

Negative impact of multiculturalism on the use of standard Kiswahili in Burundi

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Abstract: Since language and culture are intertwined, acquisition and use of foreign or second language faces cultural obstacles. Belonging to various groups has made Burundians having different perceptions towards Kiswahili. This study intends to explore cultural elements that slow down effective use of Kiswahili in Burundi. It also looks at determining negative impacts of the lack of communication competence in Kiswahili on the integration of Burundi into the East African Community (EAC). This study adopts both qualitative and quantitative method to analyse data. The data were collected using online questionnaire administered to 50 students in Kiswahili department, 13 lecturers of Kiswahili and 10 parents. Findings indicate that Burundians' negative perceptions towards Kiswahili, language policy, gender and religion bias impede effective use of Kiswahili in Burundi. The results also reveal that the non-effective use of Kiswahili affects negatively Burundi's capacity to express its needs in EAC. To ensure effective cooperation with other EAC member states, the study recommends Burundians to develop positive perceptions towards Kiswahili.

Keywords: Cultural elements, Effective integration, Kiswahili use, Multiculturalism, Negative impacts

1. Introduction

Globalization has been a source of undeniable multiculturalism in the world. Cultural, economic and social sectors need to be ensured for sustainable financial and social globalization (Ogona et al., 2022: 138). People with different cultural and linguistic backgrounds meet at a small indivisible place such as a regional organization, among other places. Multiculturalism may be understood as a description of the state of cultural diversity in a given community. In this way, multiculturalism consists of contemporaneity of different cultures, where culture incorporates social status, gender, racial, religious, or cultural groups and is manifested in the conventional model of behavior, cultural assumptions, practices, and values (Clara, 2005: 1). It also facilitates an understanding of the way others interact within themselves and with others. Language is still the main tool that facilitates intercultural communication competence improvement. People accordingly need to learn foreign languages to communicate across borders. However, learning other people's languages needs a conducive environment. The process requires tolerance, acceptance, and avoiding stereotypes, prejudices, and negative perceptions toward foreign languages. Everybody can successfully learn another language, given an adequate context, once all cultural barriers to responsive teaching and learning are eradicated. Foreign language learning, therefore, earns its speakers a probable spread.

Burundi faces regional communication challenges due to the lack of effective communication competence in Kiswahili, the official language of the East African Community. Government officials communicate more in Kirundi and French than in Kiswahili and English. As a matter of fact, different cultural factors do not motivate Burundians to learn and use Kiswahili. Consequently, the lack of competence in Kiswahili has, therefore, hampered effective cooperation and mutual understanding between Burundi and the other EAC Member States.

Ethnicity, economic and social statuses, language policy, language planning, and language management are cultural elements that still hinder the consideration of Kiswahili in Burundi. Other factors such as age bias, gender bias, negative perceptions towards the Kiswahili language, prejudices, and taboos also impede Kiswahili use in the country. The situation slows down effective cooperation between Burundi and the East African Community. This paper first aims to explore Burundi cultural elements that impede the use of Kiswahili. The article also intends to determine the negative effects of the shortfalls of Kiswahili communication competence on Burundi's effective integration into the East African Community.

2. Literature review

In this section, the study reviewed secondary sources related to multiculturalism and language use.

2.1. Negative impact of Burundi ethnic groups on the use of standard Kiswahili

Kiswahili is not and will not be a property for one country or ethnic group, but the number of users will increase. Its expansion, therefore, refers not to space but an increase, over time, in the proportion of a common need that adopts Kiswahili for a given communicative function. The spread of Kiswahili, therefore, consists of the increase in number of the users through awareness, evaluation, and knowledge (Cooper, 1979:6). However, ethnicity blocked the effective use of Kiswahili. Based on a subjective approach, ethnicity is basically considered to be a social-psychological reality or a matter of perception of us as a different group of people and them another group in contradistinction to looking at it as something given, which exists objectively as it were out there (Isajiw, 1993: 3). The definition supports this write up in a triple way that includes the elements of culture; psychology, perceptions, and society. Ethnicity has, therefore, negatively affected the spread of Kiswahili in Burundi.

