children are
socialized into the communal knowledge and are expected to creatively manipulate linguistic
resources in interaction as part of their communicative competence.
(2) Language has referential as well as stylistic functions.
(3) The functions of communication are related to the individual's needs and purposes.

The theory is significant in analyzing how Gikuyu speakers manipulate honorifics in order to
achieve specific goals as a mark of communicative competence. For example, it is possible
that one person could use the expression ‘muthee’ (old man) as a sign of respect while
another could use it ironically on a child who exhibits the characteristics of an old man or to
indicate the fact that the child may be called by a kin term such as a grandfather's name.

2.5.2 The Borrowing Transfer Theory
This theory is associated with Odlin (1989). He argues that when languages come into
contact, transfer of linguistic items from one language to another takes place. Such spreading
of linguistic features from community to community presupposes communication by means
of the spoken or written word. Communication, however, does not determine the direction of
the flow which results from the social and culturally conditioned attitudes of the communicating speakers.

Odlin sees transfer as the influence which results from similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been previously acquired. He points out that this transfer is usually from the language considered to be more prestigious to the one considered less prestigious.

Odlin differentiates between two types of transfer: borrowing transfer and substratum transfer. Borrowing transfer refers to the influence a second language has on a previously acquired language (which is typically one’s native language) while substratum transfer is the influence of the source language on the acquisition of a target language, the ‘second’ language regardless of how many languages the learner already knows. Borrowing transfer therefore involves the process where foreign elements are adapted to the native system. Borrowing transfer is usually found in bilingual contexts.

Language contact always presupposes some degree of cultural contact, however limited. He observes that borrowing transfer normally begins at the lexical level, because the influence of one language on another begins with the onset of strong cultural influences from the speakers of another language.

The theory will be used to investigate the borrowing of honorifics from other languages into Gĩkũyũ.

In this chapter, attention was paid to literature review on honorifics in general, borrowing of terms of address and the functions of honorifics. Two theoretical frameworks that form the
foundation from which the study is based were also discussed, that is, The Borrowing Transfer theory and The Communicative Competence Theory.
Research Methodology

3.0 Introduction

In this section of the research proposal, the research design, the site of the study, the study population, the sampling technique and sample size, research instruments, data collection procedures, data analysis and data presentation will be highlighted.

3.1 Research Design

The study will adopt both the qualitative (descriptive) and quantitative designs. Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) point out that descriptive research determines and reports the way things are. Given that the data will be in words, the descriptive design will be suitable in establishing the honorifics that Gikuyu has borrowed from other languages, analyzing data on factors that determine the use of these honorifics and to determine the communicative functions of honorifics. Quantitatively, the frequencies and percentages were used to determine how age and education influence the usage of borrowed honorifics in Gikuyu.

3.2 Variables.

According to Androuatsopoulas (2000), sociolinguistic variables are linguistic variants or realizations that bear some social significance. Linguistic variables are a derivative of a set of two or more realizations of an abstract linguistic unit, which could be a phenomenon, a grammatical function or a semantic unit. The independent variables in this proposed study are age, education and social context while the dependent variables are the linguistic expressions (honorifics). Holmes (1992) notes language use is not only affected by the social characteristics of the speaker but also the social context in which the speaker finds him/herself in.
3.3 Site of Study

The data for the proposed study was collected from Kasarani Constituency. Kasarani is one of the constituencies in Nairobi County. The constituency has a population of 200,984 out of which 266,684 are males and 258,940 females. It covers approximately 152.60 square kilometres with 164,354 households. It is further sub-divided into five wards namely: Clay City, Mwiki, Kasarani, Njiru and Ruai (Kenya Bureau of Statistics, 2009). This study site is appropriate as its population is heterogeneous because it is located in Kenya’s capital city Nairobi. The multilingual nature of this study site makes it possible for various languages to interact, hence the borrowing of honorifics from one language to another.

3.4 Target Population

The target population for this study will comprise native speakers of Gikuyu. According to Troike (2003:21), ‘the competence of non-native speakers of a language usually differs significantly from the competence of native speakers.’ The education of the target population will be categorized into three: those with primary school education, those with secondary school education and those with post-secondary education. The age of the target population will be stratified into two age groups namely: the young (18-35) and the old (60+). The stratification is inspired by the Kenyan Constitution (2010) which categorizes people aged 18-35 years as the youth and those above 60 years as older citizens. The variable of age was considered since older speakers have been noted to remain conservative while the younger speakers tend to be innovative (Trudgil, 1986).

3.5 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

The study adopted a purposive sampling technique. This allows a researcher to use cases that have the required information. Subjects are therefore handpicked because they are informative or they have the required characteristics (Mugenda and Mugenda, 1999; Milroy,
Age and education are important categories for the sample in this study. The technique will also be used to select Kasarani Constituency of Nairobi County as the site of study. This study site has native speakers of Gikuyu who are in contact with many other communities.

The researcher selected 24 respondents. This sample size follows Milroy’s (1987) recommendation that sociolinguistic samples that are very large amount to unnecessarily large data and necessitate much time in analysis and may not yield different results. The respondents will be identified using ‘the friend of a friend’ method. This method gives the researcher a chance to identify the kind of people who will give representative data upon which generalizations will be made. The researcher gathered data on borrowed honorifics and their functions by interviewing and observing the 24 respondents. The respondents were distributed as shown in figure 1 below.

![Figure 1: Sample distribution](image-url)
3.6 Data Collection Techniques

According to Braun (1988), the type of data collection method used usually depends on the goal of the study or the resources of the researcher. Since the purpose of this study is to examine how speakers of different ages and education level use borrowed honorifics in different contexts, it is believed that naturally occurring data has the advantage of reflecting the actual use of language. This data can be obtained through observation, interviews and tape recording.

3.6.1 Observation.

Levin and Somekh (2011) note that observation is one of the most important methods of data collection. It entails being present in a situation and making a record of one’s impressions of what takes place. The primary research instrument is the self. One gathers data through sight, hearing, smell and touch. Traces of those impressions are stored for careful analysis later. Data collected through the observation method gives revelations on how speakers use language in real life situations in their communities.

Participant observation of spontaneous speech in public spheres was done. The researcher participated in casual conversations in order to establish the honorifics that Gikuyu speakers have borrowed from other languages and to determine their functions in the day to day lives of the Gikuyu speakers. This also helped to ascertain the accuracy of the data collected through the interview method. This approach has however been criticised for being inadequate due to the effects of the observers paradox (Milroy, 1987). To limit the effects of the observer’s paradox, the social network technique was applied. The researcher approached the respondents in the capacity of a ‘friend of a friend’. This increased the chances of
observing and participating in a prolonged informal interaction without suspicion (Milroy 1987:35). The researcher tape-recorded samples from the respondents as they interacted with their friends, relatives, colleagues, family members and neighbours. This ensured that the conversations were as natural as possible. The researcher also recorded in a notebook anything she thought may be important in explaining certain aspects of the data collected, for example, any non-verbal expressions that accompanied an honorific.

