

## The Relationship Between Language Practices and the Promotion of Kiswahili in Rwanda as the Language of Commerce in the East African Community

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### ABSTRACT

*Language is a factor of regional integration among others. Statistics reviewed on the speakers of Kiswahili in Rwanda showed that Kiswahili speakers count only 0.3 % and 3.2 of the population by 2002 and 2022 respectively. It is clear that Kiswahili is not yet developed in Rwanda. Language practices are among other factors for the development of a language. Therefore, researchers had the objective of identifying the influence of language practices of the language policy of Rwanda in promoting Kiswahili for the integration of the East African Community. This paper applied mixed research design where structured questionnaires were administered to Rwandans living in both selected urban areas and bordering communities. The total of 384 respondents was the sample size calculated by using the Kothari's formula. These participants were distributed into five clusters that include business, administration, religion, education and media. The theory of language policy guided the study. The hierarchical linear regression was applied to test the relationship. It was revealed that language practices have positive relationship towards the promotion of Kiswahili as the language of commerce. The test showed the Pearson value of  $p < 0.001$  which is below .05. However such language practices are not seen on the Rwandan language landscape. Thus, the study suggests that language practices including edited texts, applying the language in media, labelling products in the language, and translating official documents in the language would contribute to the development of Kiswahili in Rwanda for the EAC integration.*

**Keywords:** EAC, Integration, Language of Commerce, Language Policy, Language Practices, Rwanda

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### I. INTRODUCTION

Language is the vector of all activities while people are interacting. For any individual to know a particular language applied in some activities there is a need to use some language practices to acquire such language for the future interests. To have a better communication and interaction at global, national and local levels, Spolsky (2004) assumed that language policy deals not only with raised language or varieties but also with all related issues of that language to include efforts to weaken what is seen as bad languages and encourage what is taken as the preferred language. As Edge (2006) indicated, the availability of studies that have already been done about designing and implementing language policy practices all over the world is still not sufficient although there is a developing recognition of politics of language that respond to confronting planning for education, organizing state, globalization, and economic development. Language policy has been an issue of concern of regional integration communities across the world. For instance, Karoly (2008) sees the European Union as the only regional integration bloc that has been able to protect the existing cultural differences among state members. Coming to the Association of South-East Asian Nation (ASEAN), the group of elites argues that English has always been the sole official and working language of the group even though it is not stated in the Bangkok Declaration (Severino, 2006, p.368). In regard to Mercado Común del Sur (MERCOSUR), Spanish and Portuguese are the official working languages. However, Morris (2016, p.42) does not even recognise this policy since the activities and policies addressing language issues are different in community member states. The East African Community (EAC, 2020) recognizes Kiswahili as its official language and few years later Kiswahili was recognized as a language of communication of the bloc with English being a medium of instructions (EAC, 2020).

Rwanda as a member country of the EAC that has planned to become a several languages speaker community for meeting the purpose of being the gate way for both East Africa and Great Lakes regions (The Republic of Rwanda, 2020). Contrary, language policy in the education framework does not favour such vision to be attained since it recognizes only three languages which are French, English, and Kinyarwanda which also monopolizes the status of medium of instruction the first level of primary (Ministry of Education [MINEDUC], 2003, p.23). Consequently,

students in Rwanda are going to become speakers of three languages only excluding Kiswahili. The constitution allows Kinyarwanda to be the national language as well as the official language together with English and French and other languages (The Republic of Rwanda, 2003, p. 31). Following this provision and considering that Rwanda is a member to the EAC, the Rwandan National Assembly, in February 2017, passed an organic law allowing Kiswahili to be one of the official languages in Rwanda (Africa News, 2017, Bishumba, 2017) even though this decision has not yet been incorporated in the national constitution.

### 1.1 Statement of the Problem

Kiswahili has been promoted in status in Rwanda because it is a tool of integration of the community on which Rwanda is a member. However, Kiswahili enjoys little number of speakers in Rwanda comparing to other languages. Having different languages as official languages, to some extent, challenges Rwandans for not having competence in all languages including Kiswahili (Masezerano et al., 2023).