Since the post-colonial period, researches have indicated Burundi multi-ethnicity that includes Tutsi (stock farmers), Hutu (farmers), and Twa (hunters and iron dealers) affected the use of Kiswahili (Benaou, 1982: 14). The first ethnic group did not learn Kiswahili and not allow their descendants knowledge acquisition in that language. They considered the language to be poison against their livestock. Consequently, Burundi has not yet succeeded in implementing Kiswahili. Back in Belgium's colonial period, Kiswahili speakers were separated from other languages' users in Burundi. Kiswahili-speaking individuals were assigned to form a Kiswahili community that gathered people from different nationalities such as Tanzanians, Congolese, Arabic, Rwandese, and many others (Belt, 2014: 80). Being Muslim conditioned belonging to the Swahili community.

Instead of being a common language of communication, Kiswahili has become a means of social marginalisation. Due to the fear of discrimination in native group, some Burundians did not learn and speak Kiswahili even those who understood the language. Division into ethnic groups, social classes and colonial history have hence led to the Kiswahili use refusal. Incompetence in Kiswahili has hence negatively influenced the integration of Burundi into EAC.

2.2. Negative impact of economic status on Kiswahili use in Burundi

Negative perceptions and prejudices have blocked Kiswahili competence acquisition in Burundi. Younger Kiswahili learners are not motivated due to the unfavourable environment. In that way, Mantle-Bromley (1995) stated that positive beliefs about foreign language learning in relation to a conducive learning setting eases foreign language learning. Even though language and dialogue solve social conflicts and insurgencies among others crises are solved (Terfa & Margaret, 2022:29), aristocrat parents do not mobilise and do not allow their children to learn Kiswahili for effective communication with neighbouring countries, but French and English for effective communication beyond Africa's borders.

Most importantly, Mirza (2001) indicates that socioeconomic status significantly affects the learning outcomes of foreign language learners. The previous study shows that high social and economic classes

positively affect foreign language development. On the contrary, the same classes are obstacles to the spread of Kiswahili in Burundi. Young people who relate to high social and economic classes are not easily allowed to speak Kiswahili. Their parents deprive them of learning and speaking the language, whereas people who belong to low socioeconomic classes are motivated to deal carefully with the language in order to enhance communication skills across Kiswahili-speaking countries for job seeking and commerce. Communication is the comprehension which occurs between humans via linguistic and non-linguistic devices such as voice, gestures and mimicry (Terfa & Moses, 2022: 48). This implicates Kiswahili as a medium of communication.

Although Burundians from low socioeconomic classes considered Kiswahili as a language of trade (Benaou, 1982: 28), many people from high socioeconomic classes perceive it to be a language of street and thieves. Nevertheless, due to regional integration and cooperation, more Burundians find themselves in situations where they have to communicate with people who speak Kiswahili. One such situation arises from regional trade, especially the rapidly rising East African Community Common Market, which seeks to improve economic growth and development. East African Community integration milestone cannot succeed without a common language between members of the community. Further, although Kiswahili and English are official languages for EAC, the first one should take the lead because Burundi already has Kiswahili communities. Being a Bantu language may also make Kiswahili easier to learn than English for Burundians. The trend toward Kiswahili as a second common language for the East African Community has evidently some advantages, and it is not expected to be reversed in the foreseeable future.

2.3. Burundi language policy, language planning, policy implementation, language management and their impact on standard Kiswahili use

Understanding the concepts of “language policy”, “language planning”, “language management”, “policy implementation” and their impact on Kiswahili use in the Burundi multicultural context plays significant role. Various scholars have differently defined the concepts. According to Spolsky (2004), language policy indicates all the language procedures, practices, beliefs and organisational preferences of a society, organisation or group of people. Based on the previous definition, a country language policy aims at responding to society’s needs, interests and concerns in compliance with local norms.

Different governments establish different language policies, language planning and policy implementation in a bid to encourage the practice of a specific language. Alike other EAC Member States have elaborated language policies most often to promote one or the official languages at the expense of others, Burundi has language policy designed to promote Kiswahili as regional common code of communication since the integration of EAC in 2007. However, while Kirundi, French and English have official status, Kiswahili does not have any official recognition in the country (Burundi Language Policy, 2013: 13). That Bantu EAC’s common code is only a compulsory course from basic education till higher education. It is also taught as a programme of studies at the Burundi Higher Institute of Education and University of Burundi (Mazunya & Habonimana, 2010: 9). Although the latter university has trained 5 batches of Kiswahili teachers, the language is not effectively used in the country. Besides, despite the signature and ratification of treaties to safeguard the language in the whole region, Burundi government’s officials prefer French and English instead of Kiswahili.