3.6.2 Interviews

Interviews were conducted with the 24 informants in order to elicit borrowed honorifics and to establish the Gikuyu speakers’ intentions in using borrowed honorifics. Semi-structured interviews were used since they permitted the interviewer to vary the questions as she moved from one informant to another probing the reasons for their own and others' use. The interviews were tape recorded. Tape recording ensured accurate and reliable storage of data for retrieval later.

3.7 Data Collection Instruments

The data that was used in the study was collected through the use of tape recorders, notebooks and interview schedules. The researcher stored the information collected during observation of spontaneous speech and interviews in tape recorders for careful analysis on how the use of borrowed honorifics varies according to the variables of age and education as well as additional honorifics and their functions in different contexts. The interview schedule aimed at eliciting information on borrowed honorifics from the sampled respondents. The researcher conducted one semi-structured interview with each of the 24 informants. Each of
the interviews took 15 minutes. Observation schedules were used to capture details of context as well as additional honorifics.

3.8 Data Analysis and Presentation

The data collected using the interview and observation techniques were analyzed using qualitative methods. All data collected was analysed to identify instances of borrowed honorifics and their uses. The conversations recorded during the semi-structured interviews and spontaneous conversations were transcribed in Gikuyu orthography. After transcription, the necessarily details such as occurrence of borrowed honorifics, and the functions of honorifics were identified. The effects of the non-linguistic variables (age and education) on the use of honorifics were studied. The data was extracted in accordance with the Borrowing Transfer Theory by Odlin (1989) while utterances were functionally categorized on the basis of Hymes (1972) functions of communication. The results of the study were presented in tables in order to give a clearer picture of the use of honorifics in view of the age and education of the respondents.

3.9 Data Management and Ethical Issues

The researcher sought a permit after the proposal for the study had been approved. The researcher presented to the Office of the President, the Office in charge of issuing research permit, such documents as a letter of approval of the study proposal from Kenyatta University’s graduate school and any other documents or requirements as the issuance of a research permit may require. The researcher sought the authority from the relevant Kasarani County offices to undertake the research within the county.
The researcher will endeavour to keep private and confidential any information that may cause any harm, embarrassment or discomfort of any nature to anybody or any source as a result of participating or volunteering information for the study. The researcher ensured that consent from any respondent was sought before such information is revealed.

Respondents were introduced to the researcher by a contact person who is a member of the different social networks. They were further assured that the research would strictly be for academic purposes. Pseudonyms were used to identify each of the respondents in order to preserve confidentiality.

The study sought voluntary consent from all the respondents, but did not compel any respondent to take part in the research. The researcher disclosed the purpose and the objectives of the study, and any other piece of information that would facilitate the respondent to participate. Care and deliberate effort was employed to avoid any psychological or social embarrassment to the respondents as a result of participating in the study.

The study will make public the findings of the study to the relevant stakeholders irrespective of the outcome of the study. This will be done to disseminate research findings into the academic world for appropriate action. Enough copies of the research findings will be availed to the concerned parties as stipulated by Kenyatta University Graduate School.

This chapter examined the research methodology employed in the study. It identified the research design that the researcher believes to be the most appropriate. It also focused on the site of study, the target population, the sampling techniques, the sample size, the data
collection techniques, data collection instruments and the analysis and presentation of data. The last section paid attention to issues of data management and ethical consideration.
CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 Introduction

In the previous chapter, the study focused on the methodology used in data collection. In this chapter, the results of the data gathered during the semi-structured interviews with the 24 participants and the systematic observation of the use of honorifics is presented and analyzed. The section is divided into three sub sections. The first section focuses on the forms of borrowed honorifics. The second section looks at how the use of borrowed honorifics is influenced by the social variables of age and education. Finally, the functions of borrowed honorifics in different contexts are analyzed.

4.1 Forms of borrowed honorifics.

The interviews were conducted in Gĩkũyũ where the participants were required to specify the actual honorifics that they use in their daily interactions to address or refer to their interactants in specific contexts. The data from the research revealed the following forms of borrowed honorifics used.

4.1.1 Kin terms/family/relative terms as social honorifics.

According to Braun (1988), kin terms are terms for blood relations and for affines. Fargal and Shakir (1994) observe that kin terms can be used as relational social honorifics. They further state that denotatively, kin terms are used to designate family relations while honorifically, kin terms are used connotatively to maintain and enrich social interaction among both related and unrelated participants. To collect data on the borrowed kin terms used by Gĩkũyũ speakers, the researcher asked the respondents to name the terms that they often used to refer
or address members of their family and non-family members. The following borrowed kin
terms were identified.

Mami/mum

This kinship term is borrowed from the English word ‘mum or mummy’. Denotatively, the
term is used to address ones biological mother or mother –in-law. This term featured in the
responses of all the 24 respondents although the aged (60 +) were quick to point out that this
term was borrowed and that the Gikũyũ term is maitũ. The term is also used to address
middle aged women who are not related or familiar to the speaker. One Young respondent
(18-35) with primary education reported that she used this term to refer to her boss. This term
is also used by members of the community for example parents and care givers to refer to
children as seen in the example below:

(The conversation took place in a home between a middle aged house help and a child)

House help: Mum ũka tũnywe ũcũrũ. (*Mum come over we take some porridge*)
Child: Aaah….aaah.

House help: Kamum ũka tũ ngwĩre. (*Mum come over so that I can tell you something*)
Child: Auntie …. 

House help: Nyua ũcũrũ nĩguo tũthi nduka ngūgũrire thwiti. (*Take the porridge so that I can buy you some sweets*).

In this conversation, the care giver uses the honorific *mum* with the diminutive prefix *ka-*
(kamum) and the honorific *mum* to address the child.

Mama (mother)
This Swahili honorific was used to make reference to the concept of mother. The younger respondents (18-35) also used the *sheng* words *mathe* (derived from the English word *mother*) to refer to their mothers and any middle aged woman.

