

**A SOCIOLINGUISTIC ACCOUNT OF LANGUAGE LOYALTY AMONG
KAMBA SPEAKERS IN YATTA SUB-COUNTY, MACHAKOS COUNTY**

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DECLARATION

This project is my original work and has not been presented for a degree at any other University.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my late grandmother, Mueni Masika. Your relentless diligence and unyielding efforts to provide a quality education for your daughters, despite all opposition, continue to bear fruit today and will undoubtedly inspire generations to come.

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ABBREVIATION AND ACRONYMS

CBC	Competency-Based Curriculum
CEL	Center for Endangered Languages
ENG	English
EDUC	Educational
EV	Ethnolinguistic Vitality
FEL	Foundation for Endangered Languages
KICD	Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development
KMB	Kikamba
KIS	Kiswahili
KNBS	Kenya National Bureau of Statistics
L1	First language
L2	Second language
LUAQ	Language Use and Attitude Questionnaire
MoE	Ministry of Education
NACOSTI	National Council for Science Technology and Innovation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
SEVQ	Subjective Ethnolinguistic Vitality Questionnaire
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific, and Cultural Organization

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

Language disloyalty	A situation of repudiation arises when individuals develop disdain for their mother tongue, consequently failing to pass it on to their children.
Language loyalty	The positive attitudes that speakers have towards their native language making them maintain the use of the language and ensure inter-generational transmission, achieving a language subsistence instead of a language change.
Speech community	Generally speaking, it is a group of people who share a common language, also called a language group, for example, Kamba language group. More specifically, it refers to people who share a particular dialect.
Vernacular/L1/Mother tongue	A person's native tongue, which in this instance is Kamba, also referred to as Kikamba.

ABSTRACT

This sociolinguistic study examined language loyalty among speakers of an indigenous language in Kenya. The study dealt with the preservation of the Kikamba language and culture among Kikamba speakers in Yatta sub-county, a rural area in Machakos County. The objectives of the study were to identify the language use patterns among the Kikamba speakers in different domains in Yatta sub-county, establish the effect of age on Kikamba language usage across different domains in Yatta sub-county, and lastly to determine the perceptions and attitudes of Kikamba speakers in Yatta Sub-County, Machakos County, toward their mother tongue. The study was grounded in two theoretical frameworks: Ethnolinguistic Vitality Theory and Domain Theory. The research design consisted of mixed methods, since the questions raised by the research required the use of both qualitative and quantitative data. At first, the semi-structured interviews were implemented to research emotions and viewpoints among the participants, which then led to the use of structured questionnaires for recording the patterns of language use across the different domains. Furthermore, participant observations were conducted parallelly to provide the researchers with scattered insights into the world of everyday language practices. The research considered the language practices not only of the younger Kikamba speakers (those aged 18 to 25 years) but also of the older Kikamba speakers (those above 50 years old) in order to give a complete picture of how the language lives among the Kikamba speakers in Yatta and to provide an idea of the language loyalty in the region. The language use patterns of the respondents, as per the research, revealed that Kikamba is the first language in family interactions which again signals its great use in domestic communication. Nevertheless, apart from the younger speakers, who were quite a few, all the others had already made the switch to Kiswahili in home. This in turn, pointed to the fact that Kiswahili has already gotten quite a strong hold increasing its sphere from educational institutions and media to the whole societal interaction area. Besides, the study found that age is a determining factor with regard to the language use patterns among the various domains. While the older respondents mostly used Kikamba, especially during family and community contacts, it still is a strong sign of cultural attachment and language continuity. On the other hand, the younger participants showed a stronger tendency to use Kiswahili and English, particularly in educational, social, and professional contexts, while keeping Kikamba for home use. Still, this pattern does not imply that the younger speakers have a negative view of Kikamba. Instead, their ongoing use of the language in family settings indicates a deep cultural bond and an acknowledgment of its role in identity and heritage preservation. These results demonstrate the variety of language use in different contexts, the influence of age on communication habits, and the gradual shift of linguistic identity within the community.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.0 Introduction

This chapter explores the fundamental elements of the research, including the setting of the study, the formulation of the main issue, the intended objectives, the particular questions directing the investigation, and the underlying premises. Furthermore, it addresses the rationale and importance of the research endeavor, concluding with the defined boundaries or constraints of the study.

1.1 Background to the study

Globalization and linguistic dominance have threatened many indigenous languages, leading to changes in language use and favoring the learning and growth of dominant languages spoken in advanced economies such as English, French, German, Spanish, and, more recently, Chinese. (Ehala & Niglas, 2007; Fishman, 2001; May 2000; 2011). Many people from developing countries, Kenya included, argue that learning these foreign languages enhances chances of social and economic mobility (McMahon, 1994; Mufwene, 2001; Brenzinger, 2006). Thus, these languages continue to expand their territories mostly at the expense of the indigenous languages, some of which do not have a territory for themselves.

In Kenya, progress has also been achieved in advancing the linguistic rights of Kiswahili. Kiswahili, an indigenous language, was given the same status as English by being stipulated as both a national and an official language in the 2010 constitution. This was done to counteract the colonial legacy of English and strengthen nationalism, yet ethnic languages were not assigned explicit roles (Githiora, 2008). As a result,

different sectors of government and businesses, both in urban and rural areas, promote the use of English and Kiswahili, many arguing that they serve at best as neutral languages of wider communication. Because of this, the use of native languages has decreased while that of English and Kiswahili has steadily increased. Batibo (2008) states that the designation of indigenous languages, such as Kiswahili, when particular languages are chosen as national or official languages, or as a bridge language, often leads to the neglect and devaluation of other original languages.

Michieka (2012) noted that the languages that appear to be competing most for the interpersonal domain among the youth are Kiswahili and Sheng. In the past, the majority of speakers in urban areas maintained a triglossic scenario in which English, Kiswahili, and indigenous languages coexisted and were utilized in different contexts (Kamwangamalu, 2000). Indigenous languages were used at home or in rural settings, while English and Kiswahili were used in formal settings. However, this form of trilingualism is no longer practiced by young Kenyans, and sadly, the indigenous languages are the ones affected (Michieka, 2012). The shrinkage of domains in which the indigenous languages are used has led to a receding generational competence in these languages. Studies such as Muthoka (2010), Michieka (2012) Kimani (2019) indicate that the majority of Kenyan urban youth have had insufficient exposure to their mother tongue; thus, many are semi-speakers, while Wamalwa & Olouch, (2013), established that there is a generation of children in Nairobi who cannot communicate in their L1.

Scrutiny of language application among young people is therefore vital to ascertain whether there is preservation or a departure from native tongues. Such inquiry is key for comprehending the mechanisms of language transfer and the elements impacting

linguistic choices among younger cohorts. We can determine whether indigenous languages are being maintained or gradually replaced by more dominant languages by examining language-use patterns and the effects of social media, education, and societal pressure. Fishman (1966b) examines how mass culture, including globalized media and commerce, influences ethnic ties. According to Swilla (2005), language choice, maintenance, and shift are directly related to ethnicity and identity. Members of a group will make an effort to preserve the language if it serves as a significant symbol of their identity and vice versa.

By examining the linguistic preferences of younger and older individuals through their different generations, researchers have uncovered the changes in and the growing preference for certain languages over others. It has been established through these studies that the main mediums of communication and self-expression of the new generation are not mother tongues anymore. The present-day youth are more inclined to switch to languages perceived as modern or global, while the older generation still use their local languages in day-to-day communication. The factors affecting this change include social media, educational systems, and the globalized environment.

Social media networks like TikTok and Instagram have played a major role in the change of language the youth in both urban and rural areas of Kenya are using, as they want to be seen as fashionable and part of the global youth culture. Through these platforms, young people get to try out many different language varieties and slang and frequently go for the trendy and worldwide expressions that give them a social identity. The use and acceptance of these new language forms are bringing about a transition from the use of conventional linguistic norms to the establishment of new

forms of language practices that are hybrid and dynamic. A classic case of this new trend is the rising use of Sheng, which is a Swahili-based urban slang that includes English, Swahili, and local dialects. Young people are indeed showing not only their youth and sophistication through the mixing of the different elements in their daily speech but are also more adept at negotiating friendships and positioning themselves socially. Hence, the urban youths are mainly engaged in subtractive bilingualism, which is a form of language shift that is more likely to occur (Batibo, 2005).

Consequently, age is a major factor that influences the patterns of language use among the speakers of indigenous languages. The older people usually remain to the traditional language forms while the younger ones change their language to adapt to the modern situations and incorporate elements from the dominant languages like slang, contemporary expressions, or even new vocabulary. This generational gap can lead to the emergence of different patterns of language use in the same community: the younger ones might opt for a mix of indigenous and dominant language features while the older ones stick to using traditional or region-specific terms. It is crucial to analyze these patterns in the context of efforts to maintain and revive indigenous languages, since it points out the necessity of intergenerational communication and cooperation in making the language's future.

Language attitudes also determine language choice patterns. Language attitudes determine how a language is regarded in the speech community, as well as the prestige it enjoys and the types of people who are most inclined to use it (Dittmar and Schlobinski, 1988). When speakers maintain a positive attitude towards their native language, there is language loyalty, and hence intergenerational transmission occurs,

and the language is maintained. Negative attitudes show language disloyalty, leading to language shift and death. A speech community embraces an invading language if it represents a higher quality of living, as a means of identifying with the lifestyle it represents. Kenyans generally connect their mother tongues with traditional culture and a lack of modernity, contrasting this with English and Kiswahili, which are tied to state employment, professional careers, and elevated social status. These latter languages are often perceived as more pragmatic and modern, providing access to greater social mobility and economic advantage (McMahon, 1994; Mufwene, 2001; Brenzinger, 2006).

Thus, this study sought to find out whether the Kamba speakers in a rural setting show loyalty to their language upon contact with dominant languages. A necessary prerequisite for language maintenance is that speech communities utilize their language in a variety of contexts. According to Fishman (1977), there are several interacting contexts in which speakers have to decide which language to use when they come into contact, referred to as domains of language use. Even though research has shown that native languages are likely to be maintained at home and in rural areas, bilingualism becomes crucial for survival if these languages come into contact with a more economically and socially valuable language. Since language loyalty or disloyalty is determined by language choice, linguistic change may be underway when speakers begin using a new language collectively in domains that were previously only spoken in their native language. Ethnolinguistic groups must also possess positive attitudes to their language and group solidarity to maintain language loyalty, and in their absence, language shift and death are likely.

1.1.1 Kikamba Language

Kikamba is a Bantu language spoken by millions of Akamba (the native speakers of Kikamba), mostly in Kenya but also in Uganda, Tanzania, and elsewhere. In Kenya, it's widely spoken in four counties: Machakos, Kitui, Makeni, and Kwale. The Akamba are believed to have migrated from the Congo-Zaire region in Africa. According to the 2019 Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS), Kambas have a total population of 4,663,910, which is 11% of Kenya's population, making them the fifth most numerous tribe in Kenya.

Kikamba language is categorized by Guthrie [1964] as E55 (Language 5 in Group 50 of Zone E) within the wider Bantu family. Kikamba is classified by Greenberg as belonging to the Niger-Congo family, as stated in Whiteley (1974). Geographically, Ukambani, the region inhabited by the Akamba people, encompasses approximately 17,396 square miles. The area lies within the latitudinal range of 4 minutes to 3 degrees south of the equator and between 37- and 39-degrees east longitude (Ndeti, 1972).

There are a number of mutually intelligible, but separate, dialects of Kikamba. Although Maundu (1980) & Kioko (2005) identify four different variants, Masaku (Machakos), South Kitui, North Kitui, and Mumoni (Kilungu), literature acknowledges two primary dialects of Kikamba: Thaisu dialect and Masaku dialect (Lindblom 1926, Mwove 1987).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Language loyalty among Kikamba speakers in Yatta Sub-County is a critical area of study due to the increasing influence of dominant languages such as Swahili and

English. As younger generations increasingly adopt Swahili and English for educational, social, and economic reasons, the spheres for the use of Kikamba are limited. The transmission and preservation of Kikamba language are put in jeopardy along with the cultural customs and traditional knowledge associated with it. The decline of the Kamba language may thus lead to the disappearance of unique cultural expressions, oral histories, and embedding knowledge systems, which are all part of the language.

On the one hand, the necessity of preserving the linguistic variety is recognized, whereas, on the other hand, the factors affecting language loyalty of Kikamba speakers in this area are still under-researched. The current investigation is aimed at determining the level of language loyalty among the Kikamba speakers in Yatta Sub-County, Machakos County, and consequently, with the goal of adding to the existing literature. In order to make plans that will encourage and maintain the use of the Kikamba language in the public and private domains, it is necessary to understand these dynamics.

1.3 Research objectives

Investigating language loyalty among Kikamba speakers was the primary goal of this research. The study was guided by the following objectives:

- i. To identify the language use patterns among Kikamba speakers across various domains in Yatta sub-county, Machakos County.
- ii. To establish the effect of age on Kikamba language use across different domains in Yatta sub-county, Machakos County.

- iii. To determine the perceptions and attitudes of Kikamba speakers in Yatta Sub-County, Machakos County, toward the Kikamba language.

1.4 Research Questions

The study addressed the following questions;

- i. What are the patterns of language use of Kikamba speakers in different domains in Yatta sub-county, Machakos County?
- ii. What is the effect of the age of speakers on their language use pattern across the various domains in Yatta sub-county, Machakos County?
- iii. What attitudes and perceptions do the Kikamba speakers in Yatta sub-county have towards their mother tongue?

1.5 Research assumptions

This study was carried out on the following assumptions;

- i. Kikamba speakers in Yatta sub-county demonstrate distinct linguistic patterns and usage variations across different domains.
- ii. The frequency and context of Kikamba language use among Kikamba speakers across various domains in Yatta sub-county vary significantly based on their age.
- iii. Kikamba speakers in Yatta sub-county have varying degrees of positive and negative attitudes toward their mother tongue across the various domains.