In regard to this, the census that was done in 2002 reported about the speakers of four main languages spoken on Rwandan language scape. It was reported that Kinyarwanda, French, English, and Kiswahili counted for 99.7%, 3.9%, 1.9%, and 3% of speakers respectively (Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning [MINECOFIN], 2005). Concerning the development of Kiswahili, it can be said that the number of Kiswahili speakers increased by 0.7% in 2002. The most recent census reported that Kiswahili literacy in Rwanda is at 3.2% (NISR, 2022) if the percentages of those who can read, speak, listen, and understand Kiswahili alone; Kiswahili, Kinyarwanda and English combined; and Kiswahili, Kinyarwanda, English, and French combined are summed up. It could be argued that there was an improvement however the number of speakers is still below by considering the fact that Rwanda wants its citizens to be linguistically competent to win both regional and international market. Following the slow pace in increasing of Kiswahili speakers in Rwanda, researchers wanted to explore the question related to what significance can language practices bring in increasing the Kiswahili speakers in Rwanda which directly mean the development of Kiswahili as a language of economic transactions and integration of the community.

### 1.2 Research Objective

The objective of this research was to identify the possible significant relationship of language practices towards the promotion of Kiswahili in Rwanda as the language of commerce of the EAC.

### 1.3 Hypothesis of the Study

H<sub>01</sub>: Language practices do not have significant relationship in developing promoting Kiswahili in Rwanda as a language of commerce of the EAC.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Theoretical Review

According to Spolsky (2007), the identification of language policy with social phenomenon is associated with three major elements that include language practices, attitude or beliefs, and the management of language. Very earlier, Kaplan and Baldauf (1997, p.11) have asserted that “ideas, laws, regulations, rules and practices comprise the framework of language policy whose intention is to attain the planned language change in societies, groups or systems”.

Also Spolsky (2007) in his theory of language policy assume language practices, people’s attitudes about that language, and language management are important components in the promotion of any selected language. The present paper chooses to talk about language practices and their role in the development of Kiswahili as a language used in economic transactions in Rwanda and in the EAC.

Spolsky (2004) viewed “language practices as the habitual pattern of selecting among the varieties that make up its linguistic repertoire”. In another way, language practice is described as a practice or an act of working with language. Language practices comprise activities like interpreting, translating, text-editing, etc.

The first attempt of the theory of language policy is that the theory comprises essential features that are divided into domains. Spolsky (2007) stated that the theory of language policy has domains such as the speech community. Such domains of speech community are the policy-relevant domain, the recognition of language policy plus taking into account both within and without impact. Spolsky (2007, p.3) cited in Masezerano et al. (2023) states that: “the goal of the theory of language policy is to account for the regular choices made by individual speakers based on patterns established in the speech community or communities of which they are members.” To this end, language practices as one of the three components of language policy theory can be used in any community that has a language to manage and plan.

## 2.2 Empirical Review

In terms of language practices which comprise the use of language in translation and interpretation activities; media and sometimes of text editing, Randaccio (2012) tried to talk about the activity of translation considered to be an important material in the process of acquiring the second language. She analysed the contradictions that existed in the 1960s and 1980s among scholars. She clearly demonstrated how one side of scholars could oppose and criticise translation as a distracting factor to “language teaching and learning process”. Moreover, she analysed how other scholars could support and promote the application of translating activities in second language acquisition.

For the sake of moderating the debate between two schools of thoughts, she started distinguishing communicative learning strategy and translation strategy. Applying translating activity equally to acquisition technique would be supported more by the linguists while the translation theorists would categorically oppose the idea. The translation theorists would insist that translation is a technical activity which involves various steps to be successful hence in the transfer of one text from one language to another language without changing the message. She finally discovered that both scholars recognised the importance of translation as a teaching and acquiring the second language. To this end, the author cited Pym (1992) and recommended the analysis of translation errors which with no doubt turns into the analysis of teaching translation.