**Anko**

This term is borrowed from the English term uncle. However it is important to note that the use of this English kinship term in naming people is different from its use as a relational social honorific among the Gĩkũyũ speakers in an urban setting as in the later, apart from it being used by the younger respondents (18-35) to name a speaker’s father’s or mother’s brother, they also used it to address middle aged male members of the community who are not related to the speaker. Gĩkũyũ speakers have different terms for a brother to ones mother ‘mama’ (uncle) and a brother to ones father ‘*baba munyinyi*’ (younger father ) and ‘*baba mûkurû*’ (senior father). This distinction is not realized among the young participants as evident in the data as they used the borrowed honorific ‘uncle’ to address their maternal as well as their paternal uncles.

**Sista (sister).**

This honorific is borrowed from the English term sister. The data revealed that the younger participants (18-35) used this honorific to refer to their female siblings. This is a case of core borrowing as Gĩkũyũ has the native term *mwarĩ wa maitũ*. The respondents reported that they used the honorific as a distant kin vocative to sermon strangers.

**Ndandi/dad**

This honorific is borrowed from the English term ‘dad/daddy’. It is used to refer to ones biological father. The term featured mostly among the young respondents with formal
education. The young respondents also used the sheng terms ‘mzæ ‘buda’ and ‘bathe’ to refer to their father.

Mũthee

The honorific mũthee borrowed from the Swahili honorific mzee which means old man is used to address older males in the community. The data revealed that one’s biological father is also addressed by this honorific especially in their absence.

Buratha

The term is used as a familial term to refer to one’s male sibling. The term featured among the young respondents. The data shows that the old speakers irrespective of their education level used the Gĩkũyu terms mūrū wa maitũ or mūrū wa baba to address their male siblings and only used the term to refer in religious circles to refer to a man who has given his life to the service of Christ especially in the Catholic Church. It is also used among friends and acquaintances especially by the young speakers as illustrated below:

(This conversation took place among young boda boda operators talking about politics.)

Speaker A: Kenya ìthũkũte múno thikũ ici. (Kenya has become a very insecure place)

Speaker B: Nĩkĩ ningĩ buratha. (Why my brother)

Speaker A: Nĩ ūronire ūrũa kūrathire Garissa. (Did you see what happened in Garissa)

Speaker B: ìno thirikari ya X. (This government of X)

Speaker A: President witũ niagĩrũrũwo kũrora ūhoro wa ūsalama. (Our president should consider the issue of security)

Speaker B: Na magabana no mbeca cia bûrûri mararĩa.

Speaker A: Inĩ mwananchi wa kawaida agikua.
In this conversation the interlocutors are not related by either blood or marriage but speaker B refers to speaker A as brother in order to achieve a certain interactional goal.

**Auntie.**

This term is a case of core borrowing. The term is borrowed from the English term ‘aunt’. The data collected through the semi-structured interviews revealed the use of this term as a relational social honorific used to refer to both related and unrelated participants. On one hand, the older respondents used the borrowed term ‘*auntie*’ as a distant kin vocative to sermon female strangers while using the Gĩkũyũ term ‘*tata*’ to refer to their mother’s sister or father’s sister. The young respondents on the other hand use the borrowed honorific term auntie as a distant kin vocative to sermon strangers as well as to address or refer to their mother’s and father’s sister.

**Ndugu**

This kin ship term is borrowed from Kiswahili. It is used as a relational social honorific to mean comrade or friend with the sole purpose of emphasizing the solidarity of the speaker with the addressee. It is also used in the religious circles to refer to a male addressee who is of the same faith as the speaker.

**Dada.**

This term is borrowed from the Kiswahili term dada ‘sister’. Honorifically the term is used in Christian circles to address a female member who is born again or one who is viewed to be fully committed to salvation therefore deserving affective reference. The term is used alone or with the addressee’s first name.
**Guks and shosh**

The data shows that there is no loan word used by all the participants irrespective of their age and education level to refer to their paternal and maternal grandmother and grandfather. However; some the younger respondents modified the Gĩkũyũ honorifics *guuka* (grandfather) and *cūcū* (grandmother) to *guks* and *shosh* respectively.

The table below gives a summary of the borrowed kin terms used as relational social honorifics.

*Table 1: A summary of borrowed kin terms*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Borrowed kin term</th>
<th>Source language/argot</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mami/mum</td>
<td>English (mum/mummy)</td>
<td>Female parent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anko</td>
<td>English (uncle)</td>
<td>Paternal/maternal uncle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sista</td>
<td>English (sister)</td>
<td>Female sibling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ndandi</td>
<td>English (dad/daddy)</td>
<td>Male parent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buratha</td>
<td>English (brother)</td>
<td>Male sibling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ndugu</td>
<td>Swahili (ndugu)</td>
<td>Male sibling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auntie</td>
<td>English (aunt)</td>
<td>Sister to ones mother or father</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dada</td>
<td>Swahili (dada)</td>
<td>Elder sister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mama</td>
<td>Swahili (mama)</td>
<td>Female parent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guks/shosh/masa</td>
<td>Sheng</td>
<td>Grandfather</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shosh</td>
<td>Sheng</td>
<td>Grandmother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masa</td>
<td>Sheng</td>
<td>Female parent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathe</td>
<td>Sheng</td>
<td>Female parent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buda</td>
<td>Sheng</td>
<td>Male parent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With respect to the use of borrowed kin terms as social honorifics to unrelated addressees, all the participants believe that age and social status play a major role in deciding on the choice of honorific. They pointed out that it is important to make judgment about the relative age of the stranger or someone who is not related to you. Most of the young female respondents
would rather be addressed by the borrowed honorifics *mandamu* and *mum/maam* rather than the Swahili borrowed honorific mama as the later made them feel old. This is evident in this interview with a middle aged woman.

**Interviewer:** Nĩküri marĩtwa ũngĩta mũndũ arakare? (Is it possible for one to get annoyed if addressed by a certain title?)

**Respondent:** ŭ. mũndũ angĩgw ita mama mũndũ aiguaga akũrĩtio mãno. (Yes, being addressed by the term mama makes one feel older than they really are).

Ones status also played a major role in the choice of honorific to strangers. The participants reported that they considered the addressee’s general appearance and mannerisms in the choice of honorific. A well dressed middle aged or elderly woman is addressed by the borrowed honorific ‘*mandamu*’ (madam) while one who is considered to be ordinary is addressed by the sheng honorific mathe or the Swahili honorific mama (mother). A middle aged or elderly male who is viewed to be of a higher status is addressed by the honorific ‘*boss*’ while a man of a lower status is addressed as ‘*mũthee*’. The younger women and girls are addressed using the sheng affective term *msupa* (a young and beautiful girl) and the affective Swahili title *mrembo* (the beautiful one) particularly by the public vehicle operators.