1.6 Justification and Significance

The study of language contact is an important area of linguistics as it sheds light on the processes of language change or evolution, language shift, maintenance, and

death, as well as the socio-economic factors that influence language use and development. Some known language contact studies include the impact of Latin on Romance languages, the study of the development of creoles and pidgins in the Caribbean and West Africa, and the analysis of language contact in colonial settings. A number of studies have also been done on individual languages in language contact contexts in Kenya and the African continent. Notable among these are the works of Batibo, H., which provide insights at the continental level. Closer to home, research has also been carried out focusing on various Kenyan ethnic communities, including studies by Kebeya, H. (2012), Muaka, C. (2019), Charo, F.K. & Ong'onda A.N. (2022), among others. Thus, this study sought to augment the language contact studies done on individual indigenous languages in Kenya.

This study, unlike most of the existing sociolinguistics studies, shifts focus from language shift and attrition in cities like Nairobi to factors that facilitate maintenance in a non-urban area. For instance, the work by Muthoka, G. (2017) has documented language shift and endangerment in an urban upmarket setting. Rural settings like Yatta are often the last strongholds of indigenous languages, making them critical sites for examining language maintenance. A decline in the core region would signal a more severe threat than the urban shift. This study, therefore seeks to provide insight into how indigenous languages in Kenya, particularly Kikamba, survive despite the increasing dominance of Kiswahili and English.

The recently enacted fundamental law mandates the government to cultivate, advance, and safeguard the linguistic variety of Kenya's population. Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD), in developing the new Competency-Based

Curriculum (CBC), emphasized that indigenous languages will serve as both the medium of instruction and a subject within the curriculum for the foundational education levels (grades 1-3). Therefore, the proposed study in a rural-urban setting will help the public policy makers, including KICD, to understand the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of policies and frameworks put in place. Given that most existing research on language use has been concentrated in Nairobi, this study will provide valuable insights into the language situation in rural areas. Such findings will be instrumental in raising awareness and aiding in the formulation of clear, informed policies.

Finally, this proposed study aims to create awareness among the Kamba community and other indigenous speech groups to document and strive to preserve their language and culture. Many indigenous people have been noted to abandon their languages and cultures in the hope of overcoming discrimination, securing a livelihood, enhancing social mobility, or assimilating to the global marketplace (UNESCO, 2003). However, these languages serve as a repository for a people's historical and contemporary cultural legacy; they serve as constant reminders of the beliefs and ideals that have shaped their present, and they serve a unique purpose in every community, making them valuable assets that should be preserved and nurtured.

1.7 Scope and Limitations

In Yatta, several indigenous languages are spoken. Therefore, a study that included all the languages would have been great for comparison purposes. Due to time restrictions, this study was limited to Kikamba and how Kiswahili and English have encroached on the domains that were traditionally a preserve of the language.

People differ in terms of language, culture, and customs; thus, we may anticipate that linguistic behavior and attitudes will vary from region to region and from one language community to another. To obtain a deeper understanding of the outcomes of language contact that has both a descriptive and an explanatory capacity, we must therefore broaden the empirical base of our investigations to involve other regions and different speech communities. However, due to time and resource constraints, the present study is solely on the Kikamba language group in Yatta sub-county, Machakos County.

1.8 Summary of the chapter

This chapter has covered the background information, provided a description of the Kikamba language, outlined the statement of the problem, established the study's aims, raised the research queries, and enumerated the presuppositions. Additionally, it provided a rationale for the investigation, as well as its extent and boundaries. The following chapter will center on a survey of relevant scholarly works, examining literature pertaining to language loyalty.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.0 Introduction

Chapter One provided an overview of the study's background. This chapter reviews the literature on language loyalty, examining relevant studies from Africa and other continents. It encompasses the phenomena of worldwide language change, extinction, and endangerment. The research covers Africa and Kenya linguistic situation with regard to people's attitudes towards languages, their commitment to the languages, and decline in language support situation exemplifications. Moreover, it shines a light on the theoretical underpinnings in a wide-ranging manner.

2.1 The Language Situation in Africa

Africa has a complex linguistic map and an impressive variety of cultures. It is a perfect example of linguistic diversity with Batibo (2005) making an approximate count of 2000 to 2500 languages living on the continent. These languages are classified into four main groups: Afro-Asiatic, Khoisan, Congo-Kordofanian, and Nilo-Saharan. The Afro-Asiatic and Congo-Kordofanian families are the largest among these four groups, comprising more than 75% of the total number of African languages.

Africa can be said to be both multilingual and plurilingual. The prevalence of multiple languages across Africa is uneven, with certain nations exhibiting characteristics of near-monolingualism in their native tongues, the likes of Rwanda, Lesotho, Burundi, Swaziland, Cape Verde, and Seychelles; and there are others with at least 100 or even more (Nigeria has 400) languages spoken within their borders (Batibo 2005).

Although most African nations have downplayed plurilingualism and multilingualism, they still have an impact on questions of national integration, group affiliation, linguistic options, and civic culture, which consequently mold the political and socioeconomic realms, cultural, and educational decisions (Batibo, 2001).

Grenoble & Whaley (1998) characterize the African continent as linguistically diverse due to its exceptionally intricate language scenario. Most Africans are known to be multilingual, and they thus select the language or the variety of languages they want to use according to the context. In the typical Kenyan context, a speaker will use his or her mother tongue to address his parents but use either Kiswahili or English when addressing a colleague in the workplace. This implies that languages in Africa do not just act as a communication tool, but they also have a social role.

The language situation in Kenya, as in other African countries, experienced substantial transformation upon Western engagement via commerce, colonial rule, and religious missions, alongside other influences. There are also historical contacts between early African languages that made some languages disappear through the genocide of their speakers or a language being absorbed into the language of its conquerors. Language suffocation was also experienced when weaker groups were prevented from speaking their languages, like the Akie, Sonjo, Kwavi, and Aasax, who were dominated by the Maasai (Batibo, 2005). Recently, there has been a rise of Kiswahili hegemony over other ethnic languages, Michieka (2012), in most places, especially urban centers, as most Kenyans view the language as a unifying factor. This study aimed at investigating whether this supremacy has expanded beyond the

metropolis to other parts of the nation, influencing the language use patterns among speakers of indigenous languages.

Abdulaziz (1978) asserts that Kenya, like Tanzania, has a triglossic structure, whereby three different languages are used by speakers in their daily activities. The first language is the code that will be used mostly at home and for socialization. The lingua franca will be utilized as an interethnic medium and an ex-colonial language for official, international, and more formal domains. The illiterate employ vernaculars and lingua francas in a diglossic structure, while the educated function at three levels. This triglossic situation, however, seems to be changing according to Dwivedi (2014). He says that when the ruling government supports and promotes certain languages in a multilingual nation, they become dominant, while the future of other minor languages becomes bleak. Hence, the indigenous languages are losing their footing to English and Kiswahili, and so a need for more studies like this to ascertain the status of indigenous languages in modern communities.

Even though Kenyans appreciate their ethnic languages highly because they preserve their culture, English and Kiswahili are considered to be prestige languages because of their potential for economic benefit and also because they wield considerable power. These languages are utilized interchangeably for teaching, national assessments, employment applications, lucrative careers, religious institutions, affluent areas, tourism, popular media, literary works, and most periodicals. On the other hand, the home is where ethnic languages are most commonly spoken, but there is a chance that this might be changing, especially among young people, and the present study investigated this encroachment, especially of the home domain.

Finally, every language group in Kenya, according to Michieka (2005), has a home region where the speech community is essentially homogeneous. However, we cannot speak of communities that are completely homogenous currently, as the general distribution of languages extends beyond the home counties. This distribution of speakers is the result of a variety of circumstances, key among them being the economic factor that has led to rural-urban migration, particularly to Mombasa and Nairobi. Appendix 1.1 is a representation of the general distribution of Kenyan languages. The current study focused on language number 24 on the map, the Kikamba language.

2.2 Language Choice

Language contact can significantly influence the language choices of various groups of people. When speakers of different languages come into regular contact, it often leads to bilingualism or multilingualism, where individuals incorporate elements from multiple languages into their daily communication, (Appel and Muysken, 2005). This communication can likewise produce code-switching, in which speakers move back and forth between languages within a dialogue, and code-mixing, where features from distinct languages are combined within individual clauses. Overall, linguistic contact can have a significant impact on the languages involved, resulting in both positive outcomes like bilingualism and cultural enrichment, as well as issues like language shift and loss. Therefore, the patterns and choices in how a language is used determine whether that language is maintained or shifted over time. A language can be maintained if it is used across various domains, if positive attitudes and beliefs about

the language are prevalent, and if there is a strong degree of intergenerational transmission.

When a language is used broadly across formal, public, and high-prestige spheres, it has a better chance of being passed down and remaining vibrant. Fishman (1991) argues that the more a language is deliberately promoted in education, media, government, and other influential domains, the more likely it is to be maintained over generations. Parents' language choices, such as which language(s) parents use with their children, also play a key role. When children are raised with consistent exposure to a minority language in the home, they are more likely to become proficient speakers and help sustain that language in the community. The current study sought to examine language use patterns across diverse domains and generations to evaluate whether the Kikamba language is being maintained among Kikamba speakers in Yatta sub-county. Conversely, when a language is predominantly used in private, informal, or low-prestige contexts, it is more vulnerable to language shift as younger generations may not see the language as useful for upward mobility or meaningful participation in public life. Additionally, if a minority language is not transmitted in the home and children primarily use a majority language, a language shift is much more likely to occur, with the minority language gradually being replaced. This variable was also explored in the current study.

2.3 Patterns of language use and language loyalty

The patterns of language use and choice have profound implications for language loyalty, which refers to the attachment individuals and communities feel toward their language and their commitment to preserving it. Additionally, when a speech

community maintains the use of their language in some or all domains of life, even in the face of pressure from a dominant language, this is referred to as language maintenance (Pauwels 2004). A language like this one is widely used in a variety of life situations, particularly in contexts that are of great cultural importance, such as religious ceremonies, traditional festivals, and family occasions. Such usage has a powerful impact on the emotional attachment that the speakers create with the language and the development of a strong feeling of loyalty towards the language.

The choice of using a native language in everyday talks, particularly in the family and community settings, is a strong affirmation of its role as the bearer of cultural identity and is thus, a promotion of the loyalty between generations. However, the loyalty to the language might wane if the emotional and practical value of the language is perceived to be lesser when the use of the language is restricted to certain areas or when the speakers gradually start preferring a dominant language over their mother tongue. This research study was done to analyze the usage of the Kikamba language in different areas and thereby measure the loyalty of the Kikamba speakers in Yatta sub-county to their language. Besides, the active presence of a language in public domains, mass communication, and digital interactions can not only raise the status of the language but also promote the unity of the speakers in their collective loyalty to the language. However, when speakers consistently choose to use more prestigious or economically advantageous language, it may signal a shift in loyalty away from their heritage language, potentially leading to a cycle of decreased use and weakened emotional attachment across generations (Holmes, 2013). This phenomenon was a leading concern for the current study.

2.4 Language disloyalty/ shift

In a language contact situation, there may arise a phenomenon of rejection, where speakers come to hold contempt towards their native language. This is referred to as language disloyalty and mostly occurs when various languages with different statuses come into contact within the same society, especially in bilingual or multilingual communities. It might also happen in a situation known as diglossia, which is the coexistence of two languages with various statuses. The existence of the lower one is threatened by the language that is connected to wealth, power, culture, and status.

Salvador (1983) delineates two forms of linguistic disloyalty. The first is the expected reaction of speakers of these languages who begin a process of abandonment after giving in to the social pressures imposed by the dominant language. Within a few generations, this could lead to their language's irreversible extinction. The second, which reflects concurrently important societal and political changes, is when native speakers of a dominant language reject or disavow it in order to align with speakers of other language groups under a strict standardization policy. When this occurs, speakers adopt a variety of attitudes toward their native speech, which can lead to language loss, social stigma, the replacement of their native tongue, or the complete loss of their native tongue.

According to Batibo (2005), the majority of African nations experience horizontal competition between languages when they come into contact. The languages compete for roles, and so the speakers have to decide which language to employ in whatever circumstance or relationship. This holds accurate across a majority of our nation, as we observe certain languages progressively expanding their spheres of influence or applications, thereby disadvantaging others. Specifically, the employment of English

and Kiswahili as national communication tools is acquiring prominence over the local languages within the country. Kiswahili, serving as a national medium, has accumulated considerable prestige and significance, consequently relegating the native tongues to a subordinate role.

There is a close correlation between language loyalty, which the present study strived to investigate, and language shift. One of the earlier studies on language shift was by Gal (1978) in Oberwart, who observed a shift from Hungarian to German mainly due to socio-economic factors. Additionally, she saw that women were more likely to switch from Hungarian to German due to the usage of German in domains that place a premium on status. Borbely (2000) looked into what caused the shift from Romanian to Hungarian. Language proficiency, language competency, language preference, and the age and sex of the community members were some of the variables found to be responsible for the shift in Borbely's study. Borbely's study is similar to the current study in that it investigated some of these variables, that is, language proficiency, language competency, language preference, and age, to assess their influence on Kikamba language.

Furthermore, investigations into language transition are associated with Fishman's contributions (Fasold, 1984), whose domain analysis perspective centers on the typical linguistic practices of individual communicators and is built upon his well-known inquiry, "Who talks what? Who speaks it and at what time?". This technique posits that individuals possess a range of language options to employ within a particular context, characterized as a combination of factors including individuals involved, setting, and topic. Mesthrie (2001) observes that when members of an

ethnolinguistic group start using another language for domains and functions that were a preserve of their native language, the process of shift is underway. This is also a concern of the present study.