The importance of translation as an activity of language acquisition was also studied by Pym et al. (2013) in their study and concluded that the activity of translation is a communicative activity which can be used to improve the acquisition of a foreign language. Additionally, Marques-Aguado and Becerra (2013) analysed the level to which translation might be considered as a valued material for acquiring second languages. The role of translation is not only researched in Europe or America, but it is also researched in Africa where Neville (2005) did an analysis on the usefulness of translating activities as a societal act of intellectualisation of African language landscape.

Translating works as a language practice written in so-called modern languages in all African languages will, of course, need a lot of resources whether human, material, and financial. Again the authors discussed above did focus specifically on student in formal education as future elites groups but they did not talk about the whole community including the ordinary people.

The second element of language practices is related to how language is being used and promoted in media. Koulouris and Agogi (2009) carried out a study on acquiring language out of formal education in professional life, official, non-official language acquisition; and good manners, inspiration, likes, reaching community, demand supply, opportunities, problems and trends. After analysing information, the research found that there was a growing interest in using information and communication technology and other media of modern days in acquiring language and that good attitude leading to them are developing in European people.

Oroujlou (2012) tried to discuss the role of media in acquiring second language in Middle East. He found that media discourse is very important for both resourceful and authentic which has a great role to play in pedagogical principles. Slim and Hafedh (2019) stated the mixture of both classical media and Facebook assisted materials could help in language learning for a specific purpose and that universities should quickly catch up with the rapid social and technological changes which have a remarkable influence on language acquisition.

Talking about promotion of indigenous African languages, Musau (1999) researched on how the making the media for the mass free has impacted on the promotion and safeguard of related to culture and language of the African nations. He said that one way to make people learn and master the language is to keep the consistency of applying the language in the media of many public. He lastly emphasised the importance of crafting a policy that prioritizes the development of languages of African people.

Kawoya and Makokha (2009) looked at the place of Kiswahili which is equally the East African region broadcasting language. The researchers were very confident that Kiswahili is being known by everyone in the region whereas there are still some people who still need to learn Kiswahili so that they can be more integrated in the region. Regarding the number of Kiswahili speakers, it can be said that some people from new member countries of the community like Burundi, Rwanda and South Sudan do not know Kiswahili yet. That is why the present study focuses of how language policy of respective countries, through language practices, can promote the learning and teaching of Kiswahili through both informal and formal education so that everyone can feel integrated and instrumentally benefits from the EAC. The study did not find literature on the impact of text-edit in promoting a selected language.

## III. METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Research Site

The present study was carried out in Rwanda more particularly in selected urban and bordering communities. These communities were purposively chosen. The purpose to select urban and bordering communities was that speakers of Kiswahili in Rwanda are mostly motivated by speakers from the EAC member countries where Kiswahili

is a language of communication. Additionally, urban and bordering communities are considered as pathways fostering the growing of Kiswahili in Rwanda (Niyomugabo, 2019, p. 8). To this end, Nemba, Rusumo, Gatuna and Cyanika were the communities around borders. These communities were chosen before the joining of the Democratic Republic of Congo. This is the reason why Rubavu and Rusizi were not chosen. Researchers also selected Huye and Kigali to represent urban communities where also people with Kiswahili literacy are found (Maniraho, 2013, p. 3).

### 3.2 Research Design

For the sake of understanding the research problem of the study, researchers adopted a mixed research design. The data collection was based on a structured questionnaire which allowed researchers to collect qualitative information which were later on quantified. The quantification of data permitted for statistical analysis and test of hypothesis.

### 3.3 Target Population

Rwandans were the population of the study. However, it targeted those Rwandans living in selected urban and bordering communities. The identified population were categorized in the domains of language use. Fishman (1972) also discusses language usage in its respective domains like media, religion, business, education, and administration.