### 4.1.2 Titles of address.

Titles are “nominal forms that lay emphasis upon the relationship between the speaker and the addressee” (Martiny, 1996, p.769). Titles of address are commonly used as absolute honorifics requiring both authorized speakers and recipients, for example *mwalimu* (teacher) is an absolute social honorific whose appropriate use in Swahili requires that the addressee be either one with a teaching role or one who has performed this role in the past. The study shows that it has become common amongst the urban Gĩkũyũ speakers to use borrowed titles such as *mwarimu* (teacher), *dagĩtarĩ* (doctor), *batha* (father) either alone or together with the
surname of the addressee. This is a clear influence of Swahili and English. The study showed that these borrowed titles of address were commonly used by the participants in both formal and informal settings in order to achieve certain interactional. The borrowed titles were categorized into smaller groups namely: occupational titles of address, social titles, affectionate/ terms of intimacy and teknonyms.

4.1.2.1 Occupational bound honorifics

Habwe (2010) defines occupational honorifics as those honorifics that relate to job or occupational hierarchies and sometimes even known societal positions. He further points out that ranks of white-collar jobs and even blue collar jobs are easily used as honorifics. These occupational honorifics can further be divided into smaller groups that are used in specific sites that is, religious honorifics, and political honorifics, honorifics used in the academia and honorific titles used in the military. Data for this category of honorifics was obtained by asking the participants the following questions:

- What terms they used to refer to leaders in their church?
- What terms they used to refer to the leader of the country and leaders in county?
- What titles they used at their work place.

More data was collected through participant observation of the use of borrowed honorifics in different settings.

4.1.2.2 Religious honorifics.

Religion plays a major role in the honorific phenomenon. Christianity uses a different system of honorifics from Islam. The Christian hierarchy is of different levels depending on the denomination. For example the Catholic Church has a different hierarchy from that of the
Protestants and even among the Protestants the naming of the leadership varies. The borrowed honorifics were mainly those used by the Protestants and Catholics: The data showed that the participants borrowed religious honorifics mainly from English only a few honorifics were noted to have been borrowed from Kiswahili, that is, dada and ndungu which were used to refer to a lady and a man who had fully committed their lives to Christ. The presence of borrowed religious term shows the vitality of honorifics as a result of the introduction of western religion.

*Table 2: A Summary of borrowed religious honorifics*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Borrowed religious honorifics</th>
<th>Source language/argot</th>
<th>Gloss.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bathita</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Pastor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buratha</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Brother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bicobu</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Bishop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebarendi</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>reverend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kanoni</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Canon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kandinoli</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Cardinal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Batiri</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Padre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abostol</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Apostle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modareta</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Moderator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Batha</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Father</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aki bicobu</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Arch bishop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ebanjelisti</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Evangelist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eroda</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Elder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dikoni</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Deacon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sista</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Sister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dada</td>
<td>Swahili</td>
<td>Sister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buratha</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Brother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ndugu</td>
<td>Swahilli</td>
<td>brother</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.1.2.3 Academic honorifics

In the academia, the existence of institutions of learning and the pursuit of academic excellence in the education field has become very advanced. This has resulted in the introduction of professional titles into Gĩkũyũ from English and Swahili. The data for this
category was obtained by asking the participants what terms they used to refer to staff in a school and in college/university. The borrowed terms identified were:

Table 3: A Summary of borrowed Academic honorifics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Borrowed honorific into Gĩkũyũ (TL)</th>
<th>Source language (SL) or argot</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mwarimũ</td>
<td>Swahili</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dagĩtarĩ</td>
<td>Swahili</td>
<td>Doctor (an instructor with a PhD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probesa</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hedimasita</td>
<td>English (headmaster)</td>
<td>Female teacher/instructor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode</td>
<td>Swahili</td>
<td>Male or female teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ticha</td>
<td>Sheng</td>
<td>Male or female teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Princi</td>
<td>Sheng</td>
<td>Female or male teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The head of a school or college</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.1.2.4 Honorifics used in the military.

The military system today provides for various ranks of officers. Therefore the various ranks have to be adopted and adapted into Gĩkũyũ leading to the borrowing of honorifics associated with the military and the police. Among these honorifics are: All this terms are borrowings from the English language. The borrowed term boss was also used to refer to those higher in rank than the speaker.

Table 4: A Summary of borrowed military honorifics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>borrowed honorific into Gĩkũyũ (TL)</th>
<th>Source language (SL) or argot</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kabuteni</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Captain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Koburũ</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Corporal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thubegita</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Inspector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mĩnja</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Major</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Brigadier
(a general honorific to one who is senior than the speaker)
Commissioner
Inspector

4.1.2.5 Political honorifics.

These are honorifics that are used to refer to people who have a certain degree of power occasioned by their position in society. Data for this category of honorifics was obtained by asking the participants to name the titles that they used to refer to the head of the county and leaders in the county.

*Table 5: A Summary of borrowed political honorifics*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Borrowed honorific into Gĩkũyũ(SL)</th>
<th>Source language (SL)/argot</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mũhecimiwa</td>
<td>Swahili</td>
<td>Honourable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cibũ</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Chief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emucie</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>M.C.A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mũbunge</td>
<td>Swahili</td>
<td>Member of parliament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kanjũra</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Councillor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buresidenti</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>President</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wimeni rebu</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Women representative in the county</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buraimu minista</td>
<td>English</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The political honorifics borrowed into Gĩkũyũ are mainly from English and Kiswahili. Only one young respondent (18-35) revealed that he used the honorific mūgatha borrowed from the *Lubukusu* term *mukasa* to refer to the village elder.

### 4.1.3 Affectionate titles.

A term of endearment is a way of showing affection for another person. English has many terms that are used for that purpose such as babe, honey, my dear, beloved and many others. The uses of such terms creates a friendly atmosphere. Gĩkũyũ has such terms, for example *wa nĩî* (of mine).

According to Fargal and Shakir (1994), affectionate titles as terms of address that are used among intimates such as lovers or a mother to a child. These titles can be used both as absolute honorifics as well as relational social honorifics. Data for this category of honorifics was obtained from participant observation of naturally occurring conversations and also by asking respondents to name the terms that are used by public vehicle touts and sellers in the market to refer to commuters and buyers respectively. The borrowed affectionate titles that are in use among the young urban Gĩkũyũ speakers are presented in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Borrowed affectionate title</th>
<th>Source language (SL)/Argot</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mūgatha</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Prime minister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hedimeni</td>
<td></td>
<td>Village elder</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 6: A Summary of borrowed Affectionate titles*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Murembo</td>
<td>Swahili</td>
<td>Beautiful lady</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Msupa</td>
<td>Sheng</td>
<td>Beautiful lady</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My dear</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>One who is loved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wa mine</td>
<td>Wa (Swahili), mine (English)</td>
<td>One who belongs to me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wa house</td>
<td>Wa (Swahili), haus (English)</td>
<td>You of my house.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kameni</td>
<td>Sheng</td>
<td>Young man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dear</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Love</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These terms were used by acquaintances as well as strangers to achieve certain interactional goals. For example the affectionate title my dear was observed to have been used by a second hand clothes dealer to address a potential buyer and matatu tout to address a passenger in the two examples below.