2.5 Language Attrition and Endangerment

As a notion within psycholinguistics, language attrition refers to the gradual decline in linguistic proficiency in any language known by a bilingual or multilingual individual. Conversely, a threatened language is one facing imminent disappearance. This endangerment commonly arises when a less dominant language cannot resist the influence of a more dominant one, or when its speakers choose to abandon it as a means of assimilating into the broader language community (Batibo, 2005).

In studying endangered languages, many linguists were attracted by Quechua, a language spoken in six South American countries. Despite it being a major indigenous language in the region, its speakers don't value it as compared to Spanish, leading to minimized usage and a likelihood of language loss (Hornberger & Coronel-Molina, 2004). In investigating the language use patterns among the Kikamba speakers in Yatta sub-county, the current study investigated whether or not the speakers value their language. A language's instrumental value encourages language maintenance and widespread use in the interaction between language shift and maintenance; conversely, a language with little or no instrumental value is more likely to be abandoned by its speakers (Coulmas, 2005).

The extinction of languages is strongly influenced by non-linguistic factors, which are sometimes referred to as external factors. According to Sasse (1992), the speech

community might be forced to give up its language due to the pressure generated by the combination of culture, sociology, ethnicity, and economy. These conditions, called the "External Context" (EC), cause the decline of the language to start. Karanja's (2006) research on the extinction of the Kimvita and Kiamu dialects of Kiswahili in Kenya assumes that standard Kiswahili together with other factors like migration, intermarriage, and urbanization are responsible for the endangerment of these two dialects. Karanja examines two facets of language disappearance: the external milieu (the impact of standard Kiswahili and Sheng) and communicative practices (speaker perspectives). This research operated under the supposition that Kikamba, in numerous situations, is jeopardized by more influential and highly regarded languages.

Muthoka's (2017) study on Kikamba language shift and endangerment in the uptown areas of Nairobi claims the language is threatened by English and Kiswahili in that order, as evidenced by a lack of knowledge of kinship terms by the young generation. According to Sasse (1992), there are three layers of language death: structural effects (decline of core terms in Kikamba lexicon), speech behavior (language attitudes, language choice), and external context (urbanization, socioeconomic factors). The present study is different from Muthoka's study in that it examined speech behavior and the external context as stipulated by Sasse (1992).

2.6 Influence of age on language choice

Age plays a crucial role in shaping language choice patterns, as individuals from different age groups often exhibit distinct language preferences and usage behaviors. The older generation in general, is more attached to the heritage or traditional

languages, because they experienced first-hand the use of those languages in daily communication, schools, and the various cultural activities. The younger generation, on the contrary, since they have been constantly learning and getting exposed to different languages through education, media, and socializing, are more inclined to incorporate modern phrases, slang, and elements of the dominant language into their speech.

Dyers (2008) asserts that the language shift occurs when the younger members of a minority language group completely give up their parents' native language, which, in turn, causes the language to lose its speakers with each generation. The research of Gal (1979) on the Hungarian community in Obertwart, Australia, revealed that the younger ones mostly spoke German with their mates and used Hungarian only when addressing older people in the community. In social situations, teenagers and young people might opt for a global language like English while their parents and grandparents stick to their mother tongue. This difference in language choice based on age is most pronounced in multilingual environments. It was found that among Kikamba speakers of different age groups, the language preferences were quite different. The above-mentioned investigations provided the basis for analyzing the language use characteristics among the Kamba speakers.

Communication gaps within families and groups can occasionally result from this age-based disparity in language choice, which may have an impact on patterns of language maintenance and transition over generations. Dorian (1981) suggests that language contact leads to a decline in proficiency in one's native language. This decline is more pronounced in younger generations, resulting in lower levels of language proficiency.

Over time, the community consists of both highly proficient native speakers and those with imperfect language skills coexisting. This study investigated the effects of bilingualism/multilingualism on language competency, interference, and identity across several age groups, despite existing research (Howard, Christian, & Genesee, 2003) that highlights its considerable cognitive, cultural, and professional advantages.

2.7 Language loyalty and language attitudes

According to scholarly consensus, those who have positive feelings about a language and its speakers are more likely to acquire and remain loyal to it (Garet, 2010; Karaha, 2007; Zhang & Slaughter-Defoe, 2009). Holmes (2001) stated that positive feelings are the main reason for the speakers of the minority languages to use or to communicate their languages in different places the way they want. Language allegiance is a term that describes the positive emotions of the speakers of the language towards their mother tongue, which makes them not only to continue its usage but also to provide its transfer to the coming generations resulting in the preservation of the language instead of its shift.

While investigating linguistic attitudes, Blass Arroyo (2007) introduces three factors that must be taken into account: language fidelity, language pride, and language rejection. Language pride indicates the amount of enthusiasm a speaker has for his/her mother tongue while language fidelity is observed in a speech community when the speakers develop resistance to changes in the structure of the language or lose their usage of the language. Lastly, he uses language rejection to refer to speakers having negative feelings towards their native language.

The way people feel about a language stems from the communal standards linked to the speakers' sense of belonging. Consequently, linguistic perspective and self-perception are connected, as one's language identity can be viewed favorably or unfavorably depending on how the speaker feels about their language. As Morreno (1998) suggested, a favorable viewpoint might encourage more frequent use of that language, while an unfavorable one could result in its decline. He contends that certain individuals who speak less dominant languages hold a negative view of their own language, particularly when these languages do not facilitate social progress, financial improvement, or relocation beyond their immediate communities, which is a central focus of this research.

Closer home, studies have reiterated the fact that positive attitudes towards dominant languages, in this case, Kiswahili and English, are primarily motivated by socio-economic and instrumental gains (Mukhwana, 2014). Over the years, Kiswahili has become an important marker of national identity and also a factor contributing to the unification of East Africa as a whole. Tanzania's language policy, following its independence, considered Kiswahili as a national language thus making it a dynamic force in the whole country's identity (Lup, 2021). In contrast, Kenya and Uganda sidelined Kiswahili in those areas of life where English was preferred in the beginning; however, the language has gradually gained its fame as a lingua franca that bridges people from different ethnicities and linguistic backgrounds. To Ngugi (1993), Kiswahili is a powerful tool for inter-ethnic communication, it is the representation of a common African past that colonial languages could not reach, and it is a symbol of cultural independence and authenticity. Even though Kiswahili is mostly recognized throughout East Africa as a means of social integration and

national identity marker, still these wider forces at play also affect the status of indigenous languages like Kikamba. Looking into the different uses of Kikamba in Yatta Sub-County, how different age groups perceive and value it, gives a local viewpoint on the same issues of language use and attitudes that regional studies of Kiswahili have revealed.

Fink's (2005) research on linguistic viewpoints in Kenya explored the coexistence of English, Swahili, Sheng, and native languages to a certain extent. He concluded that men from low social class, residing in slum areas of eastern Nairobi, chose Sheng as one of the most spoken languages. On the other hand, women and persons from upper social classes preferred English. Fink's research was conducted on native languages in general, but the present study focuses on the attitudes towards a particular language, Kikamba, within a rural context, which is a contrast to the urban setting of Fink's study. The work of Fink gives this research two major supports: first, the conclusion that children lean towards English while adults correspond with their mother tongue and the variety of language options at home. The present study views this as an aspect of age that has a role in linguistic loyalty.

Garret (2010) suggests a trio of methods to analyze attitudes: societal treatment research, direct measures, and indirect measures. He contends that the sociological handling technique involves deducing individuals' perspectives by analyzing policy papers, media content, advertisements, and similar materials. Contrarily, direct measurements entail asking participants questions about their linguistic attitudes, sometimes referred to as evaluative preferences. Typically, questionnaires, surveys, and interviews are used to do this. Last but not least, the term "indirect method" refers

to techniques that do not directly ask participants questions, such as the "matched guise" methodology. The direct approach is the most frequently employed technique, and it forms the basis of the present investigation. Evaluating perspectives within this research is pertinent for ascertaining the attitudes of Kamba language users in Yatta to gauge their language loyalty.

2.8 Language vitality

UNESCO (2003) developed nine criteria to consider for language vitality. Key factors encompass the intergenerational passing down of language, the overall count of individuals who speak it, how local inhabitants view their language, the percentage of speakers relative to the entire population, shifts in where the language is used, the availability of resources for reading, writing, and language teaching, responses to emerging media and contexts, official and organizational viewpoints and regulations concerning the language, such as its formal standing and application, and ultimately, the amount and quality of its recorded materials.

The most prevalent criterion for determining language vitality is whether it is being passed down from one generation to the next (Fishman 1991). Rankings for endangered languages range from stability to extinction. Regarding the transmission of languages over generations, six levels of endangerment can be identified, as seen below;

Table 2.1: Intergenerational Transmission

DEGREES OF ENDANGERMENT	INTERGENERATIONAL LANGUAGE TRANSMISSION
Safe	Communication is uttered across all age groups; generational passage remains continuous.
Vulnerable	The majority of youngsters utilize the language, though its use might be limited to specific contexts, such as the household
Definitely Endangered	In contemporary society, youngsters are increasingly not acquiring language as their native dialect within their familial environment.
Severely Endangered	The ancestral tongue is utilized by elders and preceding age groups; although the parental cohort might comprehend it, they refrain from using it with their offspring or in their own interaction.
Critically Endangered	The most juvenile speakers are the elderly and senior generations, and they communicate the language partly and seldom
Extinct	There are no speakers left.

Source: UNESCO program on safeguarding endangered languages (2003)

Table 2.1 presents UNESCO's classification of six degrees of endangerment concerning intergenerational language transmission. Kikamba would therefore be classified as a vulnerable language, as its use is restricted to the home or family domain. However, findings from Muthoka's (2017) study on Kikamba language shift and endangerment in some Nairobi estates, point out that English and Kiswahili as dominant languages have encroached on the social domains and the present study seeks to study if this phenomenon has spread to regions that were previously considered 'safe' in language contact studies.

Another factor that is analyzed in this present study is the attitudes the community members have toward their language. If a particular language is viewed as

advantageous for social mobility, people are more likely to adopt it in formal settings, such as education and professional environments. Conversely, if a language is associated with cultural identity and heritage, it might be preferred in informal or familial contexts. These attitudes can lead to maintenance or shifts in language use over time.

Table 2.2: Community Members' Attitudes towards their Language

GRADE	Community Members' Attitudes towards their Language
5	Every individual cherishes their native tongue and desires its advancement.
4	Most members support language maintenance.
3	Numerous individuals advocate for the continuation of languages, while others are apathetic or might even favor their disappearance
2	Some members support language maintenance; others are indifferent or may even support language loss.
1	Only a few members support language maintenance; others are indifferent or may even support language loss.
0	The disappearance of a language is a matter of indifference to people, as they generally favor using a more prevalent tongue.

Source: UNESCO program on safeguarding endangered languages (2003)

Table 2.2 depicts the various levels of Community Members' Perspectives on their language as organized by UNESCO. The findings from the study revealed that Kikamba is placed in Grade 3, suggesting that a significant portion of community members endorse language preservation, whereas others are neutral or might even favor language attrition.

Language attitudes towards Kikamba language differ from one individual to another. In most cases, the adult generation tends to maintain their native language, whereas the younger generation is more vulnerable to losing their mother tongue. This is because of being exposed to global cultures and languages through media, education, and technology.

2.9 Theoretical Framework

The research was guided by two theories, namely, the Ethnolinguistic Vitality Model by Giles, Bourhis, and Taylor (1977) and the Domain Theory by Fishman (1991). The authors of Ethnolinguistic theory put up a three-cluster model in which several factors interact to give minority languages more or less vitality. These factors are status factors, demographic factors, and institutional support factors. A language group with a combination of these three factors will have a higher vitality and thus remain loyal to their indigenous language and vice versa (according to Appel and Muysken 1987).

2.9.1 Ethnolinguistic Vitality Model

Giles, Bourhis, and Taylor (1977) postulated a model to explore how socio-structural factors influence various aspects of intergroup dynamics, cross-cultural communication, acquiring second languages, preserving mother tongues, and changes in language usage. They identified key elements of objective ethnolinguistic vitality, which encompass factors related to status, demographics, and institutional backing.

The status factors are concerned with a language's economic, social, and symbolic status. When the socio-economic prospects of the users of a particular language are bleak, the pressure to switch their loyalty to another language is high. The speakers will develop negative attitudes towards themselves and their language, and hence, a language may be abandoned because of its inability to guarantee economic progress. Such a speech community is likely to move to the majority language that is seen to give them access to important social services like education, legal, and health services, and generally lead to upward social mobility (Appel and Muysken, 1987). For

example, in Kenya, a person's ability to communicate in a particular language might assist them in obtaining crucial services.

The demographic characteristics pertain to the total population within the speech community and how they are dispersed within a certain urban, regional, or national area. Finally, organizational backing elements (Breton, 1971) denote the level of formal and unofficial presence a language group possesses within the diverse establishments of a neighborhood, area, or nation. It was proposed that a speech community's ability to function well depended on how many of its members could communicate in their native tongue in a variety of settings, including the home, workplace, local government, church, and school system. All these socio-cultural factors can determine trends such as language maintenance, language shift, language loss, and inter-generational transmission of an indigenous language (Bourhis, 2001).

Bourhis et al. (1981) additionally introduced the concept of subjective vitality by utilizing the (Subjective Vitality Questionnaire) SVQ to scrutinize group members' appraisals of their group vitality and that of other linguistic groups significant in their vicinity. Via the SVQ questionnaire, participants assess the vitality of their group demographics, institutional support, and status elements of the objective vitality framework. A combination of objective and subjective vitality can be used to study a wide range of language behaviors, including self-reports of language use, language attitudes, language competence, and language choice in multilingual cultures.

On the other hand, objective ethnolinguistic vitality is critical in shaping individual linguistic networks, which serve as the major setting for the development and

maintenance of language knowledge and attitudes. The vitality of a language, whether it is being maintained or is in decline, is influenced by various interrelated factors, both positive and negative, that collectively position the language on a continuum of vitality. Thus, persistent patterns of language choice within the speech community decide whether a language will be maintained or changed over time. The heritage language is preserved if people continuously favour it in day-to-day interactions; if they prefer a different language, a shift takes place, resulting in decreased usage and, ultimately, possible linguistic loss. The current study explored key indicators proposed by Landweer (2008) that indicate the direction of language loyalty or disloyalty in a speech community.