### 3.4 Sample Size

The designing and selecting of the sample and its elements were based on probability and non-probability. The probability sampling was applied while identifying the size of the sample. Then, the formula applied by Kothari (2004) was considered to calculate the sample size. The formula is presented as follows.

$$n = \frac{(z)^2 p(q)}{e^2}$$

In this formula, the sample size is represented as  $n$ ,  $z$  represents the confidence level is equal to 95%. The percentage is equal to 1.96.  $P$  represents the proportion of the population which is 0.5, and finally  $e$  stands in the formula as the margin error and it is equal to 5%= 0.05.  $q$  is calculated by  $(1-p)$ . Therefore,

The size of the sample is as follow:

$$n = \frac{(z)^2 p(1 - p)}{e^2}$$

$$n = \frac{(1.96)^2 0.5(1 - 0.5)}{0.05^2}$$

$$n = \frac{3.8416 \times 0.25}{0.0025}$$

$$n = \frac{0.9604}{0.0025}$$

$$n = 384.16 \cong 384$$

### 3.5 Data Collection

In order to collect data from the field, researchers designed a structured questionnaire in Likert scale format which allowed researchers to quantify the responses from participants. Participants could select among the five options of likert scale that were provided. The five options were agree, strongly agree, disagree, strongly disagree, and neutral. Researchers also collected information from available documents on language practices to influence the development of Kiswahili in Rwanda as a language of commerce and trade of the integration community.

### 3.6 Data Analysis

The data collected were quantified by researchers to make it possible to use the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). To this end, information was processed and analysed through running a hierarchical linear regression. The data for sub-variables under language practices as an independent variable and those under the trade language or language of commerce as dependent variable were entered in the hierarchical model. Besides the aforementioned indicators, researchers used intervening indicators that included location of respondents, domain of language use, and age of respondents. Consequently, the monitoring of change in outcomes brought by these controlled variables was possible. The inferential statistics used the Pearson value below 0.05 as a significant value to check the hypothesis of this paper. The interpretation of factors like coefficients, standard error, F-ratios, and P-value was done to verify the hypothesis.

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis (hierarchical linear regression), which is the manner in which variables of interest (independent variables), demonstrated a strong and significant variance in experimental variable (EV) after considering all other indicators. In this view, researchers built models of regression through adding variables to already run model at each step. Models run lastly always included other small models in the former levels. Predictors like language practices, age of respondents, location of respondents, and domain of language use of respondents were applied to determine the outcomes in trade language (Kiswahili) promotion in Rwanda. The research applied the model as it is beneath demonstrated.

$$Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_i + \beta_2 X_i + \dots + \beta_k X_k + \varepsilon_i$$

Where:

$Y_i$  = Dependent variable

$\beta_0$  = The slope

$\beta_1$  = The intercept in explanatory variable

$X_i$  = Explanatory variable

$\beta_k$  = The intercept in an added explanatory variable

$X_k$  = Added explanatory variable

$\varepsilon_i$  = Error in observation

The combination of predictors of development of the language of communication (Kiswahili) in Rwanda consisted of language practices, location of participants, domains of language use (categories), and age of participants. The definition of predictors and the outcomes in the model would be as follow:

$$TL_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 LangP_{1i} + \beta_k Loc_{2i} + \beta_k DomLangUse_{3i} + \beta_k Age_i + \varepsilon_i$$

The definition of predictors in the above equation reflect the hierarchical multiple regression after fitting all variables throughout all stages.

Where:

TL: Trade Language (Language of commerce)

LangP: Language practices

Loc: Location (urban or bordering community)

DomLangU: domain of language use

Age: Age of respondents

For the purpose of running hierarchical multiple regression, the study ran regression analysis into four stages as follow.