In the same vein, Burundi established the language policy that includes Kiswahili to prepare functional regional integration. However, it does not provide Kiswahili with any status whereas Kirundi, French and English are official languages. That language policy prioritises first Kirundi for the safeguarding of national culture. It also focuses on the two European languages French and English, languages used on administrative documents such as passport, driving license, among other documents to benefit geopolitical opportunities around Africa and all over the world (Mazunya, 2016: 93). Has the Burundi language policy attained its objectives? Maybe no, the government is still reclaiming the use of French as a second official language in EAC

(idem) instead of English and Kiswahili only. That shows there is still a linguistic and cultural divide, although the country has been teaching the latter two languages for 15 years to fill the gap and contribute to regional development. Burundi legislation established the teaching of Kiswahili from basic education to higher education to promote the language around the country. Despite the government effort to incorporate Kiswahili among other languages spoken in the country, it seems that there is no implementation. Since the government has signed and ratified texts stipulating Kiswahili use as an official language of EAC and taught language in Burundi, the assurance and use in public institutions are limited. Government officials rarely communicate in that language. Kiswahili practice is, therefore, far from actions.

According to Cooper (1989), language planning means conscious initiative to influence people's behavior regarding the acquisition, structure, or functional allocation of their language codes. The definition indirectly reveals the role of people in promoting a second language through teaching and learning. It also emphasizes the need of respecting existing culture alongside policies. The language planning made in Burundi in 2007 most visibly indicates the government's will to sensitize Burundians to use Kiswahili for effective regional integration. Nevertheless, stakeholders seem they did not effectively contribute an expected massive changes in regional integration due to less importance attributed to Kiswahili. By establishing the new language planning, the government intended to promote systematic linguistic change in the country. Burundi introduced the linguistic change for assuring socio-economic development and maintaining useful communication between local citizens and other East African Community inhabitants. It aimed at moving the entire Burundi society to the regional cooperation direction. Although language policy has been established to enhance linguistic access conditions to EAC cooperation, policy implementation encountered constraints that impeded interregional communication.

Language policy implementation has been a threat to Kiswahili use. According to the theory of policy implementation firstly discussed by Pressman and Wildavsky (1984) in early 1970s, policy implementation refers to carrying out, accomplishing, fulfilling, producing or completing a given task (Narendra, 2009: 1). For pioneers of policy implementation theory, policy implementation concept indicates the process of interaction between the setting of goals and actions geared to achieve them (Pressman & Wildavsky, 1984: 21-23). Noluthando (2017) states that policy implementation means a process whereby a policy is translated from plan, ideas or expectation into substantive action with which the intention is to change or regulate the current societal issues. Besides, they stated that when a policy is being implemented, it means that the implementers including government officials and other stakeholders are taking into consideration decisions, rules, regulations and practices intending to improve the community well-being.

This study considers policy implementation as a set of practical activities carried out through collaboration between the government and stakeholders to attain a certain objective. They all aim at effectively and efficiently attaining the goals and objectives already planned, that are the effective use of Kiswahili. The implementation process can be of initiating programs, supporting all groups involved in the sector of that language policy, and evaluating how effective and efficient is the policy being implemented. Establishing language policy and planning for language are not enough to make Kiswahili effective tool of cooperation and integration in EAC. The government of Burundi, therefore, has to deal with language management in order to insure language responsiveness, language preparedness and language awareness. The process should provide the state with capacity of satisfying the needs of multilingual Burundi people within the EAC. Apart from stating language policy and language planning as parts of language promotion, Spolsky (2004) indicates that language management is any specific efforts to modify or influence language practice. The scholar adds that language management is conscious and explicit efforts by language managers to control language choices (Spolsky, 2004: 1) and the explicit and observable effort by an individual or group that has or claims authority over the participants in the domain to modify their practices or beliefs (Spolsky, 2004: 4).

Furthermore, EAC common market urges people to have multilingual skills. The process of East African integration has given rise to a rapid increase in the use of Kiswahili as official language by at least 50% of EAC member states. Three countries (3) out of seven (7) speak and have adopted Kiswahili as official language. Tanzania and Kenya have Kiswahili as national and official language while it only has official status in Rwanda. Despite the interests and needs of Burundi to effectively integrate the community, the country did not provide the language with any status in language policy. There are regulations and laws to teach Kiswahili, but no legislation to use it. Further, as effective communication and common understanding are main strategic imperatives for successful EAC integration, Kiswahili is one of the two languages which has been adopted as the common language of administration, legislation and business. That Bantu language plays the role of lingua franca in the region due to its large number of speakers. Ineffective use of Kiswahili in Burundi will therefore lead to ineffective integration and cooperation of EAC.