**Example 1**

**Second hand clothes dealer:** Üga ngwenderie my dear. *(Tell me what you would like me to sell to you).*

**Example 2**

**Tout:** Eterera cinji hanini my dear. *(Wait for change my dear)*

### 4.1.4 Teknonyms.

Teknonyms are forms of address derived from the combination of the name of a child and that of its father or mother (Akindele, 2005). They are given to people once they attain fatherhood or motherhood. Oyali (2009) notes that there is a tendency for parents to be addressed by the name of their first child. He further explains that the use of teknonyms gives a woman more respect than being addressed by personal names. Teknonyms are used as
absolute social honorifics. The borrowed honorifics that are used by the Gĩkũyũ speakers are *baba x* and *mama x* (where x is the name of the child). The words *baba/ba* (father) and *mama/ma* (mother) which are part of the teknonyms *baba x* and *mama x* are borrowed from swahili. The Gĩkũyũ forms are *ithe wa* (father of) and *nyina wa* (mother of).

### 4.1.5 Social titles

*Table 7: A summary of borrowed Social titles*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Borrowed social title</th>
<th>Source language/Argot</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mũthee</td>
<td>Swahili (bwana)</td>
<td>A title for an elderly male person.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosi</td>
<td>English (boss)</td>
<td>A title for a person in authority.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandamu.</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>A title for a female person.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bwana.</td>
<td>Swahili (bwana)</td>
<td>A formal title for a male person.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mama</td>
<td>Swahili.</td>
<td>A title for a middle aged and elderly woman.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mista</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>A formal title for a male person.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4.2

According to Shana, David and Christopher ( ) various characteristics of an individual may be expected to affect their behaviour with regard to use of borrowings. These include sociolinguistic factors such as sex, age, educational attainment as well as personal bilingual
ability and the prevailing norms of the speech community in which one resides. In this section, we investigate how the social factors of age and education are predictive of the borrowing rates of honorifics (both nonce and widespread) among the Gĩkũyũ speakers. To do this, we first calculated the proportion of borrowed tokens for each respondent interviewed. Since, some borrowed honorifics only occurred once; we limited this part of the study to borrowed honorifics that occurred relatively frequently. We extracted all those honorifics that were used a minimum of five times by the respondents. The data indicates that a speaker’s age has some effect on the borrowing patterns. Younger speakers have higher borrowing rates than the older speakers. The highly educated have more borrowings than the less educated especially with regard to core borrowing.

Table 8: Frequency of kin terms according to Respondent’s Age and Education Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form of honorific</th>
<th>Respondents Age and Education</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kinship terms</td>
<td>YPE</td>
<td>YSE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mami/mum</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anko</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sista</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ndandi</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buratha</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ndugu</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guks</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shosh</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the above data, the borrowed honorific *mami/mum* is the most frequent kin term among the respondents. The frequency of use however varies with the age and education of the respondents with the younger respondents recording a higher frequency than the older respondents. The frequency of use of the honorific (*mami/mum*) also increases with the level of education with those with post secondary education recording a higher frequency than
their counter parts with primary and secondary education. This variation can be attributed to the fact that the younger speakers use the honorific term *Mami/mum* to address their biological mother, their spiritual mother as well as unrelated/female strangers. The old respondents on the other hand use the term only to refer to unrelated females and female strangers.

The honorific term *Ndugu* (brother) only features among the respondents with primary education irrespective of their age. The honorifics *Anko* (uncle), *guuks* (a modified form of the term *guuka*) and *shosh* (a modified form of the term *Cũcũ*) do not feature among the older speakers. This is because they prefer to use the Gĩkũyũ honorifics *mama*, *guuka* and *Cũcũ*. The younger speakers use borrowed terms even where Gĩkũyũ honorifics are in existence or modify the existing ones while the older respondents mainly borrow to fill an existing gap. This is summarized in table 9 on the next page.

The least frequent borrowed religious honorifics among the young speakers are dada and batĩrĩ. Among the older speakers, the least frequent are bathita (pastor) with 0%. The old prefer to use the Gĩkũyũ term mütungatũri. The frequency of this term is highest among young speakers with post secondary education. The form with the highest frequency across the board is bicobu with 3.8%. From the data it clear that the old mainly borrow religious titles where indigenous ones do not exist. The borrowing of religious honorifics where indigenous ones do not exist is uniform across the board.
### Table 9: Frequency of Religious honorifics according to Respondent’s Age and Education Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form of honorific</th>
<th>Respondents Age and Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Religious titles</td>
<td>YPE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bathita</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bicobu</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebarendi</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Batha</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Batčiri</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eroda</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dada</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modareta</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dikoni</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 10: Frequency of Political honorifics according to Respondent’s Age and Education Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form of honorific</th>
<th>Respondents Age and Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Political titles</td>
<td>YPE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mũhecimiwa</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gabana</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seneta</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cibũ</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.C.A</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The least used borrowed political titles among the young speakers irrespective of the education level are the titles kanjūra and hedinemi at 0%. The title did not also feature among the aged with secondary and post secondary education. This is because these groups seem to be aware that this term had been replaced with the title M.C.A with the promulgation of the new constitution. The proportion of borrowing of the terms gabaná, seneta, cibu, M.C.A and buresidendi tends to decrease slightly with age and increase slightly with education. The young group (18-35) use these terms slightly more than the aged (60+). Those with secondary and post secondary education use these titles more than those with primary education who occasionally used the Gikuyū term mūnene and mūthamaki to refer to these categories. The frequency of use the honorific mūheshimiwa is lower among the old with primary education as they also used the Gikuyū terms mūnene and mūtongoria when addressing important figures such as members of parliament.

**Table 11: Frequency of Academic honorifics according to Respondent’s Age and Education Level**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form of honorific</th>
<th>Respondents Age and Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>YPE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic titles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mwarimū</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dagītari</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hedimasita/heditica</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probesa</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The most frequently used borrowed honorific among the young respondents is mwarimũ with a frequency of 7.6% among those with primary education, 7.6% among those with secondary education and 9.0% among those with post secondary education. The level of frequency varies with the education level as those with primary education and secondary education also used the Gĩkũyũ title mûrutani. It is also the only title that featured among the aged respondents with primary education as well as those with secondary education. The title dagîtarĩ features only among those with post secondary education. The sheng title mode (teacher) does not feature among the older speakers which serve to show the innovative nature of young respondents.