Level 1

$$TL_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 LangP_i + \varepsilon_i$$

Level 2

$$TL_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 LangP_i + \beta_k Age_i + \varepsilon_i$$

Level 3

$$TL_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 LangP_i + \beta_k Age_i + \beta_k DomLangU_i + \varepsilon_i$$

Level 4

$$TL_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 LangP_i + \beta_k Age_i + \beta_k DomLangU_i + \beta_k Loc_i + \varepsilon_i$$

Hierarchical linear regression run at different levels intended for checking if the added up indicators bring meaning change into coefficient. Location, domain of language use and age of respondents were added to the first simple regression analysis in order to see their variances in coefficient that might affect the influence of independent variables over dependent variables.

## IV. FINDINGS & DISCUSSIONS

### 4.1 Bio Information of Participants

Information characterisation of respondents was based on their place of living (location), field of language use, and age. The use of such characteristics (added variables) was due to the fact that they might scientifically influence participants' responses. The general information of participants is therefore presented in Table 1 for better understanding of the research findings.

**Table 1***Statistics on Bio Information of Respondents*

Statistics	Age	Domain of Language use	Location
Mean	2.87	2.97	1.53
Median	3	3	2
Mode	3	3	2
Validity	384	384	384

For the quick understanding of the demographic characteristics of participants, researchers coded them. The coding was as follows. Participants found in the age characteristic were coded as follow. Those between the ages 12-18 were given 1 as a code. Those between the ages 19-25 were coded as 2. Participants between the ages 26-45 were coded as 3 and those from 46 and above were coded as 4. In order to have a quick understanding on the field of language use which is used in the research as “domain of language use” of participants, code number 1 was provided for administration, number 2 as a code was provided for education, number 3 was provided for journalism as its code, number 4 was given to business as the code to apply in data processes, then number 5 as a code was provided for religion. In regard to place of living (location) of respondents, 1 as a number was considered as a code for urban community and number 2 was provided as a code for bordering community. Following this coding of respondents’ bio information, Table 1 indicates that ages of participants had a mean of 2.87 tending to 3. This explains that several respondents were of age between 26 years old and 45 years old. Respondents of this age presented 52.6 percent of all 384 respondents.

Table 1 continues indicating that the mean for the domain of language use was 2.97 to explain that most respondents of the research were journalists. Participants from this domain presented 20.6% of all participants. In case of place of living (location) of respondents, 1.53 was the mean to explain that many participants were from communities around borders which was coded as 2. These participants represented 52.9% of all respondents of the study.

**4.2 Testing Hypothesis of the Study**

The study used linear regression from hierarchical linear regression model for the purpose of testing the hypothesis of this research. In hierarchical regression, variables are entered in the model block by block after the major variable has entered in the regression model (Mitzi, 2007). To this end, other variables that were entered in the model were participants’ age, domains of language use, and location.

**4.2.1 The Influence of Language Practices towards Trade Language in Rwanda**

In order to identify the significant influence of language practices on the development of Kiswahili in Rwanda as a language of trade of the EAC, researchers used four statements labelled as latent factors (see Table 2). The study was interested in looking at which change by other controlled variables entered into the model after running the regression. In the first step, the model shows that language practices has R square change which equals to 0.088 (see Table 3). It means that language practices could bring 8.8% of change in the outcome.

**Table 2***Frequencies on Language Practices on Trade Language*

Latent factors	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
Official documents like constitution are translated in all official languages including Kiswahili.	94	96	103	66	25	384
Official documents of communication are translated in official languages including Kiswahili	70	114	62	92	46	384
The media tries to broadcast programs and publish stories in other languages including Kiswahili	10	27	17	169	161	384
Texts edited in Kiswahili ensure successful communication	20	58	63	187	56	384

The model summary in Table 3 shows age as a controlled variable bringing the R square change of 0.013 which means that participants’ age could show variance in outcome at 1.3%. In the following model, the variable of field of language use (domain of language use) of participants has 0.002 as R square change which means that this variable would bring change at 0.2% in the outcome. Finally, there was 0.008 changes in R square for location of respondents. This means that place of living (location) of participants could bring 0.8% in the outcome. Therefore, language practices showed big and have a great significant influence on Kiswahili in Rwanda as a language of commerce compared to other indicators in the equation of hierarchical regression model.