This article explores how cultural elements impede language policy implementation, language planning and language management. Those cultural factors involve attitudes and behaviours or government's practices that block Kiswahili, the most important language of EAC common understanding. The study hence evaluates whether there is a connection between the 2014 Burundi language policy and the promotion of Kiswahili the lingua franca of the region.

2.4. The impact of language bias, gender bias, religious, perceptions and prejudices on standard Kiswahili spread in Burundi

Language bias has been a practice by adults to discriminate against younger people willing to master Kiswahili for different purposes. Biased language against Kiswahili users in Burundi consists of using expressions that relate them to no mature and uneducated people. In rural areas and in most of high class quarters of Bujumbura, younger people who tend to speak Kiswahili face mistreatment. Children are not sensitised to study the language. However, adults feel proud to see their children communicating in any European or Asian language. Therefore, even those who have studied the language at school feel ashamed to use it.

Social and cultural factors inevitably affect a language's sociolinguistics (Jenniffer, 2003: 85). Gender bias which is the act of favouring more men than women has hindered the use of the second official language of EAC (Rothchild, 2014: 1). The use of Kiswahili faces gender bias as one of the barriers to its spread in Burundi. The number of female Kiswahili users is still smaller than the one of males. Kiswahili spread in the country is hence shaped by gender bias. Men as the heads of families have negative attitudes and perceptions against the women's willingness to acquire knowledge in Kiswahili. Males do not motivate women to learn Kiswahili pretending to protect them from undisciplined behaviour. However, parents sometimes allow only men to follow Kiswahili trainings. Due to socialization and the development of gender roles, the participation in various activities also promotes labour division (Francis and al., 2020: 102). African societies including Burundi consider child naïve, innocent and incapable; delicate and helpless (Jaquelyne & Nicolas, 2022: 189). Some people also perceive women and girls as children according to cultural beliefs. That is why, the number of female students is smaller in Kiswahili department than the one in English, French, economics, among other departments of universities in Burundi. Besides, in the Kiswahili training centres, SAPROSS-urundi (Solution Académique pour la Promotion du Swahili Standard) and CHAWAKIBU (Chama Cha Wanafunzi wa Kiswahili nchini Burundi: Association of Kiswahili Students in Burundi), the number of females is smaller than one of men. Cultural dynamics and traditions towards Kiswahili are consequently still impeding the use of Kiswahili by women and girls in Burundi, although the law is no longer a barrier to women and girls access to education.

3. Materials and methods

The study used qualitative and quantitative approaches to analyse data collected from three categories of respondents. It was conducted in Burundi, the francophone member state of EAC. In total, 73 respondents participated in the study. It adopted random approach as method of sampling. The study population hence comprised 50 students in Kiswahili departments, 10 parents of university students and 13 lecturers of Kiswahili. Kiswahili students were targeted for whether they had experienced or not cultural challenges for willing to learn and use Kiswahili in their society. Lecturers were also selected for they are aware of barriers to Kiswahili use in Burundi. They also know cultural factors that ease the use of the language in the country. Parents are also targeted in order to reveal their perceptions of Kiswahili users.

The study applied questionnaire surveys and interview methods for data collection. For each category of correspondents, the questionnaires comprised two closed questions and two open-ended questions. Respondents were directed to meticulously reflect on the questions by relating them to the society experiences.

4. Findings

This section presents results following three subsections, that are data collected from Kiswahili lecturers, students of Kiswahili and questionnaire administered to from non-Kiswahili lecturers neither students. The first section reveals detailed presentation of the results. It presents the level of Kiswahili use out of classroom. This section also examines Burundi cultural elements that impede speaking Kiswahili. This part determines challenges that block lecturers and students to studying and speaking Kiswahili. It also explores negative effects of the lack of communication competence in Kiswahili on Burundi effective integration into EAC. Before investigating different levels of using Kiswahili by various social classes the study also examines the influence of Burundi ethnic groups on Kiswahili spread in the country. It also looks at evaluating social classes that prefer their children to learn and speak Kiswahili than French and English. This section finally examines the negative impact of not providing Kiswahili with official status as French and English on Kiswahili competences acquisition.