These indicators included the domains in which the language is used, how often and in what manner code-switching occurred, demographic and communal interactions, societal attitudes both toward and within the speech community, and the prestige associated with the language. Language choice, the second indicator of ethnolinguistic vitality, looks at the number of domains where the language is utilized. Each time speakers interact within a specific sub-domain, they decide which language to use. These cumulative choices reveal the preferred language for each domain within the community's linguistic repertoire.

Code-switching is anticipated in a multilingual environment such as that of Kikamba speakers in Yatta sub-county. As demonstrated by diglossia, where a stable kind of multilingualism dictates language use depending on the situation, this phenomenon can appear consistently throughout the community. In situational code-switching, the choice of language is determined by the context, while in unbounded code-switching,

language selection shifts without a clear pattern or consistency. The resilience of the vernacular language within a community of speakers is influenced by the frequency and mode of code-switching.

The maintenance of a language is significantly influenced by the size of its speaker population. With significant speaker groups, their language will most likely survive because they have a larger number of people who can speak and share the language around in different places. Moreover, language dying is even accompanied by the very scenario of population spoken languages—where in those cases the ability of oral tradition to transmit the language from one generation to the next may be so weak that the members of the younger generation might opt for the dominant ones just to enjoy the socioeconomic benefits.

The language's vitality is at the same time a question of both the internal and external attitude people hold towards it. If the community of speakers has a good attitude towards its language, it will be a great help in their efforts to keep and preserve it. When the members of the community feel proud about their linguistic inheritance, use their language in many aspects of daily life, it will be a very strong factor promoting the language's existence and continuity. Moreover, the larger society's and institutions' support, such as government, media representation, and education systems, will not only create the situation that is favorable to the use and transfer of the language but will also facilitate it.

Landweer's criteria, namely: areas of language use, frequency and type of language variation, demographic patterns and social status of the language, are among the most important U indicators of the ethnolinguistic survival.

2.9.2 Domain Theory

Furthermore, the study made use of Fishman's Domain Theory (1991). The essential idea of this theory, initially put forward by Schmidt-Rohr in 1932, is that language, by nature a social and cultural phenomenon, should be researched solely through social interaction. It follows that the attitudinal as well as the pragmatic shifts in people's language use can be indicators of the extent to which social forces are operating on the language (Fishman, 1972). Fishman did not claim that he was abstracting all such influences and reducing their visibility through the domains but, rather, that he was drawing less discernible ones and making them more explicit by their articulation in terms of the domains (Fishman, 1972). Fishman gives five language use domains: family, friends, religion, education, and workplace. His study of language domains elucidates the usage of languages in various places within a multilingual community.

In the opinion of Fishman (1968), the choice between two languages by a speaker can largely depend on the appropriateness of a particular language in the given domain. According to Fishman (1964), the language that speakers in that given domain prefer is typically the standard, dominant, or prominent language. While the vernaculars are chosen and used in low domains or fewer domains, this language is employed by interlocutors in high domains. Fishman (1964) studied language choices in

multilingual societies using this concept. Domains are also said to be societal constructs that govern a group of specific interactions.

Nishimura (1997) stated that during a conversation, the setting, the individuals involved, their respective positions, and the subjects they address are all consistent. This concept originates from Fishman's inquiry: which language does someone speak, to whom are they speaking, and in what context (time and place) does this communication occur? For this particular research, the "who" aspect of the question identifies the speakers by their ethnic affiliation, specifically Kikamba speakers. The "what" pertains to the language being examined – Kikamba – and the "where" concerns the environments of communication, also known as the spheres of language use, which in this instance are Kamba homes in Yatta sub-county. Fishman also asserted that appropriate language choice suggests that speakers will select only one of the available languages or language variations to discuss particular subjects in specific situations.

The Domain Analysis Theory (Fishman, 1964, 1968) posits that as a language's sphere of application broadens, bilingual individuals within that area might gravitate towards the language or dialect employed across a wider range of contexts. Furthermore, these speakers tend to adopt the established or prevailing language of those domains. Baker and Jones (1998) contend that within a bilingual community, a single language typically holds a position of greater influence than the rest. According to Matiki (1997), this theoretical framework is effective in looking into the informants' reports regarding language use in various places. Thus, the theory will reveal the language distribution among the Kamba speakers in Yatta County, which covers various

domains like the family, i.e., intergenerational communication, education, friendship, trade, media and entertainment, and religion.

2.10 Summary of the Chapter

The second chapter has provided the deepest analysis possible of language loyalty. It has pointed out the dissemination of the findings from the studies across Africa and the other continents, thus giving a pretty complete picture of the factors that influence allegiance to a language and its eventual shifts in terms of social, cultural, economic, and educational aspects. The research method used was critiqued to guide the current study on how to adopt the best practices for doing similar research and at the same time, identifying the weaknesses that make this research necessary. The theoretical framework to be used in the study has also been discussed in the chapter. The next chapter presents the research methodology.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This section outlines the methodological framework that was employed in the current investigation. It encompasses the research approach selected for this study, the setting of the research, the target population, the number of participants and the methods for selecting them, the data-gathering tool, the pilot study, the accuracy and consistency of the tools, the steps for gathering data, the analysis of the data, and the moral principles guiding the research.

3.1 Research Design

The present study is sociolinguistic in nature, and it employed both qualitative and quantitative data, thus adopting a mixed research design. With a mixed study design, a researcher can take advantage of both approaches because the weaknesses of each are balanced out by the strengths of the other. As Patton (1990) puts it, mixed study design allows the combination of strengths to deal with the weaknesses of each single method, and hence, they will complement each other.

The use of this kind of approach was influenced largely by the research questions and the research objectives. Most of the research questions had the capability of producing data that is exclusively neither qualitative nor quantitative, but a combination of the two. Orodho (2003) and Fraenkel and Wallen (1993) point out that qualitative design is a method for gathering data through interviews or the distribution of questionnaires to a subset of individuals. Wambiri and Muthee (2010) further state that this is

conducted to ascertain the informant's perspectives, beliefs, and customs regarding a research subject. Consequently, the qualitative design allowed the researcher to obtain details on the linguistic behavior of the participants in a multilingual setting.

Then, quantitative design was used to look at the numeric data on the number of respondents whose language use patterns across the various domains show a change of loyalty and those who have maintained loyalty in the face of language contact. The design involved data analysis, which was used to determine the proportion of respondents who provided similar answers to the questionnaire. The researcher asked the same questions to various respondents when administering the questionnaires, and both self-administration and researcher administration were employed.

The responders in the self-administered approach received questionnaires by hand from the researcher, which they filled out and provided immediate feedback (in front of the researcher). In the second method, the researcher employed a questionnaire to conduct interviews with participants, paying particular attention to older (over 50 years old) respondents who had difficulty understanding the questions and writing clearly. Hence, the researcher was able to identify the language(s) that is (are) commonly used in the different domains to determine language loyalty in the area.

3.2 Research location

This current study was conducted in Yatta sub-county, Machakos County. It covers an area of 1057.30 km² with 172,583 (2019 KPHC) people living in the area. Yatta sub-county borders Kiambu County to the north and Kitui to the south, and has five county assembly wards, including Kithimani, Ikombe, Katangi, Matuu, and Ndalani.

The area is of particular interest to this study due to the rapid urbanization that has seen the growth of towns in rural areas, thus attracting people of different tribes and ethnicities. Also, the area has been in close contact with other communities, especially the Gikuyu, the Somali, the Maasai, and others; however, the Kamba speakers form the majority of the people living in the area. Because of socioeconomic interactions between the different speech communities, it is essential to communicate using the lingua franca, particularly Kiswahili. The region of study was also selected because of accessibility, familiarity, economy, and immediate rapport with the respondents.

3.3 Target population

The Kikamba speakers living in Yatta sub-county, Machakos County were the target population for this research. This population was deliberately chosen to guarantee that the study would be able to provide an accurate picture of the community's experiences and viewpoints. The study encompassed younger Kamba speakers (ages 18 to 25 years) who were either born and/or raised in the area of research and older speakers (over 50 years), thus allowing a deeper understanding of language loyalty in the different age groups.

Moreover, the participants were from different social and economic levels, including farms and small cities, thus making it possible to have thorough coverage of different aspects of the Yatta language. A stratified random sampling method was used to select about 100 respondents from 378 households, which helped in ensuring that the Kamba community in Yatta sub-county was represented in a way that was not only focused on language choice but also on cultural identity and intergenerational language practices.

3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Procedure

A sample is a subset of a population that has been carefully chosen to reflect all of the salient traits of the entire population, according to Borg and Gall (1989). The study used stratified random sampling and purposive sampling to carry out this investigation. Stratified random sampling is taken in each homogeneous subgroup once the population has been divided into stratified random sampling groups, while purposive sampling involves relying on one's judgement when selecting respondents. Researchers employ the purposive sampling technique to find a small group of people who fit the criteria, such as age, ethnicity, and length of stay in the area of study.

Although Gay (1992) says that the larger the sample, the smaller the sampling error. In this study, a sample of 378 respondents was first identified using simple random sampling from the target population, focusing on two age cohorts: 18–25 years and above 50 years. To ensure representation across these age groups, stratified sampling was then applied, dividing the respondents into strata based on age. From this pool, purposive sampling was employed to select 100 respondents, ensuring equal representation from each of the five county assembly wards in Yatta Sub-County. In addition, the purposive selection process deliberately considered gender balance, age distribution, residential location (urban vs. rural wards), and socioeconomic status, so that the final group of informants reflected the diversity of the Kikamba-speaking community.

The research aimed at getting a total of 100 respondents, 50 younger speakers, and 50 older speakers distributed across the age brackets. The study included different age categories, recognizing age as an important variable in language use. The age of a

speaker influences his or her choice of language and thus reveals his or her attitudes toward his or her mother tongue. Since the snowballing technique is faulted for bringing respondents who share similar characteristics, thorough vetting was done to ensure that each respondent was unique in some way.

3.5 Data Collection Methods and Instruments

According to Kombo and Tromp (2006), data collection is the practice of collecting facts to strengthen or support specific claims. It is possible to better understand a complicated topic and make the facts clear by compiling ideas, perceptions, observations, behaviours, and habits for analysis (Kombo and Tromp, 2006). Three techniques for gathering data are mentioned by Kumar R. (2011): surveys, interviews, and observation.

This study utilized questionnaires and interviews (cf. Appendix 1 and 2) as instruments of data collection. The researcher used the Language Use and Attitude Questionnaire (LUAQ), adopted from Fishman (1965), because it can reach a large number of respondents in a short period. Furthermore, it gives respondents a sense of security because they are not required to reveal their identity, which motivates them to give accurate and trustworthy information.

In order to get the most detailed responses, semi-structured interviews were held with a quarter of those who filled in the LUAQ. This set of people, called the key informants, was selected by considering factors like gender, age, area of living, and social class. The interviewees gave their approval as the researcher needed to tape the conversations to extract all the information.

The LUAQ was divided into four sections labeled A, B, C, and D. In sections A and B of the questionnaire, the main focus was on the age and gender of the respondents and on determining their preferred language for communication with different people. On the other hand, sections C and D contained questions meant to express the respondents' opinions about the use of Kikamba in different contexts. The sections together aimed to bring out the generation-wise differences in language preferences and also to show the patterns of language use among Kikamba speakers in different areas. The gathered information also helped in comparing speakers' attitudes toward the use of different languages.

These senior community members along with the illiterate persons were interviewed to obtain information on a variety of issues. This included demographic, political, and social history of the Yatta people. The researcher then used this information to evaluate the extent to which language use patterns were influenced by sociopolitical and economic situations.

3.6 Piloting study

A pilot study to a smaller sample of the target population in Yatta sub-county was done in July 2023 mainly to check and measure the reliability and validity of the instruments and development of the items for the questionnaire. Likewise, it gave directions about what parts of the research tools should be modified to achieve the study's objectives. The pilot study was executed in the same sub-county as the main study in order to secure that the respondents had the same sociolinguistic, cultural, and demographic characteristics as the actual study population, thus giving realistic feedback on the suitability of the tools. The pilot study was done in the same context

which also helped in reducing the likelihood of extraneous variables being introduced that might have come up if a different population had been used. Bell (1987) claims that piloting gives information on the length of time each respondent takes to answer a question and it also helps to ensure that all respondents get the same clear and consistent interpretation of the items.

3.7 Data Analysis

The corpus that was collected encompassed various aspects of language use and attitudes, and it was divided into three levels in such a way: first, patterns of language use among Kikamba speakers in different contexts, age effect on Kikamba language use, and lastly, opinions and attitudes of Kikamba speakers towards Kikamba. Following the domain theory, the different domains were determined, which included family, work, education, trade, religion, etc., alongside media and social activities.

Descriptive statistics including the computation of percentages and frequency distributions were done with the help of Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). This was apparent in frequency tables 4.1 to 4.12 in chapter 4, which showed the dominant language used in each domain—Kikamba, Kiswahili, or English. The language use patterns in the various domains were identified by both the younger (18-25 years) and the older (over 50 years) respondents.

The age factor in Kikamba language usage was studied to evaluate its ethnolinguistic vitality among the younger and the older respondents. The analysis was conducted using SPSS, with results presented in tables. To complement the quantitative findings, age-related themes from interviews—such as younger speakers' shifting preferences

and older speakers' role in language maintenance—were extracted to provide deeper interpretation. See tables 4.13 to 4.18 in chapter four.