Table 12: Frequency of Social Titles according to Respondent’s Age and Education Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form of honorific</th>
<th>Respondents Age and Education</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social titles</td>
<td>YPE</td>
<td>YSE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandamu</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mama</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mûthee</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosí</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mista</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bwana</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The social titles *mama* and *mũthee* are the most frequently used by the young respondents with primary education at 5.0% while the least used are *bosi* and *mista* at 1.7%. Among the young speakers with secondary education, the most frequently used are the social titles *mandamu, mama* and *mũthee*. *Mandamu* is most the most common among the young speakers with post secondary education. The social titles *mũthee* is the most frequently used among the older respondents with primary education at 5.0% while the titles *bosi* and *bwana* do not feature at all. Among the old respondents with secondary education the most, the common title is *mũthee* at 4.2% while the least frequent are *bosi* and *bwana*. The most frequent among the old with post secondary education is the title *mandamu* while the least frequent is *bwana*. It is the clear that Swahili honorifics are more popular among the respondents with primary education while the English social titles are preferred among the respondents with post secondary education.

**Affectionate titles**

Borrowed affectionate forms are not common among the Gĩkũyũ speakers and only feature among the young speakers. The affectionate title *mũreombo* is popular among the young respondent with primary education at 20% while my dear and dear are most frequent among those with post secondary education.

**4.3 FUNCTIONS OF HONORIFICS.**

The social deictic nature of honorification indicates that honorifics should not be studied as only grammatical forms but also from wider pragmatic and sociolinguistic perspectives (Shibatani, 2006). Such an approach examines the actual use of honorifics in speech situations, and takes into account the elements of conversational situations: the relationships between the participants in a
conversation and the functional roles that honorification plays in communicative interaction. Speech situations consist of elements such as who use the honorifics, to whom and for what functions. The functions of honorifics can only be recovered from the context of use. This section focuses on the functions of borrowed honorifics in the daily lives of urban Gĩkũyũ speakers.

In the analysis of the functions of borrowed honorifics, we paid attention to the range of borrowed honorifics, the role relationship between the speaker and the addressee, or referent and the situations in which the discourses occurred. We also considered the background information such as the identity of the interactional participants, the situational context of the discourse and the purpose of the interaction. Our intuition and inside knowledge of Gĩkũyũ and culture enabled our insights into the communicational events.

The study focused on both referential (unmarked) and stylistic (marked) functions. Hymes (1962, 1972, and 1987) indentifies the following functions of language: the expressive function, the directive function, the referential function, the poetic function and the phatic function.

Since the one of the objective of this research was to observe how borrowed honorifics are used in natural interactions, the researcher had to situate herself where the uses of this honorifics would be possible or appropriate. The observations were recorded in a tape recorder or in the form of field notes. The actual discourses and conversational encounters helped to facilitate the analysis of borrowed honorifics as applied in everyday exchanges in Gĩkũyũ. The interactions include conversations among:
- Family members (mother- daughter/ son, caregiver-child, sister-brother, husband-wife)
- Friends/ acquaintances (boda boda operators , drivers/touts )
- Strangers (buyers-sellers, drivers/touts-commuters)
- Colleagues at work place.

This classification was beneficial in terms of different topics, addressees, different contexts and settings; all which according to Hymes’ theory of communicative competence are important in the analysis of functions of communication; in this case borrowed honorifics. Agha (1998) argues that honorific registers are functionally stratified cultural formations that permit language users to calculate many aspects of the pragmatic context of usage. He notes that contextual constraints include the power, social position, the rank, age, and the gender of the participants, the setting and the topic.

Morford (1997) argues that native French speakers are usually keenly aware of the social indexical values of pronominal address; they instinctively and often explicitly recognize the various kinds of social significance generated through the use of tu and vous in relation to particular contexts. When they talk about pronominal address, they often describe their own or other’s language as inherently ‘strategic’ or toward the achievement of particular goals. The study revealed that the respondents were aware of the reasons why people used honorifics. A few of the responses given by the respondents when asked why they or others used honorifics were given. The following functions were identified.

4.3.1 Honorifics and persuasion.

In his theory on communication functions of speech, Hymes argues that one of the functions of language is the directive function. This kind of utterances focuses upon the addressee
seeking to affect his/her behaviour. Directives can further be sub-divided into orders, questions, requests and pleas.

Persuasion is a communicative strategy that speakers use to elicit behavioural compliance with their wishes. It is an intentional and non coercive influence employed to change an addressee’s values attitudes and beliefs (Ryan 1992). This can also be defined as any form of discourse that influences thoughts, feeling and conduct. Communicatively competent Gĩkũyũ speakers achieve their goals in communicative encounters by persuading their addressee(s).

Honorifics when used by parents and care givers for example can change a command into a plea as is evident in the example below:

Example 1
(The conversation took place in home between a middle aged house help and a child)

**House help:** Mum ũka ṭũnywe ũcũrũ. *(Mum come over we take some porridge)*

**Child:** Aaah….aaah.

**House help:** Kamum ũka ṭũ ngwĩre. *(Mum come over so that I can tell you something)*

**Child:** Auntie ….

**House help:** Nyua ũcũrũ nĩguo tũthiĩ nduka ngũgũrire thwiti. *(Take the porridge so that I can buy you some sweets)*.

In this conversation, the care-giver uses the honorific *mum* and the diminutive prefix (*ka*) and the honorific *mum* to address in order to talk her into taking the porridge.

Example 2
(The conversation took place at a market between a seller and a buyer both who are middle aged.)
Buyer: Mum ñùrendia atia mûcere? (Mum how much are you selling the rice at?)

Seller: Mandamu ni gûkûringana na nî múthemba ūrikû. (Madam, the price depends on the variety of rice)

Buyer: Bishori ñùrendia atîa? (How much are you selling the pishori variety?)

Seller: Kiro nî igana rîa mırongo ītano. (A kilo is one hundred and fifty.)

Buyer: No ū nyenderiï kiro igana rîa mırongo īna? (Would you mind selling it to me at one hundred and forty?)

Seller: Aca ma mandamu ūgîte goro mûno. Úrenda kiro cigana? (No madam, the buying price is very high at the moment. How many kilograms do you need?)