**Table 3**  
*Testing of Model Fitness*

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
				R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.297 <sup>a</sup>	.088	.086	.088	37.026	1	382	.000	
2	.318 <sup>b</sup>	.101	.096	.013	5.300	1	381	.022	
3	.320 <sup>c</sup>	.102	.095	.002	.646	1	380	.422	
4	.332 <sup>d</sup>	.110	.101	.008	3.375	1	379	.067	1.661

\*Durbin-Watson value should approximate 2

a (language practices), b (Language practice, age)

c (language Practices, age, domain of language use),

d (language practices, age, domain of language use, location)

It is very significant to measure the tenability of assumption in the independent variable as Devore et al., (2013) emphasised. Therefore, the study ran Durbin-Watson test. Normally, the Durbin-Watson test is for measuring autocorrelation. It indicates that the non-autocorrelation is measured at the value near to 2 where positive autocorrelation is at the value near to 0 and negative autocorrelation is at the value near to 4. The value was 1.661 which is approximate to 2 which is also acknowledged to be acceptable value of assuming independent variable.

Researchers also verified the fitness of the regression model. Most of the time, it is accepted that the F value becomes greater than 1 when there is an improvement in fitting inaccuracy of the regression model. For language practices, 37.026 was the value of F-ration which showed a Pearson value at  $p < .001$ . Secondly, the third, and the fourth models, the F-ratios are 5.300 corresponding to  $p < 0.05$ , .646 corresponding to  $p > 0.05$ , and 3.375 corresponding to  $p > 0.05$  respectively. Therefore, it can be interpreted that these results increased researchers' ability to forecast outcomes in dependent variable both in the first and the second models. To decide on whether these variables have significance on the outcome was tested in Table 4.

The study adopted the model of hierarchical linear regression to identify the significant relationship between language practices and trade language. As it was previously highlighted, controlled variables were entered in the model in order to verify their change into outcomes. Researchers created four statements (see Table 2) to make sub-indicators of practices of language as independent variable. These latent factors were established to identify the influence of language practices over Kiswahili as a language of trade. As Mitzi (2007, p.10) states: "The main objective to use hierarchical linear regression is to analyse the effect of a predictor variable after controlling for others." Subsequently, researchers firstly entered language practices as variable to predict outcomes. After that, the intervening variables could be also applied in the model.

Researchers did a statistical test to identify the significant relationship that can be brought by language practices towards promoting Kiswahili in Rwanda as the language of trade or economic transactions in the EAC's integration process. The analysis in Table 4 indicated that the coefficient for language practices was  $\beta = 0.297$  corresponding to std. err. = 0.120 with the  $t$  value at  $t = 6.085$ , while the value was at  $p < 0.001$ .

For the intervening indicators, their coefficients showed the following results. The age of respondents showed a coefficient equals to  $B = -0.112$  which explains the standard error at std. err. = 0.521 while the  $t$  value was  $t = -2.302$  and the Pearson value was at  $p < 0.001$ . For the field of language use labelled as domain of language use in the present research had a coefficient equalled to  $B = 0.039$  while its standard error was at std. err. = 0.285 corresponding to the  $t$  value of  $t = 0.804$  and the Pearson value was equally at below  $p > 0.05$ . Finally, location as a place of living for respondents showed the coefficient of  $B = -0.090$  while its standard error was at std. err. = 0.801 and the  $t$  value was at  $t = -1.837$  while the Pearson value was  $p > 0.05$ .

Following results in (Table 4), it is evident that language activities are the only indicators to forecast variance in Kiswahili as a language of trade. Researchers state this due to the value which is below the  $p < 0.05$  as a significant value. In the controlled indicators, age was the only intervening variable having a p-value which was below 0.05 but it could not be considered as a predictor since its  $t$  value was less than 1.