Lastly, perceptions and attitudes toward Kikamba were analyzed using questionnaire data and interview responses. Quantitative attitude data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, and these insights provided context and a deeper interpretation of the statistical findings. The findings were then categorized, calculated in percentages, and discussed. Refer to tables 19 to 22 in chapter four

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Research ethics, according to the Economic and Social Research Council (2004), cited by Gray 2009, refers to the moral standards that direct research. Four principles are supported by Mugenda (2008): voluntary and informed permission, privacy and confidentiality, and anonymity. The rights of everyone who volunteers to engage in a study should likewise be protected, as should the vulnerable or special populations.

Prior to commencing the investigation, the investigator courteously notified the individuals involved, articulating the study's objective and emphasizing that their involvement was optional. Given that a portion of the participants were learners, the examiner obtained authorization from their guardians or headteachers before undertaking the research. Informed consent was also included in the introductory section of the questionnaires, as well as the interview schedule. The respondents did not need to include their names on the questionnaires, and even where names were needed, they were assured of their confidentiality. Finally, the researcher obtained a

letter of authorization and a National Council for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) permit before carrying out the research.

3.9 Summary of Chapter 3

This chapter has given a thorough account of the investigation's procedural aspects which includes the study's design, location, participant group, selection mechanisms, and data collection methods and tools. Besides, the ethical issues and data analysis procedures are also discussed in detail. Each component is very detailed and gives justification for the selected techniques. To find out about the preferred language of each participant, the questionnaire was organized in sections and their answers were analyzed. The specific focus was on the frequency of usage of the Kikamba language by its speakers, which was an indicator of the level of language loyalty. The next chapter presents the study's results.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION

4.0 Introduction

The findings of the study are presented in this chapter by following the three research objectives. The text is divided into sections relating to language use patterns, age influence, and the Kamba speakers' attitudes towards Kikamba in Yatta sub-county.

Residents of Yatta Sub-County, Machakos County, who were fluent in Kikamba were the respondents for this research. The sample consisted of one hundred participants, who were meticulously selected to represent different age groups, genders, education levels, occupations, and social classes. A stratified sampling method was used to select the participants in order to have a diverse and representative sample. The response rate was 100%, which means that all the invited participants participated, showing a very high level of engagement. The majority of the respondents came from the same geographical area, thus limiting the study to that particular region. Choosing age as a factor in language usage, equal number of participants were selected from two different age groups: young adults (18-25 years) and seniors (over 50 years), respectively.

4.1 Language use patterns among Kikamba speakers in Yatta sub-county, Machakos county

The primary goal of this research was to conduct an analysis of the linguistic behavior of Kikamba speakers in Yatta sub-county, Machakos County, within six different domains. To accomplish this, a structured questionnaire (see Appendix 1) was developed along with data collection and a sample of the population by setting

predetermined standards (see Sub-section 3.2). The questionnaire was subdivided into various sections in order to gather thorough information.

In Part B of the questionnaire, which dealt exclusively with the different domains of linguistic preferences, the respondents were asked to report in detail their language selections when in communication with various interlocutors. It was the researchers' intention to portray the different domains wherein Kikamba is recognized and is still being heard. By documenting the various aspects of the language's use the study aimed to provide some insights into the dynamics of Kikamba's functioning in interpersonal communication. It started with an analysis of the language use patterns of the youngest age group, then stepped to the examination of older one's patterns.

4.1.1 The language use patterns among the younger respondents (18-25 years) in the family domain

Within the home environment, the study focused on situations involving interactions with various family members.

Table 4.1: amily Domain

Domain	Questionnaire items	Language (in %)		
		Kmb	Kis	Eng
Family	1. When you are speaking to your mother, you use	80	18	2
	2. When your mother is speaking to you, she uses	86	14	0
	3. When you are speaking to your father, you use	74	24	2
	4. When your father is speaking to you, he uses	72	24	4
	5. When you are speaking to your siblings, you use	34	66	0

For the family domain, the respondents were first asked to indicate which language they used when speaking to their mothers. As illustrated in Table 4.1, 80% of the younger respondents use Kikamba when speaking to their mothers, 18% use Kiswahili, and 2% use English. When the question was reversed, 86% of mothers were found to use Kikamba when communicating with their children, 14% used Kiswahili, and none used English. Regarding the language used when speaking with their fathers, 74% of respondents stated they used Kikamba, 24% used Kiswahili, and 2% used English. For item 4, 72% of the respondents use Kikamba when speaking to their fathers, 24% use Kiswahili, and 4% use English. Lastly, when the respondents are speaking to their siblings, only 34% use Kikamba, 66% use Kiswahili, and 0% use English.

The results in Table 4.1 show that in the family domain, Kikamba is leading except when the respondents are speaking to their siblings, followed by Kiswahili and, lastly, English. These results show that a majority of parents in Yatta are still using Kikamba to communicate with their children. According to Lao (2004), the language choice of parents and children is the most important factor in preserving or losing a language throughout generations. Positive interactions between parents and their children in their first language can increase the likelihood of language loyalty over many generations.

However, in regard to their language choices when communicating with their siblings, a significant majority (66%) reported using Kiswahili. This suggests that Kiswahili plays a dominant role in sibling interactions, possibly due to its widespread use as a

lingua franca in Kenya. The preference for Kiswahili in this context should be investigated further.

4.1.2 The language use patterns among the younger respondents (18-25 years) in the educational domain

In the education domain, respondents were asked to identify the language most commonly used in educational settings, including in classrooms, during discussions, and while studying.

Table 4.2 Educational domain

Domain	Questionnaire items	Language (in %)		
		Kmb	Kis	Eng
Educ. domain	1. Which language(s) do you primarily use in educational settings (e.g., in the classroom, during discussions, or when studying)?	0	38	62

Table 4.2 shows the results on language use patterns in the second domain, which is education. When respondents were asked about their language preferences in this domain, 62% indicated that they use English, while the remaining (38%) respondents use Kiswahili. Notably, none of the younger participants reported using Kikamba, suggesting that the language may have a limited presence in formal learning environments.

This trend could be influenced by institutional policies that prioritize English and Kiswahili as mediums of instruction, as well as broader societal attitudes toward language use in education. However, further research should be conducted to explain

if this is the case, especially with the introduction of the CBC curriculum, which includes mother tongue as a subject.

4.1.3 The language use patterns among the younger respondents (18-25 years) in the friendship domain

In the friendship domain, the study examined the predominant language used in conversations with peers of the same age group as well as with adults.

Table 4.3 Friendship Domain

Domain	Questionnaire items	Language (in %)		
		Kmb	Kis	Eng
Friendship	1. When you are speaking to your age mates outside school, you use	20	78	2
	2. When speaking to adults in the village, you use	68	32	0

In the third domain, the respondents were asked what language they used while speaking to their age mates outside school. According to the data presented in Table 4.3 above, 78% of the respondents said they use Kiswahili, 20% use Kikamba, and 2% use English. The second item in this domain required them to state what language they used while speaking to adults in the village. 68% said they use Kikamba, 32% said they use Kiswahili, and 0% use English. The results in Table 4.3 indicate that the respondents choose their language of communication based on who they are speaking with. This is consistent with Michieka's (2012) findings that Kenyans have always selected their languages based on specific contexts.

The results also seem to agree with what Michieka (2012) noted: that a sizable number of Kenyan native languages are under threat from the linguistic and cultural influence of English and Kiswahili, whereby Kiswahili appears to be competing most for the

interpersonal domain among the youth. Similar to what Batibo (2005) further observed for urban youth, it seems to also apply to the youth from Yatta subcounty that the youth mostly practice subtractive bilingualism, which encourages mother tongue disloyalty. The findings also support the observation made by Whiteley (1974b) that speaking English or Swahili well is considered a sign of education in rural Kenya; as a result, speaking Kiswahili reinforces this status.

4.1.4 The language use patterns among the younger respondents (18-25 years) in the trade domain

In the trade and business domain, respondents were asked to specify the language they commonly use when interacting with traders during buying and selling activities.

Table 4.4 Trade Domain

Domain	Questionnaire items	Language (in %)		
		Kmb	Kis	Eng
Trade	1. When you are speaking to the shopkeeper or seller, you use	48	52	0

The results in Table 4.4 show that when respondents were asked about their language choices when interacting with shopkeepers or sellers, 52% reported using Kiswahili, while 48% indicated they use Kikamba, and none use English. In the trade domain, Kiswahili is leading while Kikamba follows closely, and English is not used at all. This suggests that Kiswahili serves as the dominant language for commercial transactions, likely due to its role as a widely spoken lingua franca in Kenya. The preference for Kiswahili in these interactions may be driven by its accessibility and familiarity across diverse linguistic backgrounds, facilitating smoother communication between buyers and sellers. Meanwhile, the use of Kikamba by a

smaller segment of respondents highlights the presence of localized language practices in marketplace exchanges, particularly in regions where Kikamba speakers are concentrated. These results provide insights into how language and commerce interact, showing how pragmatism, cultural identification, and the need for mutual understanding in daily interactions all impact linguistic choices.

4.1.5 The language use patterns among the younger respondents (18-25 years) in the religious domain

Finding the most often used language in different facets of church activities was the main focus of language use in the religious sector. The study's responses were restricted to Christian-based worship activities, such as worship, prayer, sermons, and reading announcements, because all of the participants were Christians.

Table 4.5 Religious Domain

Domain	Questionnaire items	Language (in %)		
		Kmb	Kis	Eng
Religion	1. Which language is used at your place of worship	48	50	2

Concerning the language the respondents mostly used at their place of worship, Table 4.5 shows that 50% of the respondents said they use Kiswahili, 48% said they use Kikamba, and 2% use English. The majority of younger respondents said they preferred to attend their church's first service, which was usually held in Kiswahili and/or English. This preference may reflect their greater comfort and familiarity with these languages in formal and communal settings. The findings support Mugane's (2003) hypothesis that ethnic languages are mostly utilised for intra-community communication. However, the theory also highlights the potential risk of declining

usage outside these communities, especially among younger individuals and urbanized generations.

4.1.6 The language use patterns among the younger respondents (18-25 years) in the media and entertainment domain

In the media and entertainment domain, the study examined the language used on digital mobile phones, given the respondents' frequent interaction with social media.

It also explored their most preferred TV and radio stations.

Table 4.6 Media and entertainment Domain

Domain	Questionnaire items	Language (in %)		
		Kmb	Kis	Eng
Media and entertainment	1. Which language(s) do you primarily use when texting or communicating on social media?	10	38	52
	2. Your favorite TV/radio show is broadcast in	6	48	46

Finally, in the last domain, the respondents were asked which language they preferred when texting or communicating on social media. Table 4.6 illustrates that 52% of the respondents reported that they use English, 38% use Kiswahili, and 10% use Kikamba. The second item in this domain, which asked what favorite TV/radio show is broadcast in, 48% of the respondents said Kiswahili, 46% English, and 6% Kikamba.

This preference for the use of Kiswahili and English in social media by a majority of the younger respondents, and having their favorite TV/radio program broadcast in Kiswahili followed by English, further confirms the view that young adults prefer using languages other than their mother tongue for communication (Batibo, 2005). In both mainstream media and social media, mother tongue is the least desired choice. Kikamba occupies a very small space in contemporary media platforms. This is

worrying since many young people today spend long hours communicating through social media. Our ethnic languages are in danger of dying.

In the next subsections, we shall focus on language use patterns among older respondents across six domains.

4.1.7 The language use patterns among the older respondents (above 50 years) in the family domain

Like the younger respondents, the older respondents were also asked to specify the language they used when interacting with various family members in the home domain.

Table 4.7: Family Domain

Domain	Questionnaire items	Language (in %)		
		Kmb	Kis	Eng
Family	1. When speaking to your parents, you use	100	0	0
	2. When speaking with your children, you use	74	22	4
	3. When you are speaking to your spouse, you use	92	8	0

The first discussion centred on the home domain, with the corresponding responses presented in Table 4.7. When the respondents were asked which language they used when communicating with their parents, all (100%) reported that they use Kikamba. In the second item, when the respondents were speaking to their children, 74% of them said Kikamba, 22% said Kiswahili, and 4% said English. Finally, when asked which language the respondents used when speaking to their spouses, 92% said Kikamba, 8% said Kiswahili, and none used English.

The results presented in Table 4.7 show that all the older respondents (100%) always used Kikamba when speaking to their parents. This discovery is curious and will require more analysis to explain the reason why the population of 50 and over mainly resorts to Kikamba in communicating with their parents. The results have indicated that although Kikamba is still the most frequently spoken language in family contexts, Kiswahili is slowly making its way into parent-child communication. This is in line with Dwivedi's (2014) conclusion that in a multilingual country, where the government promotes certain languages, those languages eventually become dominant while the future of indigenous languages is bleak. These trends not only highlight the transformation of language use among families but also point out the link between the past and current trends in linguistics.

4.1.8 The language use patterns among the older respondents (above 50 years) in the friendship domain

In the friendship domain, the study examined the predominant language used by the respondents when interacting with friends.

Table 4.8: Friendship Domain

Domain	Questionnaire items	Language (in %)		
		Kmb	Kis	Eng
Friendship	1. When speaking with friends, you use	94	6	0

Table 4.8 presents the findings in the second domain, friendship. On the question of what language the respondents used while speaking to their friends, 94% said they always used Kikamba, 6% said Kiswahili, and none used English. This implies that the older Kamba speakers have not shifted to using other languages for domains and

functions that were a preserve of their native language, as observed by Mesthrie (2001).

4.1.9 The language use patterns among the older respondents (above 50 years) in the workplace domain

This section of the study focused on the language respondents predominantly used in their workplace, as well as when accessing government services.

Table 4.9 Workplace Domain

Domain	Questionnaire items	Language (in %)		
		Kmb	Kis	Eng
Workplace Domain	1. When at your workplace, you use	46	48	6
	2. When you are seeking services in government offices within the sub-county, you use	42	58	0

The third domain of language use in the questionnaire was the workplace, and the responses are recorded in Table 4.9. With regard to what language the respondents used at their workplace, 48% said they used Kiswahili, 46% said they used Kikamba, and 6% said they used English. Of these respondents, 18 worked in the formal sector, including teachers and nurses, while the rest (32) were in the informal sector, that is, business people and farmers. Although all those in the formal sector either used Kiswahili or English at the workplace, only 6 of those in the informal sector said they used Kiswahili.