Buyer: Kiro Ithatû (three kilograms)

Seller: Nî sawa. (It’s okay)

In this conversation, the buyer addresses the seller using the borrowed honorific mum although it is clear that they are not related. The seller on the hand uses the honorific mandamu (madam) to address the buyer. The use of the honorifics by each of the participants serves to persuade or influence the other in a subtle way.

Example 2

(This is a conversation between a public service vehicle tout and a female passenger.)

Tout: Mûrembo nîtûthîî nî thate taunî. (Beautiful lady lets go its thirty shillings to town.) (After the passenger gets in). Dereba nî tûthîî. (Driver lets go).

Passenger: (After paying the bus fare). Na Ndîraumîra Acacia. (am alighting at Acacia).

Tout: Mandamu hau hatikorangwo na thiînji. (Madam there is no stage there.)

Passenger: Woi njiga tu brother. (Please just drop me at that point brother)
The passenger uses the honorific *brother* to persuade the tout to drop her at her preferred point after realizing that the tout is not about to give in to her demands. She adopts this strategy in order to influence the tout without coercing him.

The Swahili term *mrembo* which is used to address beautiful ladies has become a popular address to young and middle aged females among the Gĩkũyũ speakers in Nairobi. A number of the young female respondents reported to have been addressed by this term especially by public vehicle operators, hawkers and sellers at the market. The word is no longer a privilege term used to refer to beautiful young ladies but an honorific term for the females. It is used by friends, acquaintances and strangers in order to appeal to their ego and succeed at persuading them to act in favour of the speaker as evident in the example above.

4.3.2 The phatic function

Hymes defines this as any form that serves to create an opportunity for communication. Honorifics serve as a means of identification in phatic communions. In many instances this terms fulfil the role of invoking the identity of the addressee in social encounters. The phatic function is responsible for the efficiency of the communication of channel. Without a channel, communication is impossible and if the addressee fails to open the channel, persuasive intentions are bound to fail. Honorifics help define the interlocutors status which in turn determines the phatic behaviour of the two people who meet for the first time. That is, they reflect as well as shape the role relationship.

Farghal and Shakir (1994) argue that the easiest way to get the attention of a stranger in the street is through the use of an honorific kin term. The data collected through semi structured
interviews and from naturally occurring speech revealed extensive use of borrowed honorific kin terms, terms of address and social titles as attention getting devices.

Example 1

**Conductor:** Sista Nitũthĩĩ. (Let’s go sista.)

**Passenger:** ũrarĩhĩa atĩa ũmũth bratha? (How much are you charging today brother?)

**Conductor:** Town nĩ mbaũ sista. (It’s twenty shillings to town)

**Passenger:** Ngũikara kũ na ndĩrona nĩ njiũru? (Where will I sit? I can see the vehicle is already full)

**Conductor:** Ntwendanei bratha, rũga hau gitĩ kĩa thutha,ũka sista ũikare haha ũru. (Let’s love each other by creating room for her. Sister please come and sit here.)

The conductor uses the kin term sista ‘sister’ as a distant kin vocative. It is clear that the two are not related but he chooses to use this term. This enables him to get the attention of the passenger and therefore, open a conversation and consequently achieve his persuasive intention of having the passenger get into his vehicle which is apparently already full.

4.3.3 Sarcasm/irony/ Playfulness/humour.

Honorific items can be used sarcastically. That is, the uses whose goal or purpose may be quite the opposite of polite ones. In such a case, the speaker uses an honorific on the addressee or referent that is supposed to signal deference but is accompanied by some non-verbal signal that makes it actually not count as difference in the interaction at hand. Such non-verbal forms may include a sneer, a frown or a sarcastic tone. The researcher observed that some honorifics were used in a sarcastic and playful manner as illustrated in the examples below.

Example 1
(This conversation took place in an institution of learning between too middle aged women who had been asked to undertake a certain task by a colleague)

**Speaker A:** Ndámũhoya mwarĩkia ũria mũreka múitiřiřiř mahũa macio maĩ. (Please do water the flowers once you are done with what you are doing.)

**Speaker B:** Nĩwaigua ũria twerwoo. (Have you heard what we have been told?)

**Speaker C:** Kaĩ twĩ adosi aingi ũi. (We do have a lot of bosses.)

Speaker C uses the sheng term *adosi* (bosses) sarcastically. This implies that speaker A is in no way their boss and therefore has no right to assign them (speaker B and C) tasks.

### Example 2

**Speaker A:** Kenya ũthũkite múno múno thikũ ici. (*Kenya has become so insecure.*)

**Speaker B:** Nĩkĩ ningĩ buratha? (*Why my brother*)

**Speaker A:** Niũronire ũrĩa kũrathire Garissa. (*Did you see what happened in Garissa*)

**Speaker B:** îno thirikari ya X. (*This government of X*)

**Speaker A:** President witũ nĩagĩrũrwo kũrora ũhoro wa ũsalama. (*Our president should consider the issue of security*)

**Speaker B:** Na magabana no mbeça cia bũrũri mararĩa. (*Yet the governors are stealing money from the public coffers.*)

**Speaker B:** Inĩ mwananchi wa kawaida agikua. (*Imagine the common man dying.*)

In this example, speaker uses the title *magabana* (governors) ironically as he believes that they are not performing the role they were elected for (to ensure that there is security in their respective counties.)

### Example 3

(This conversation was recorded in the respondent’s house between her and her child)
The child: Mum na ūririkane birthday yakwa nĩ next week. (*Mum, do not forget that my birthday comes next week.*)

The child’s mother: Ndigīriganĩrwo boss. (*I cannot forget boss.*)

Example 2

(The conversation takes place between public vehicle tout and the driver at a bus terminus.)

Tout: Ńitũthiĩ bwana, nũramenya tũkuũte arimũ? (*Let’s go mister. Don’t you know we have teachers on board?*)

Driver: Ñīndakũigua afande. (*I have heard you, sir*)

In example 1, the child’s mother uses the honorific boss playfully to refer to the child. In the second example, the driver uses the honorific *abande*; a term used in the military sarcastically to refer to the tout. This implies that he may have interpreted the tout’s utterance as a command and is not at all amused.

Those interviewed also understood that sometimes honorifics are used in an ironic or playful manner as in the example below.