**Table 4***Statistical Significant relationship of Language Practices on Trade Language in Rwanda*

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	47.507	1.625		29.230	.000
	Language Practices	.733	.120	.297	6.085	.000*
2	(Constant)	51.237	2.288		22.389	.000
	Language Practices	.710	.120	.288	5.915	.000
	Age	-1.200	.521	-.112	-2.302	.022*
3	(Constant)	50.629	2.411		20.995	.000
	Language Practices	.706	.120	.286	5.867	.000
	Age	-1.204	.521	-.113	-2.309	.021
	Domain of Language use	.229	.285	.039	.804	.422**
4	(Constant)	52.629	2.639		19.943	.000
	Language Practices	.703	.120	.285	5.861	.000
	Age	-1.101	.523	-.103	-2.106	.036
	Domain of Language use	.227	.284	.039	.798	.425
	Location	-1.472	.801	-.090	-1.837	.067**

\* Models are \* $p < 0.05$ , \*\* $p > 0.05$ 

Language practices are clearly shown to have prediction in affecting the language of trade or commerce. When these language practices are considered, the number of speakers of a language can increase. This was clearly shown that it is not the case in Rwanda. This is because the number of Kiswahili speakers is still low as the census of (MINECOFIN, 2005) showed the percentage to be at 3%. The more recent census reported that Kiswahili literacy in Rwanda increased at 3.2% (NISR, 2022). The former percentage is also low compared to the vision of Rwanda. The problem was that language practices are maybe not considered for the increase of Kiswahili speakers in Rwanda. Identifying the significant relationship of language practices towards the development of the language of trade of the EAC in Rwanda would call attention of the Government and other stakeholders.

Therefore, researchers' objective intended to identify possible significant relationship of language practices in the promotion of Kiswahili as the language of trade of the EAC in Rwanda. For the purpose of attaining at the objective of the research, null and alternative hypotheses to test were formulated.

Ho: Language practices do not have significant relationship towards developing Kiswahili in Rwanda which is the language of trade in EAC's integration.

Ha: Language practices have significant relationship towards developing Kiswahili in Rwanda which is the language of trade in EAC's integration.

Testing the research hypothesis was done through running a regression analysis and it was found appropriate since the ratio of F in Table 3 was 37.026 which means that F value was below 1 ( $F > 1$ ). The value for assumption tenacity labelled as Durbin-Watson in independent variable was also 1.661 which approximates 2 as the accepted value. In regard to the statistical results in Table 4, the p-value for language practices as a predictor is  $p < 0.05$  ( $p = .0001$ ) which is significant. Researchers basing on the above results were able to refute the fact that language practices do not have significant relationship towards developing Kiswahili in Rwanda as a language of trade in EAC's integration. Following this results, researchers accepted the assumption saying that language practices have significant influence towards developing Kiswahili in Rwanda which is the language of trade in the EAC's integration.

The above findings are also evidenced from the theory of language policy by Spolsky (2007) who emphasises the language practices' importance into the formulation and implementation of any policy of any language. Language practices are defined as all activities of working with language including interpretation, translation, text editing among others. The importance of activities of translation as one of the practices of language was emphasised by Artar (2017) when he was assessing the part of language translating activities in the learning and acquisition of second language in Turkey. According to his results, he found that translation is an activity which should not be avoided while teaching or learning a foreign language under the conditions that likely benefit learners.

In the same line, Widdowson (2014) conducted a research that was trying to look at the significance of translating activities in the acquisition process of second language. He finally put his views in the following words:

"...translation might be resorted from time to time as an optional extra, but its role would be peripheral at best. But if we think of learning and translation in the very different terms I have suggested here, then these relationships change quite radically. For in language learning that is not teacher- determined, I have argued, learners will draw naturally on existing language experience to extend their linguistic resource for making meaning. They will,



in other words, engage in translating as a general pragmatic process, using whatever language they have at their disposal to learn more. Learning and translating becomes essentially the same thing” (Widdowson, 2014, p.55).