The findings of the second sub-section present the level of using Kiswahili when visiting a public or private institution. They also reveal the obstacles to speaking Kiswahili in public or private administration, cultural elements that block the spread of Kiswahili. The results also indicate the Kiswahili status comparing to other foreign languages in Burundi and the negative impacts of the lack of communication competence in Kiswahili on Burundi effective integration into EAC. The sub-section also show how ethnic groups are obstacles to Kiswahili spread in Burundi. It besides assesses the factors of using Kiswahili for some ethnic groups. The results indicate children's social classes and gender who speak freely Kiswahili. The subsection reveal the level of communicating in Kiswahili among low class and high class and Kiswahili status in Burundi.

The last sub-section presents findings under the following major headings: opinions of parents on their children studying and speaking standard Kiswahili, parents' perceptions towards women or girls who speak Kiswahili, and parents' favoured language programme of studies for their children at university.

4.1. Level of Kiswahili use out of classroom

This section aims at examining the level of kiswahili language use when lecturers and students are interacting with other people. The study presents statistics about the level of speaking Kiswahili for teachers in daily life and for students when they visit a public or private institution. Results indicate that 5 % of teachers speak Kiswahili out of classroom whereas 95 % do not speak that language due to various cultural factors (Figure 1). This research also shows that 14 % of students especially speak Kiswahili when they visit their teachers whereas 24 % do not speak it in administrative institution (Figure 2).

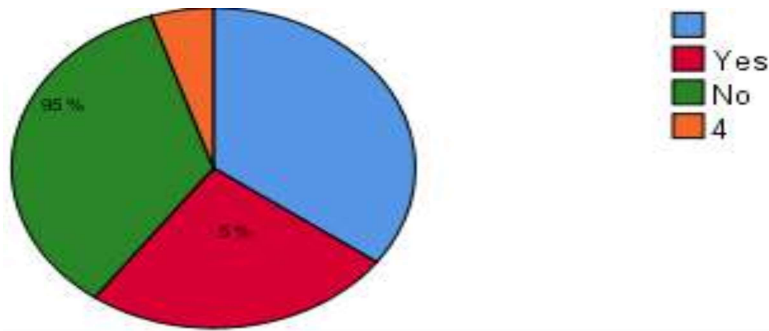


Figure 1: Lecturers' agreement on speaking Kiswahili out of classroom. Source: Field data, 2022

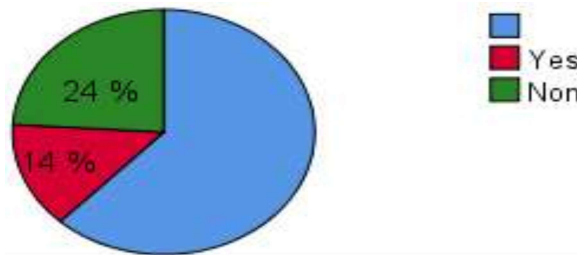


Figure 2: Students' agreement on speaking Kiswahili when they visit public or private institution.

Source: Computed from field data, 2022

4.2. Cultural barriers to Kiswahili use in Burundi

Teachers were asked to mention cultural challenges that block them to speaking Kiswahili. The figure below indicate the most cultural obstacles to Kiswahili use in Burundi.

Results of figure 3 reveal that people's negative historical perceptions towards Kiswahili (25 %), lack of Kiswahili interlocutors (20 %), Kiswahili less consideration in academic and administrative institutions (15 %) and lack of passion in Kiswahili language for some teachers (5 %) hinder the effective use of Kiswahili.

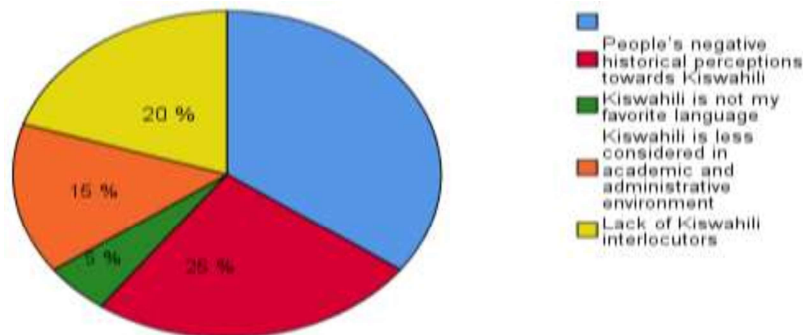


Figure 3: Cultural elements that block lecturers to speaking Kiswahili in everyday life. Source: Computed from field data, 2022

In order to investigate cultural elements that impede the use of Kiswahili, students were also targeted to mention obstacles to speaking the language when they visit public or private institution.