The use of Kiswahili language by a majority at the workplace supports the argument by McMahon (1994), Mufwene (2001), and Brenzinger (2006) that learning and using nationally accepted non-indigenous languages enhances chances of social and economic mobility. Respondents were also asked what language they used while

seeking services in government offices in Yatta sub-county. The results indicate that 58% of the respondents said they used Kiswahili, while 42% said they used Kikamba, and none used English. The use of Kiswahili by a majority in government offices may be in response to the official designation of Kiswahili as a national language, as noted by Batibo (2008). In addition, apart from their mother tongue, many of the rural populations are more fluent in Kiswahili than in English. However, the total lack of English use in government offices is an interesting finding and, therefore, a gap for future research

4.1.10 The language use patterns among the older respondents (above 50 years) in the religious domain

Given that all the respondents were Christians, the study aimed to determine the predominant language used in various church activities, such as worship, prayer, sermons, and announcements.

Table 4.10: Religious Domain

Domain	Questionnaire items	Language (in %)		
		Kmb	Kis	Eng
Religion	1. When in your place of worship, you use	90	10	0

The fourth domain explored the language mostly used in the religious domain, with the respondents' answers documented in Table 4.10. When asked what language the respondents used at their place of worship, 90% of the respondents said they always used Kikamba, while 10% said they always used Kiswahili, and none of them used English. The researcher observed that in larger churches in Matuu and Kithimani locations, two services were held: the first was conducted in English and Kiswahili,

while the second was primarily in Kikamba. Notably, most older respondents attended the latter service, reflecting their preference for Kikamba in religious gatherings.

4.1.11 The language use patterns among the older respondents (above 50 years) in the trade domain

In the trade domain, respondents were asked to specify the language they predominantly used during interactions related to buying and selling.

Table 4.11: Trade Domain

Domain	Questionnaire items	Language (in %)		
		Kmb	Kis	Eng
Trade	1. Which language do you use in the shopping centre	88	12	0

The respondents were asked about the language they use when buying and selling. As illustrated in Table 4.11, 88% of the respondents use Kikamba when in the market, 12% use Kiswahili, and none use English. Kikamba was leading in this domain, implying that Kikamba is still the dominant language in commercial interactions among this population, most likely due to shared cultural identity and the familiarity it provides in business exchanges. The presence of native-speaking local sellers and customers may further contribute to the preference for Kikamba in market settings, providing an environment where the language thrives. Kiswahili was chosen by the remaining respondents, possibly for transactions or wider communication with non-Kikamba speakers.

4.1.12 The language use patterns among the older respondents (above 50 years) in the Communication and entertainment domain

Lastly, respondents were asked to specify the language they commonly used for calling or texting, given that all owned mobile phones, as well as the language in which their favorite TV or radio programs were broadcast.

Table 4.12: Communication and entertainment domain

Domain	Questionnaire items	Language (in %)		
		Kmb	Kis	Eng
Communication and entertainment	1. Which language(s) do you primarily use when texting or calling on your mobile phone?	50	38	12
	2. Your favorite TV/radio show is broadcast in	36	58	6

The last domain was communication and entertainment. When respondents were asked about their language preferences while using mobile devices, 50% reported exclusively using Kikamba, 38% said they use Kiswahili, and 12% said they use English. However, when asked which language their favorite shows were in, 58% of the respondents said Kiswahili, 36% said Kikamba, and 6% said English.

This preference for Kiswahili may be attributed to the fact that larger television stations tend to offer more comprehensive and high-quality programming, including news, entertainment, and educational content. The contrast in language choice between mobile device usage and media consumption highlights how accessibility, content variety, and production quality influence linguistic preferences in different contexts.

4.2 The effect of the age of speakers on their language use patterns across different domains in Yatta sub-county, Machakos County.

The second objective of the study was to investigate the effect of the age of the speaker on the language use patterns of the respondents in Kamba households. To achieve this objective, the respondents were asked several questions derived from sections A and B of the questionnaire (refer to the appendix). The findings from the two respondent groups—younger and older—were systematically compared and presented in a table format.

4.2.1 Respondents' First Language Learned

Firstly, the respondents were asked which language they learned as their mother tongue to provide insight into intergenerational transmission and the potential for language preservation, and the results are as represented in Table 4.13

Table 4.13: The language the respondents learned as their first language

First Language	Younger Respondents (18-25 years)	Older Respondents (above 50 years)
Kikamba	66%	100%
Kiswahili	44%	0%
English	0%	0%

Table 4.13 indicates that all (100%) of the older respondents reported that they acquired Kikamba as their first language, and 66% of the younger respondents also learned Kikamba as their first language. Furthermore, 44% of the younger respondents said they acquired Kiswahili as their primary language. None of the respondents stated learning English as their first language. Therefore, the results indicate that a higher percentage of the older respondents are leading in Kikamba language acquisition, while the younger respondents are leading in Kiswahili language acquisition.

These findings reveal that among the majority of the respondents, intergenerational transmission of Kikamba is uninterrupted; thus, according to the UNESCO Ad Hoc Expert Group on Endangered Languages (2003), Kikamba is a safe language. Nevertheless, the results also show a decline in the intergenerational transmission of Kikamba, and this was mainly observed among parents living in and around the major towns in Yatta sub-county, that is, Kithimani and Matuu locations. It is quite unlikely that children who do not acquire a language from their parents will be able to teach it to their children, and this means that the intergenerational transmission of Kikamba will continue to decline among urbanized populations.

4.2.2 Respondents' ability to speak Kikamba

The respondents were asked about their proficiency levels in Kikamba, which is likely to influence their communicative patterns in different contexts.

Table 4.14: Respondents' ability to speak Kikamba

Kikamba fluency ratings	Younger respondents	Older Respondents
Fluent	60%	100%
Less fluent	22%	0
Cannot speak	18%	0

Table 4.14 shows that all (100%) of the older respondents claimed to be able to speak their mother tongue fluently. As concerns the younger respondents, 60% said they could speak Kikamba fluently, 22% reported they spoke with less fluency, while 18% could not speak Kikamba fluently. The results demonstrate that the older respondents outscored the younger respondents in Kikamba proficiency levels.

It is evident that fluency in Kikamba is declining among the younger respondents.

Whereas language loyalty is evident in the older respondents' group, since 100% are

fluent in Kikamba, the younger group has begun exhibiting a decline in Kikamba language loyalty.

4.2.3. Code switching

The respondents were asked if they switched to any other language when speaking Kikamba, and the results are presented in Table 4.15 below.

Table 4.15: Whether the respondents switched to any other language when speaking Kikamba

Switches to other languages while speaking Kikamba	Younger respondents	Older respondents
Yes	88	34
No	12	66

Table 4.15 shows that only a minority of the older respondents (34%) switched to other languages when speaking Kikamba, while 66% said they did not. On the other hand, the majority of the younger respondents (88%) switched to other languages when speaking Kikamba, while 12% said they did not. Younger respondents tended to employ codeswitching in their conversations as opposed to older respondents, who used codeswitching when encountering lexical gaps in their mother tongue.

4.2.4 Respondents' ability to read and write in Kikamba

The respondents were asked about their proficiency in both reading and writing in their mother tongue, and the results are presented below.

Table 4.16: Whether the respondents could read and write Kikamba fluently

How would you rate your ability to read and write in Kikamba?	Younger respondents	Older respondents
Fluent in both reading and writing	48	100
Limited ability in both reading and writing	34	0
Cannot read or write in Kikamba	18	0

Table 4.16 shows that all (100%) the older Kamba speakers claimed that they could read and write the Kamba language fluently. Among the younger respondents, 48% said they can read and write in Kikamba fluently, 34% said they have limited ability in reading and writing in Kikamba, while 18% said they cannot read or write in Kikamba. In both reading and writing in Kikamba, the older outscored the younger respondents; thus, age is a factor in determining whether one can read and write the Kikamba language.

The younger respondents reported that they hardly write anything in Kikamba since there were no opportunities before to utilize their knowledge of the mother tongue in fields like education, hence, they turned to the mainstream languages. According to Batibo (2005), the practice of writing down language is typically beneficial for language maintenance since it elevates the language's social and symbolic standing.

4.2.5 Respondents' knowledge of Kikamba proverbs, folktales, or oral poetry

The respondents were asked if they knew proverbs, folktales, or oral poetry in their native language. In addition, they were asked to state at least 5 proverbs in Kikamba.

Table 4.17: Whether the respondents knew Kikamba proverbs, folktales, or poetry

Knows Kikamba proverbs, folktales, or oral poetry	Younger respondents (18-25 years)	Older respondents (above 50 years)
I know proverbs, folktales, and oral poetry	22	100
I have limited knowledge of proverbs, folktales, and oral poetry	54	0
I am not familiar with any	24	0

Table 4.17 shows that all the older respondents (100%) reported that they know Kamba proverbs, folktales, or poetry, which is an important sign of a good understanding of a given language. This indicates that they can enjoy the richness and wisdom that lie within the proverbs, which is useful in teaching, cautioning, and advising. Among the younger respondents, 22% knew Kamba proverbs, folktales, or poetry, 54% had limited knowledge of Kikamba oral literature, and 24% were not familiar with any of it.

This information shows that the lack of widespread knowledge of the language among the youth negatively affected their ability to acquire other important aspects of the language, which may in turn affect their loyalty to Kikamba. This may be attributed to the restrictions laid on using Kikamba formerly, having only learned the language for a brief moment in lower primary school (Mulatya, 2013).

Language preservation remains prevalent, particularly among people with strong cultural and linguistic ties (Batibo, 2005). Poetry, proverbs, and folktales communicate feelings, thus helping people form strong emotional bonds with their language and culture, connecting them to their roots. Although limited exposure to

folklore may affect language loyalty among the younger respondents, it was encouraging to observe that most of them listened to Kamba songs.

4.2.6 A Comparison of Older and Younger Respondents' Language Patterns Across Six Domains

Language use patterns vary significantly across different age groups and domains, reflecting shifts in communication preferences, cultural influences, and societal changes.

Table 4.18: The effect of the age of the speaker on the respondents' language use patterns across six domains

Domain	Younger Respondents (18-25 years)			Older Respondents (above 50 years)		
	Kmb	Kis	Eng	Kmb	Kis	Eng
Family	69.2	29.2	1.6	88	10	1.3
Formal	0	38	62	44	53	3
Friendship	44	55	1	94	6	0
Marketplace	48	52	0	88	12	0
Religion	48	50	2	90	10	0
Communication and entertainment	8	43	49	43	48	9

From the data illustrated in Table 4.18, it is clear that there are considerable differences between the generations in their language usage in various spheres. The family domain was characterized by the older group interacting by Kikamba predominantly (88% of the time). Kiswahili was second in usage at 10%, while English was a minuscule part of the communication with a mere 1.3%. In contrast, the young group spoke by means of Kikamba (69.2%), followed by Kiswahili (29.2%)

and then English (1.6%) being their last choice in the language. The same trend was observed in the business and religious domains, where Kikamba was leading for both younger and older respondents, with the latter having slightly more control over their native language.

In the friendship sphere, the older respondents (94%) claimed that within their interactions, Kikamba was the only language used, while for the younger group, Kiswahili (55%) was the preferred language, with only 44% reporting using Kikamba. Furthermore, in the area of religion, older respondents were more inclined to use Kikamba while younger ones chose Kiswahili. Finally, in communication and entertainment, the younger audience showed a liking for English (49%) and Kiswahili (43%), while among older respondents, the languages of communication were Kiswahili (48%) and Kikamba (43%) in this regard.

The observations made echo very strong social and cultural connections as well as the ongoing use of the Kikamba language among the older respondents in daily interactions. Nonetheless, the young respondents without a doubt chose Kiswahili in all spheres except the home domain where Kikamba was still the most used language. This means that the younger generation is turning more and more to Kiswahili for communication in larger social, educational, and work-related contexts, even if Kikamba is still a major language in family relations. Such language use trends are indicative of the changes in language use that are more or less dependent on the above-mentioned factors of generation shift, multilingual exposure, and society's impact in general.

The first stage of linguistic endangerment, according to Mesthrie (2001), is when a speech community starts using a language other than their own tongue for communicative contexts and purposes traditionally reserved for their original tongue. This seems to be the situation happening through the action of some of the older adults choosing to speak to their children in Kiswahili.

4.3 Attitudes Kamba speakers have toward their mother tongue

Lastly, the study looked into how Kikamba speakers in Machakos County's Yatta Sub-County felt about their mother tongue in different situations. Language attitudes encompass the opinions, beliefs, and biases that speakers hold regarding a particular language. Assessing positive and negative sentiments towards the language under investigation is an important measure of linguistic loyalty. To achieve this, the respondents were asked to respond to questionnaire items in sections C and D of the LUAQ (Refer to the appendix).

We will begin by examining the attitudes of younger respondents before shifting our focus to the older group, specifically regarding the use of Kikamba across various domains in comparison to Kiswahili and English.

4.3.1 Attitudes the younger respondents (18-25 years) have about the importance of their mother tongue in various domains within Yatta sub-county

In Section C, the respondents shared their opinions on the language they considered essential for effective communication across six distinct domains. This is significant as it provides direct insight into their attitudes toward the language, which, in turn,

influences their willingness to preserve it. Responses obtained from this section are displayed in Table 19 below.