Interviewer: Andũ mahũthagĩra marĩtwa maya nĩkĩ? (*Why do you use respect terms?*)

Respondent: Rĩmwe andũ mahũthagĩra marĩtwa macio nĩũndũ wa kũheana gĩĩo, kana ĩtherũ ona kana tondũ matiũũ rĩtwa rĩakũ na rĩmwe nĩ madharaũ kana kĩnyũrũrũ. (*Sometimes people use these terms as a sign of respect or because they do not know one’s name sometimes they are just being playful, humorous or sarcastic.*)

4.3.4 Endearment/affection/closeness.

This is the use of an honorific with the intention of showing love closeness or intimacy to the addressee. This is the case with the reciprocal use of honorifics where the older members of
the family such as parents use honorifics meant for them to refer to their children. According to Braun (1988), the reciprocation of a senior kinship term or a superior status term to the junior (address inversion) is used for expressing affection especially in talking to children.

The study shows that in most of the families, children were referred to by their parents honorifics such us *mum/mami* and *dandi* to show affection. In one particular case, a child was referred to as ‘*shosh*’ a modified form of the Gĩkũyũ term *cũcũ* (grandmother). Honorifics can also be used among acquaintances and relatives to show affection or closeness. Affection between non-kin involves friendliness or fond attachment. This phenomenon can be illustrated by the conversations below.

**Example 1:**

(The conversation took place between a middle aged woman and a security person in an estate.)

**The middle aged woman:** X, ndorera mwana ũcio ndagathikĩre bara. (*X, please do watch over that child so that they do not cross the road.*)

**Security person:** Mandamu mwana ũyũ waku nĩ mwega ndagĩkũra bara. (*Madam, your chid I we mannered.he cannot cross the road.*)

**The middle aged woman:** Mum ndũgakĩre bara.

**Child:** By mum.

In this example, there is reciprocal use of the honorific term *mum*. Whereas the child is expected to address its mother using the term *mum*, the woman use of the honorific to refer to the child serves to show affection.

***Kubayi ( ) in his study of terms of address among the Xitsonga speakers observes that titles such as Tatana (Mr.) are the preserve of standard language rather than the raw
linguistic data observed in real life situations and that these forms are the direct outcome of education. He further notes that these forms are reserved at least in theory for writing and other formal domains such as workplaces and delivery of speeches in formal ceremonies. However, the data in this study reveals their use in informal contexts among friends and acquaintances as illustrated below.

Example 1

(The conversation took place between a public vehicle driver and his tout both young; 18-35 years.)

**Driver:** Tūtīgītīi andũ aigana? (How many more passengers do we need?)  
**Tout:** Tūtīgītīi andũ atatũ guuka. (We need three more people, grandfather)  
**Driver:** Acio nĩ aingĩ bwana. Nitũgere njĩra īno ya mairo inya tuone kana kwĩna ithaa. (That’s a big number mister, let’s use the four kilometre root and see whether there are commuters.)

The driver uses the borrowed honorific *bwana* (mister) on the tout. The term *bwana* is normally used in formal contexts. Its use in this context depicts a clash between the form and the context of use; [+ formal] form in a context that is [-formal]. The function of the honorific ‘*bwana*’ in this context is to show the closeness or fondness between the driver and the tout.

To foreground /index the speakers or addressee’s institutional identity.

### 4.3.5 Convey respect or to dignify the addressee.

The social function of respect expresses one’s admiration for, honouring of, or deference towards another individual. It is the state of being esteemed by another. Winchatz (2001)
defines deference as treating others with the proper ritual care. All the participants interviewed pointed out seniority in age or position in the society commands a lot of respect and therefore in social interactions respect and deference must be shown to those who are older than oneself. Among the Gikũyũ it is taboo to refer to somebody of a higher status familial, professional or age status by his/her name especially if the person being about is within ear-shot; a concept commonly known as ‘gũtengũra’. To avoid what is considered taboo, interlocutors use honorifics which can either be kin terms, occupational titles or social titles.

Example: (Respondent number 12; YPE)

**Interviewer:** ũhũthagĩra marĩtwa maya nĩkĩ. (*Why do you use titles?)*

**Respondent:** Niũndũ wa kũũnyihĩria mũndũ, kũũmũonia nũ wa bata na kũũheana gĩũto. (*In order to humble yourself, to show the addressee that they are important and as a sign of respect*)

Some respondents pointed out that they do use honorifics when addressing strangers because they considered it disrespectful to use the pronoun ‘you’. Consider the following example from an aged respondent with secondary education (ASE).

**Interviewer:** ũhuthagĩra marĩtwa maya nũki? (*Why do you use these terms?)*

**Respondent:** Mũno ũngĩona mũndũ ũtamũũ ũmwũũwe ‘we’ rĩtwa nĩũkĩramũũ rĩũrũũ rĩa gwĩũa mũndũ ‘we’. Gwĩũa mũndũ we rĩtikenagĩa mũndũ ũrĩa ũreũta, ũndũ egũngũcũkũerĩa na njũra ũrĩa ũtاجرũre. (*Most people get annoyed if addressed by the pronoun you.*)
REFERENCES


http://www.absoluteastronomy.com/topics/gikuyulanguage.


The Kenyan Constitution 2010

Appendix I: Interview schedule.

RESPONDENTS’ DETAILS

Name (optional)

Age

(18-35)

(60+)

Education level

Primary education

Secondary education

Post-primary education

(1) Number of languages the interviewee is proficient in.

(2) Could you please tell me of terms that are used to refer to leaders in your church?

(3) What titles are used to refer to the leaders in your county and constituency?

(4) Could you mention terms that are used to refer to the staff in your school/college?

(5) What terms do you and members of your family use to refer to one another?

(6) What terms do public vehicle touts/ drivers / those who man bus terminus use to refer to commuters?

(7) Mention a few terms that are used by hawkers and sellers in the market to refer to their customers?

(8) Is it possible for someone to get annoyed if addressed by a certain title? If yes, what titles would elicit such a reaction?

(9) What kind of reaction does the wrong use of a title elicit?
(10) Why do you think people use titles?

(11) What are some of the factors that guide the use of respect terms in this community?

(12) What titles do you normally use in your line of duty?
Appendix II: Observation schedule

(1) What is the context of use of the borrowed honorifics?

(2) Who are the participants?

(3) Which honorifics are used in the particular context?
Appendix III: Map of Kasarani Constituency in Nairobi County.

Appendix IV: Tentative Timeline for the Study

<table>
<thead>
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<td>Developing concept</td>
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<tr>
<td>Defence of concept paper</td>
<td>May 2012</td>
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<td>Writing the Proposal</td>
<td>June 2012 – May 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defence of Proposal</td>
<td>June 2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>Correction of Proposal</td>
<td>July 2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>Data Collections</td>
<td>August 2013</td>
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<td>Data Analysis</td>
<td>September 2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>Data Presentation</td>
<td>October 2013</td>
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<tr>
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### Appendix V: Tentative Budget of the Study

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