Findings (Figure 4) show that while 8 % confirm that Burundians' negative perceptions block the use of Kiswahili, 6 % indicate that lack of sensitization to Kiswahili in high class families and language policy are the barriers to the effective use of Kiswahili. The results also reveal that some ethnic groups do not like their children to learn and speak Kiswahili (2%). The figure below presents more details.

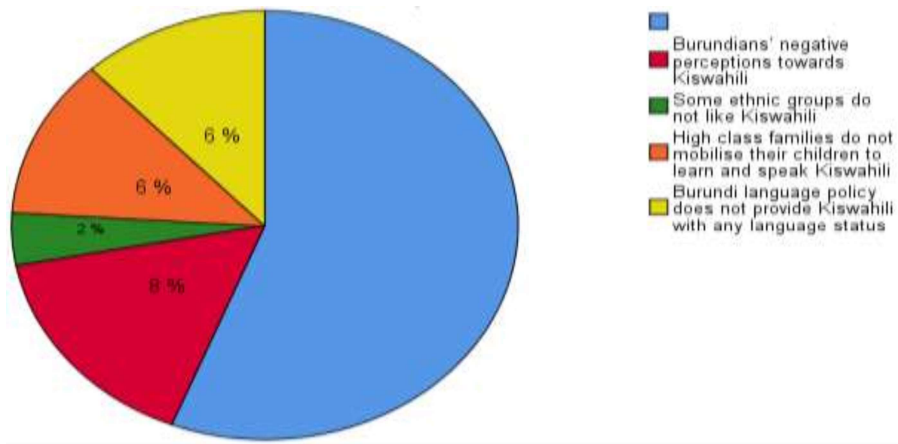


Figure 4: Cultural elements that block the spread of Kiswahili in Burundi. Source: Field data, 2022

4.3. Level of using Kiswahili by various social classes

After presenting responses on frequencies of participants to indicate cultural barriers to Kiswahili effective use who were split into two categories of respondents, the research also presents statistics of teachers' and students agreements on the level of Kiswahili use by high class and low class (Figure 5).

About the question of investigating whether high class and low class use at same level Kiswahili and why, findings indicate that 50 % of teachers confirm the second class studies and communicates more in that African language than the first class. Further, they reveal that 15 % of respondents indicate that both high class and low class use Kiswahili at the same level. The first category of teacher respondents (50 %) explained that low class is historically supposed to contain poor people. They hence study Kiswahili in a bid to be able to communicate when they go to seek for job in Tanzania and Kenya where Kiswahili is mostly spoken.

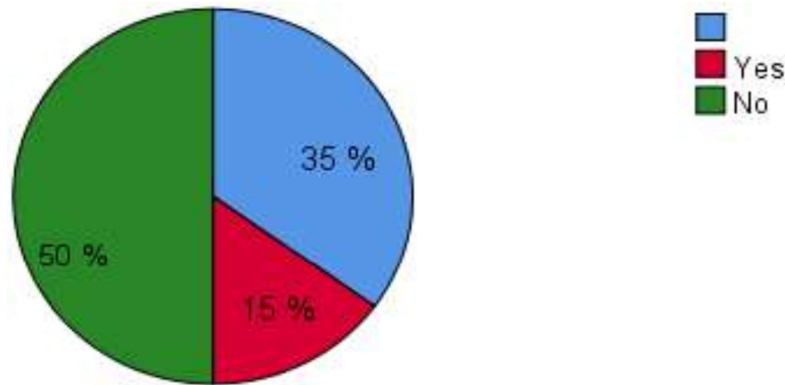


Figure 5: Level at which high class and low class Burundians study and speak Kiswahili. Source: Computed from field data, 2022

Besides, respondents were asked to indicate whether high class Burundians speak Kiswahili than low class do. Results from the figure show that 32 % of students agree with the unequal use of the language by the two social classes, whereas 24 % confirm the same level of studying and communicating in Kiswahili. In short, the majority of both lecturers and students confirm disparity in studying and speaking Kiswahili between the two classes.