Table 4.19: Perceptions of prestige

Areas	Language (%)		
	Kmb	Kis	Eng
1. Education	4	44	52
2. Workplace	10	66	24
3. Trade (business)	16	74	10
4. Friendship	20	70	10
5. Cultural identity	92	8	0

In the education domain, over half of the respondents (52%) identified English as significant, closely followed by Kiswahili (44%), while 4% considered the Kikamba language important. For work situations within the sub-county, 66% of the respondents indicated that Kiswahili language was important, 24% said English language was important, and only 10% of the respondents said Kikamba was important. When asked what language was important in trade or business, 74% said Kiswahili language was important, 16% said Kikamba language was important, and 10% chose English.

In addition, 70% of the respondents indicated that the Kiswahili language was important when socializing with friends, 20% of the respondents said Kikamba language was important, and 10% chose English. Lastly, 92% of the respondents chose Kikamba language for cultural identity, 8% chose Kiswahili, and none chose English.

The results reveal that, except for cultural identity, the younger respondents regard Kiswahili as the appropriate means of communication in most of the other domains. This may be attributed to the great progress that has been achieved in advancing the linguistic rights of Kiswahili, with the language being promoted as a neutral language

of wider communication for different sectors of government and businesses, both in urban and rural areas.

However, in education, English leads, closely followed by Kiswahili. This could stem from the prevalent use of Kiswahili and English as the primary languages of teaching in schools, whereas Kikamba, similar to other native tongues, had its use in academic settings limited to lower elementary levels (Mulatya, 2013). These outcomes also reinforce Bongeni and Kapp's (2007) assertion that students view English as the language that will advance their economic well-being and future personal growth.

4.3.2 Attitudes the older respondents (above 50 years) have about the importance of their mother tongue in various domains within Yatta sub-county

The same items in Section C of the questionnaire were administered to the older respondents, and the responses are recorded in Table 20 below.

Table 4.20: Perceptions of prestige

Areas	Languages (%)		
	Kmb	Kis	Eng
1. Education	24	32	44
2. Workplace	26	52	12
3. Trade (business)	58	42	0
4. Friendship	96	4	0
5. Cultural identity	100	0	0

In regards to education, 44% of the respondents indicated that the English language was important, followed by Kiswahili (32%), and 24% said Kikamba was important.

In the workplace, 52% of the respondents preferred Kiswahili, 26% said Kikamba language was important, and 12% said English was important. When asked what language was important in trade or business, 58% of the respondents said Kikamba,

42% said Kiswahili, and none chose English. For socializing with friends, 96% of the respondents indicated that Kikamba was important, 4% said Kiswahili language was important, and none chose English. For cultural identity, all respondents (100%) said Kikamba language was important.

Except for education and the workplace, the older respondents valued Kikamba as important for various aspects of their daily lives. It is interesting that Kiswahili is gaining traction also among the older respondents. This may be attributed to the great progress that has been achieved in advancing the linguistic rights of Kiswahili, with the language being promoted as a neutral language of wider communication for different sectors of government and businesses, both in urban and rural areas.

To further understand the attitudes toward Kikamba among the respondents, the researcher asked their opinions regarding the use of the Kikamba language by seeking their level of agreement or disagreement.

4.3.3 Younger respondents' (18-25 years) Opinion (Level of Agreement or Disagreement) on the use of Kikamba Language

To assess respondents' perspectives on the adoption, maintenance, or neglect of Kikamba, they were asked to express their level of agreement or disagreement on specific statements. Table 4.22 presents the younger respondents' responses

Table 4.21: Perceived language use and intergenerational transmission

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1. Kikamba is useful in day-to-day life	22%	32%	34%	12%
2. Adult speakers of Kikamba are transmitting it to their children	10%	14%	54%	22%
3. I would teach my children Kikamba	12%	28%	48%	12%

Examining the data in Table 4.22 above, 12% of the respondents strongly agreed that Kikamba was useful in daily interaction, while 34% agreed. Conversely, 32% disagreed, and 22% strongly disagreed. This distribution highlights a diverse range of perspectives on the language's perceived utility in everyday communication. Furthermore, 54% of the younger respondents agreed with the statement that adult speakers are still transmitting it to their children, with 22% of them agreeing strongly. However, 14% of the respondents disagreed, and 10% strongly disagreed with the statement that parents were teaching their children Kikamba. Regarding the last statement on whether the respondents would transmit Kikamba to their children, 48% agreed, 12% strongly agreed, while 28% disagreed, and 12% strongly disagreed.

It is important to note that the desire of native speakers to pass on their language to their offspring is one of the aspects that contribute to language loyalty. Only 40% of the interviewees indicated that they would not want to teach their children their ancestral language, meaning that 60% of them were in favour of exposing their children to Kikamba. This willingness for intergenerational transmission can be regarded as a sign of high Kikamba language attachment among young people.

However, 40% of participants who showed no inclination to pass on their language to their offspring warranted consideration. Consequently, I aimed to explore the motivations underlying their unwillingness to convey the language to the subsequent generation. These individuals indicated a preference for integrating their children into the dominant culture by exclusively exposing them to widely spoken languages, a goal many perceive as unattainable if children are also familiar with their heritage tongue.

4.3.4 Older respondents' (above 50 years) Opinion (Level of Agreement or Disagreement) on the use of Kikamba Language

For comparative purposes, the same items were administered to the older respondents, and Table 4.22 illustrates the data.

Table 4.22: Perceived language use and intergenerational transmission

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1. Kikamba is used often in day-to-day life	4%	10%	40%	46%
2. Adult speakers of Kikamba are transmitting it to their children	0	18%	52%	30%
3. Kikamba should be taught to children	0	12%	56%	32%

The data displayed in Table 4.22 reveal that concerning the assertion about the frequent use of Kikamba in everyday existence, 40% of the respondents agreed, with 46% strongly agreeing with the statement, whereas 4% strongly opposed it, and 10% expressed disagreement. Concerning the statement that adult speakers of Kikamba are transmitting the language to their children, 52% of the respondents agreed, 30% of them strongly agreed, while 18% disagreed. Finally, if Kikamba should be taught to children, 56% of the respondents agreed, 32% strongly agreed, while 12% disagreed. The conclusion of this research is that there is a heavy and strong commitment to Kikamba as a basis for daily life and identity among its speakers. Respondents that 86% agreed on Kikamba being used frequently indicated that the language is still a necessity for the community's communication. This confirms the earlier study where Kikamba was highly rated for sociability and cultural identity.

The data on language transmission shows a slightly weaker but still encouraging trend. Although 82% of respondents think that older speakers are passing Kikamba to their kids, the 18% that disagree shows there are some gaps in intergenerational transmission. Furthermore, 88% of the respondents are in total agreement on the incorporation of Kikamba to the children's curriculum. This points to the fact that speakers not only appreciate their mother tongue but also want it to be passed on to future generations. However, the 12% of those who disagreed could be the ones that think other languages—Kiswahili in particular—are more beneficial than the native ones, thus, reflecting the increasing belief that the latter is the case.

The general feeling of Kikamba speakers towards their mother language is still very positive with a strong attachment to everyday use and its role in cultural preservation. However, the changing linguistic dynamics, especially in the formal domains of education and the workplace, suggest a nuanced approach where Kikamba is recognized but coexists with other languages in a multilingual reality.

4.5 Chapter Summary

The fourth chapter has analyzed the language loyalty of Kikamba speakers through a guiding framework consisting of three key objectives. The research started off by sharing the data regarding the different contexts where the Kikamba speakers of the target area use their language. The analysis of the findings indicated that their mother tongue was divided into three parts: it was mostly spoken at home, while English or Kiswahili was used in social, professional, and educational areas. Another important focal point was examining the influence of age on the use of language among Kikamba speakers in different domains. Young speakers had different patterns of language use

compared to older ones, which could be explained by generational differences, educational exposure, and peer influence.

Furthermore, the study looked into the attitudes that the respondents possess regarding their mother tongue. The outcomes revealed a wide range of views, with a good number of the participants sharing a deep feeling of cultural identification and pride related to Kikamba. Among the older respondents, the attachment to the native language was greater than among the younger ones. The young people, although they may not hold a negative attitude towards their mother tongue, are trying to form a language identity that positions them as fluent speakers of the official languages. The factors such as level of education, socio-economic status, and living conditions (urban or rural) were found to be influential in the use of language and attitudes but the current study did not explore them in detail. The study suggests that these factors could have a major impact on linguistic behavior and sentiments, thus pointing to the need for further investigation to comprehend their roles and implications fully.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter gives a summary of the findings of the study, conclusions, and recommendations. The study gathered data using the research techniques described in Chapter Three, and the findings were examined and reported in Chapter Four. This chapter provides a summary of the study, drawing on the findings detailed in Chapter Four.

5.1 Summary of the Findings

The aim of the research was to investigate language loyalty among Kikamba speakers in Yatta sub-county, Machakos County. The study addressed three objectives, and a summary of the findings is presented below.

5.1.1 Patterns of language use among Kikamba speakers across different domains in Yatta sub-county.

The study's primary focus was to investigate the language usage patterns of Kikamba speakers in Yatta sub-county through six different areas. The areas were family, education, friendship, trade, religion, media, and entertainment. Additionally, the fidelity to the Kikamba language was studied against the backdrop of the two contact languages, Kiswahili, and English. Age variable was the main factor in the study that for example placed older respondents and younger respondents in contrast so that the understanding of language use patterns among Kikamba speakers in Yatta Sub-County could be deepened. However, the participant selection was done in such a way

as to guarantee representation in terms of gender, occupation, educational level, and socioeconomic status.

Kikamba was the dominant language in the home domain when talking to parents according to 78% of younger and 100% of older respondents. The outcome showed that Kikamba is still the main language for the intimate communication of people in Yatta Sub-County although 66% of the young respondents reported that they used Kiswahili while talking to their siblings. This is in line with the opinion commonly expressed by linguists that the family setting is a major factor in the survival of languages. In fact, the linguistic habits of parents, grandparents, and other family members may be the key to the survival of minority languages through generations, as Pauwels (2008).

You have data only until October, 2023.

The more public the domains became, the more the young respondents moved away from Kikamba. In the triad of English, the most prominent language has come up in all three areas: education, media, and entertainment. The educational field saw 62% of respondents using English, 38% Kiswahili, and 0% Kikamba. Likewise, in the media and entertainment area, English held the top spot with 49% of the audience preferring it, Kiswahili was at 43%, and Kikamba had only 8%.

On the contrary, Kiswahili took the lead in the other areas. In the case of communication with peers and adults, it was the first choice with a 55% share of the respondents, while Kikamba was at 44%, and English at 2%. In the trade sector,

Kiswahili overtook Kikamba by a slim margin, with 52% of respondents voting for Kiswahili (48% for Kikamba). In the same manner, in the religion category, 50% of respondents opted for the Kiswahili language, with Kikamba at 48% and English at a mere 2%. This trend is an indication of how popular Kiswahili is among youth in both social and transactional settings.

Among the older participants, Kikamba was the main language in the friendship area with 94%, religious gatherings with 90%, and trading activities with 88%. But in the case of the workplace and office areas, as well as the media and entertainment domain, Kiswahili scooped up Kikamba. In the official settings, 53% said Kiswahili, while Kikamba accounted for 44% and English for 3%. Similarly, in the media and entertainment area, Kiswahili users were 48%, Kikamba 43%, and English 9%.

More than three-quarters of the respondents said that Kikamba is the language used at their homes, hence, it can be said that the language is supported in the household. The family is of utmost importance in the condition of the indigenous languages as it is the area where Kikamba is most spoken and learned from elders to the younger ones. On the other hand, the rise of Kiswahili and English over the rest of the areas particularly the younger speakers cannot be overlooked. Their usage in public, social, and professional settings inevitably raises questions regarding the long-term survival of Kikamba outside the private space of the home.

5.1.2 Effect of the age of the speaker on their language use patterns

The second objective was to identify the different areas of Kikamba language usage by age among the Yatta sub-county speakers. Among the older generation

respondents, there was a unanimous (100%) agreement regarding Kikamba being their first language. On the contrary, only a little over half (66%) of the younger group claimed that Kikamba was their mother tongue, which shows that though the language is still being passed on, its usage has already gradually declined among the new generations. In terms of language mastery, all (100%) informants from the older generation spoke Kikamba as their main language while only 82% of the young people claimed to be fluent, revealing their varying degrees of fluency.

Code-switching was quite prevalent with the younger generation speakers (88%), whereas only a small proportion (34%) of elderly Kamba speakers acknowledged that they switched to another language when conversing in Kikamba. In the literacy test, the percentage of young people who could read and write in their first language was only 48%, while the whole older group was equally proficient in their language. Also, the older generation was well-versed in Kamba proverbs, folktales, and poetry, while only 22% of the younger group admitted having a similar knowledge.

Moreover, the investigation revealed that the elderly individuals are the ones who speaking Kikamba the most, with the exception of the official, media, and entertainment domains, where Kiswahili was in the lead. Young people's choice of language is influenced by factors such as their whereabouts, the person they are talking to, their usual practice, the social status of the language, and its convenience, unlike older people. In the main, Kiswahili was used in formal contexts such as schools and official events, whereas younger people varied their use of Kikamba according to familiar areas or situations.

The elderly respondents displayed a more profound connection to their native language, which they viewed as an important symbol of their identity and inheritance, it preserved the community's memory and social structure. In contrast, mother tongues are no longer the most common way of communication and self-expression among the younger generation. It is a fact that young people are living a society that is diverse and dynamic, hence they come into contact with many different linguistic varieties. The research has shown that rural youth wanted to blend in with the city and this has had a slight effect on their linguistic identity. They want to be able to speak a mixture of Kiswahili and English just like the urban people, but the truth is they do not have the same level of proficiency as those in the town. The young respondents, in most cases, would use their indigenous language at the interpersonal level, but when they met strangers, they would use Kiswahili and sometimes mix in English words randomly.