Both authors Artar and Widdowson support what the participants showed that translation as one of the language practices, with which one of the statements was formulated, has an important part played in the knowledge acquisition which are for the promotion of any second language. In the case of this research, the second language labelled as language of trade which is Kiswahili is also considered as the language of the EAC’s integration.

Apart from translation, interpretation is also one of the language practices when it comes to the application of language in a community. In this regard, Akhyar (2011) recognised the importance of interpreting and translating in the learning of any foreign language. Also Anderson and Bruce (2002) emphasised the role of interpretation for instance when someone is conducting an interview in a community through interpreters. He said that maintenance of rapport with him or her will bring greater data quality. Anderson said:

*“translation also occurs in social situations amenable to sociological analysis. In any such setting role played by the interpreters is likely to exert considerable influence on the evolution of group structure and the outcome of the interaction. For a sociologist conducting interviews through an interpreter, the problem of maintaining rapport with him may give greater bearing upon data quality than time-honoured problem of maintaining respondent rapport (Anderson & Bruce, 2002, p.209).”*

The author did not limit himself on social events only to demonstrate the role of interpretation as a language practice. He also talked of interpreting role in negotiating trade agreement and peace treaties. As a result (Springer, 2010, p.23) recognises the implication of the interpreting activity in a communication event, the role significance being defined in relation to social group and the outcome of communication.

Moreover, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA, n.d.) also recognised the role of interpretation and even translation is also recognised where it created the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning which delivers courses and services on interpretation, translation and conference so that communication can be achieved smoothly.

## V. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 Conclusions

The study aimed to evaluate the impact of language activities and practices on promoting Kiswahili as a trade language in Rwanda, particularly in the context of the East African Community. The results from the statistical analysis indicated that language practices significantly influence the promotion of Kiswahili as a means of communication in the region. Effective promotion of Kiswahili requires attention to various language practices, such as translating and interpreting official documents like the constitution and other essential communication materials. Broadcasting radio and television programs in Kiswahili, as well as publishing texts in the language, also play a crucial role in advancing its use in Rwanda.

These practices are integral to the development of a language within a society, as they help establish it as a viable and widely accepted means of communication. For Kiswahili, specifically, the combination of media, translation, and interpretation efforts is essential to ensure that the language gains a foothold across different sectors of the community.

Based on the analysis, it can be concluded that language practices at all levels—from individual actions to community-wide initiatives—positively impact the promotion of Kiswahili as a trade language. Therefore, to foster its growth and integration in Rwanda, these practices should be prioritized and systematically implemented. By doing so, Kiswahili can become a more prominent language within the East African Community and strengthen its role in regional communication and trade.

### 5.2 Recommendations

The study recommends translation; interpretation; broadcasting and publishing stories; and editing texts in Kiswahili as language practices to be considered while designing a policy that intends to promote Kiswahili which is the language of EAC’s regional integration. In order to ensure the promotion of Kiswahili at all levels of community, government, partners, and other stakeholders including people from the speech community should be involved in all practices at all levels from micro up to macro level. This recommendation is addressed to the government of Rwanda, its partners, and stakeholders.

It is therefore important for the government and Rwanda Heritage Academy in working together with the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Local Government which is in charge of media to make sure for instance that banners and signs that are posted alongside streets and roads are translated in all four official languages including Kiswahili for the sake of promoting Kiswahili which is useful for people around borders and those in urban

communities. Again, media should be supported so that they can continue mobilising radios and televisions to at least have programs aired or translated or interpreted in Kiswahili. Media, if supported by the government, can also mobilise printed and online newspapers to try to put their stories in Kiswahili. This will of course in the long term promote and teach Kiswahili for those who are capable to learn from reading newspapers or journals. However, all this needs to have well-equipped personnel in the language of Kiswahili. This can be achieved when the government is also supported by the East African Kiswahili Commission and other partners interested in regional integration.

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