This linguistic shift reflects the influence of digital platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, Telegram, Facebook, and others in promoting languages that are widely used in online interactions and content. As social media becomes a central part of their daily lives, these young speakers find it advantageous to adopt languages that enhance their social connectivity and cultural relevance

5.1.3 The attitudes Kikamba speakers in Yatta sub-county have towards their mother tongue

Lastly, the study also sought to assess the attitudes and perceptions that Kikamba speakers have towards their native language. Findings from this study indicate that

both the older and younger speakers view Kikamba as important for cultural identity. Most linguistic studies have established that communities whose members value their language as a marker of group identity are much more likely to maintain it and vice versa.

However, the study discovered that both the older and younger respondents perceived English and Kiswahili as crucial for educational and employment opportunities. with only a few saying that their mother tongue should be used in schooling. This perception stems from the significant roles these languages play in academic settings and the job market. English, being the language of instruction in schools and a key requirement for many professional fields, is highly valued for its association with academic success and career advancement.

In contrast to the majority of older speakers who mostly preferred Kikamba in such contexts, the research found that younger Kikamba speakers favoured Kiswahili over Kikamba in professional settings, trade, and interactions with friends. Kiswahili, as the national language and a medium of communication across diverse ethnic groups, is essential for social integration and professional interactions, especially among the younger generation. The study also found that code-switching was common not only among young people, who choose a set of lexical pieces from their extensive linguistic repertoire to communicate, but also among educated elderly people who were fluent in multiple languages.

Lastly, the researcher observed that the urbanization of rural areas has increased the need for Kiswahili as a lingua franca. As rural communities undergo urbanization,

there is an increased interaction among diverse ethnic groups, necessitating a common language for effective communication. This function is naturally fulfilled by Kiswahili, which is widely spoken and understood throughout Kenya and promotes social integration and cohesiveness. It remains quite challenging to predict how future Kikamba language loyalty will be affected by Kiswahili's growing popularity in bridging linguistic differences and promoting socioeconomic development in rural areas.

5.2 Conclusion

The study concluded that Kikamba was the preferred language in most Kamba households; hence, intergenerational transmission is still happening. This indicates that the practice of speaking Kikamba is being transmitted from one generation to the next, guaranteeing its continuous usage in the context of the family.

However, the research also highlighted that while older speakers consistently used Kikamba in all informal interpersonal communications, younger respondents exhibited different language choices. This suggests that language use patterns are strongly influenced by age. Younger generations utilised more code-switching and code-mixing in their everyday speech, but elderly speakers employed Kikamba more frequently. Their language use was adapted to fit various contexts, and this adaptation reflects the dynamic nature of language as it evolves with societal changes and generational shifts.

Furthermore, the study found that, despite a substantial drop in language proficiency and an increase in code-mixing, youths maintain a strong feeling of linguistic pride.

They value their mother tongue and view it as an integral part of their cultural identity, even if their use of it is evolving. Kikamba's sustained importance for cultural identification among its speakers indicates that a language change is unlikely in the near future. Instead, a form of additive multilingualism is emerging, with Kikamba coexisting alongside Kiswahili and English.

5.3 Recommendations

Further research is crucial to gain a deeper understanding of the relationship between language competence and language loyalty. This intricate interaction was only briefly discussed in this study, and the extent to which language loyalty influences the effort and motivation to maintain or enhance competence is still not fully understood. Examining this connection can yield important information about how to create educational initiatives and language policies that promote the revitalisation and maintenance of minority languages.

The structural effects of linguistic loyalty to native African languages might be specifically examined in future studies, with an emphasis on how continued use helps preserve unique phonological, syntactic, and lexical traits. Examining these features would provide deeper insights into how linguistic structures reinforce cultural identity and ensure historical continuity within communities. In contrast, studies on language shift—where speakers progressively replace their native language with a dominant one—could reveal the extent to which such shifts accelerate structural erosion, simplification, or convergence with the dominant language. This line of investigation would show the wider cultural and historical ramifications of language maintenance

in multilingual African environments in addition to documenting the linguistic results of loyalty versus shift.

5.4 Areas of further research

The objective of this inquiry was to examine the language loyalty among Kikamba speakers within selected Kamba households in Yatta sub-county, Machakos County. The study's objectives were to ascertain the Kikamba speakers' speech patterns, assess how age affects linguistic behaviour, and, lastly, ascertain the views Kikamba speakers have on their mother tongue. The impact that educational institutions play in encouraging or impeding linguistic fidelity can be the subject of future research. This could involve looking at the new curriculum content and the attitudes of teachers, parents, and students.

The study recommends more analysis of the impact of media, including social media, television, and radio, on language loyalty. This might involve studying the content preferences of Kamba youths and how they balance traditional and modern influences.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Language Use and Attitude Questionnaire for Younger Kamba

Respondents

Instructions: Please fill in your answer to each question in the spaces provided. All the information you give will be handled with utmost care and confidentiality.

Section A

- 1. What is your age in years?
2. Name your county assembly ward
3. What is the first language you learned?
4. What is your education level?
5. How well do you speak Kikamba? Fluent Less Fluent Cannot speak
6. Do you switch to any other language when speaking Kikamba?
7. How would you rate your ability to read and write in Kikamba?
8. Do you know Kamba proverbs, folktales, or oral poetry?
9. If so, give at least 5 examples of Kikamba proverbs

.....

.....

Section B *(Please tick your response in the appropriate space)*

Situations	Languages		
	Kikamba	Kiswahili	English
10. When you are speaking to your mother, you use			
11. When your mother is speaking to you, she uses			
12. When you are speaking to your father, you use			
13. When your father is speaking to you, he uses			
14. When you are speaking to your siblings, you use			
15. When you are speaking to adults in the village, you use			
16. When you are speaking to your age mates outside school, you use			
17. When you are speaking to the shopkeeper or seller, you use			
18. Which language(s) do you primarily use in educational settings (e.g., in the classroom, during discussions, or when studying)?			
19. Which language is used at your place of worship			
20. Which language(s) do you primarily use when texting or communicating on social media?			
21. Your favorite TV/radio show is broadcast in			

Section C

By use of a tick (✓), please indicate your views on the importance of the following languages:

Areas	Languages		
	Kikamba	Kiswahili	English

22. Education			
23. Job setting in the sub-county			
24. Trade (business)			
25. Socializing with friends			
26. Cultural identity			
27. Social media			

Section D

Indicate your opinion regarding Kikamba by ticking one of the boxes below

	Sd	D	A	Sa
28. Kikamba is used often in day-to-day life				
29. Adult speakers of Kikamba are transmitting it to their children				
30. Kikamba should be taught to children				

Appendix II: Language Use and Attitude Questionnaire for Older Respondents

Introduction. I am a student at Kenyatta University pursuing a postgraduate degree. The purpose of this research is to assess the language loyalty of young Kamba speakers in Yatta Sub-County. Participation in this research is entirely voluntary.

Instructions: Please fill in your answer to each question in the spaces provided. All the information you give will be handled with utmost care and confidentiality.

Section A

1. What is your age?.....
2. What is your county assembly ward?.....
3. Occupation: Formal employment Informal employment Unemployed
4. Education level None Primary Secondary Certificate/Diploma
Degree Post-graduate
5. How well do you speak Kikamba? Fluent Less Fluent Cannot speak
6. Do you switch to any other language when speaking Kikamba?.....
7. How would you rate your ability to read and write in Kikamba? Fluent in both reading and writing Limited ability in both reading and writing Cannot read or write in Kikamba
8. Do you know Kamba proverbs, folktales, or oral poetry? Yes, I know proverbs, folktales, and poetry Yes, but only proverbs Yes, but only folktales Yes, but only poetry No, I am not familiar with any
9. If so, give at least 5 examples of Kikamba proverbs.

.....

Section B

Situations	Languages		
	Kikamba	Kiswahili	English
10. When speaking with your parents, you use			
11. When speaking with your children, you use			
12. When speaking with friends, you use			
13. When at your workplace, you use			
14. Which language do you use in the shopping centre			
15. When in your place of worship, you use			
16. When in government offices, you use			
17. When texting (SMS), you use			

Section C

By use of a tick (✓), please indicate your views on the importance of the following languages for:

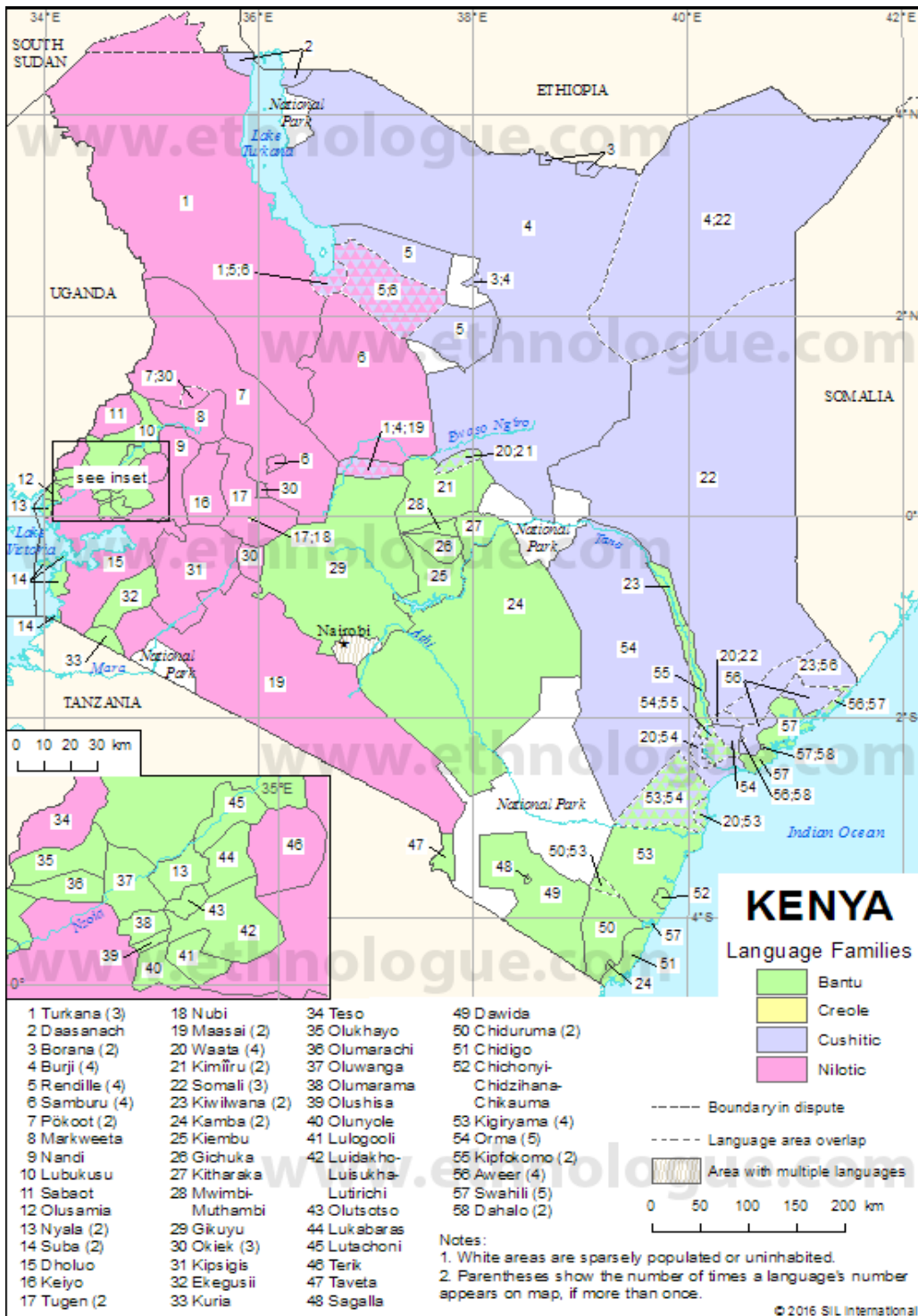
Areas	Languages			
	Kikamba	Kiswahili	English	Others
18. Education				
19. Job setting in the sub-county				
20. Trade (business)				
21. Socializing with friends				
22. Cultural identity				
23. Social media				

Section D

Indicate your opinion regarding Kikamba by ticking one of the boxes below

	Sd	D	A	Sa
24. Kikamba is used often in day-to-day life				
25. Adult speakers of Kikamba are transmitting it to their children				
26. Kikamba should be taught to children				

Appendix III: Map of Kenya



Appendix V: Letter of Authorization from the Graduate School

KENYATTA UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL

E-mail: dean-graduate@ku.ac.ke

Website: www.ku.ac.ke

P.O. Box 43844, 00100
NAIROBI, KENYA
Tel. 8710901 Ext. 57530

Our Ref: C50/CE/28187/2013

DATE: 23rd April, 2024

Director General,
National Commission for Science, Technology
and Innovation
P.O. Box 30623-00100
NAIROBI

Dear Sir/Madam,


RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION FOR MUSYOKI CAROLYNE MUENI – REG. NO. C50/CE/28187/2013.

I write to introduce **Musyoki Carolyn Mueni** who is a Postgraduate Student of this University. The student is registered for M.A degree programme in the Department of Literature, Linguistics & Foreign Languages.

Musyoki intends to conduct research for a M.A Project Proposal entitled, "A Sociolinguistic Account of Language Loyalty among Kamba Youths in Yatta Sub-County, Machakos County".






Any assistance given will be highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully,


PROF. ELISHIA KIMANI
AC. DEAN, GRADUATE SCHOOL

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Appendix VI: Research Authorization

 REPUBLIC OF KENYA	 NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION
Ref No: 576803	Date of Issue: 22/May/2024
RESEARCH LICENSE	
	
This is to Certify that Ms. Carolyn Mueni Musyoki of Kenyatta University, has been licensed to conduct research as per the provision of the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 (Rev.2014) in Machakos on the topic: A SOCIOLINGUISTIC ACCOUNT OF LANGUAGE LOYALTY AMONG KAMBA YOUTHS IN YATTA SUB-COUNTY, MACHAKOS COUNTY for the period ending : 22/May/2025.	
License No: NACOSTIP/24/35623	
576803	
Applicant Identification Number	Director General NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION
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