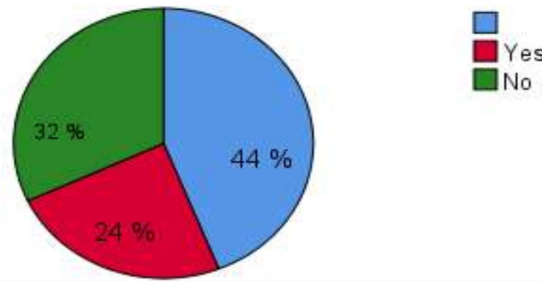


Figure 6: Difference in Kiswahili use by high class and low class in Burundi. **Source:** Computed data from field, 2022

4.4. Impact of environment and gender bias on Kiswahili use

The research also explored influence of rural area, urban environment and gender bias on Kiswahili use in Burundi. Students were asked to indicate among townees, villagers, men and women, category who studies and speaks more Kiswahili. Results of (figure 7) show that 32 % of townees against 14 % villagers study and speak that official language of EAC. The respondents explained that some people are still believing that Kiswahili is a language of liars, thieves and Muslims. The findings of the same figure indicate that 38 % of men against 16 % of women study and communicate in Kiswahili.

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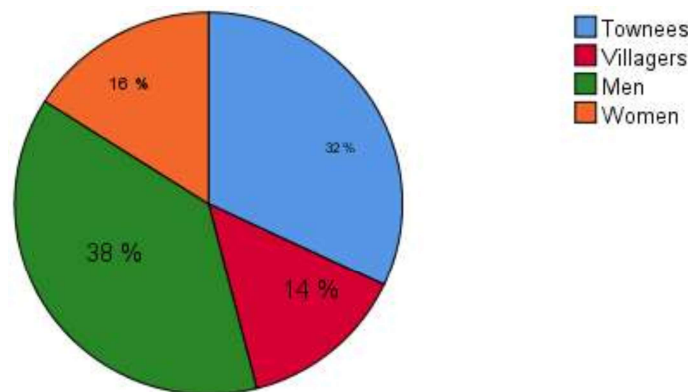


Figure 7: Influence of environment and gender bias on Kiswahili use in Burundi. **Source:** Field data, 2022

4.5. Burundian parents' perceptions towards women and girls Kiswahili speakers

This study also aimed at researching the contribution of Burundian parents to effective use of Kiswahili. Findings show that lack of good education (28.6 %), assimilation (28.6 %) and disrespect (35.7 %) are interpretations for a woman or girl who speaks Kiswahili. Women and girls face these obstacles when they are willing to learn and speak the language.

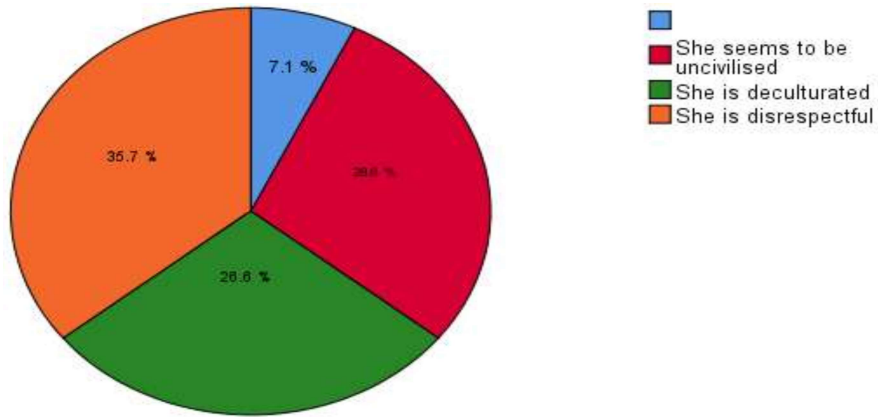


Figure 8: Burundian parents' perceptions towards women or girls who speak Kiswahili. Source: Field data, 2022

4.6. Parents' favorite language programme of studies at university for their children

The study sought to investigate the parents' sensitization of children to Kiswahili use. It therefore researched parents' preferences among French, English, Kirundi and Kiswahili programs of studies.

Results reveal that 50 % of parents prefer their children to pursue English programme, 21.4 % want their children to study French whereas 14.3 % of parents prioritise Kirundi and Kiswahili. The figure below indicates more details.

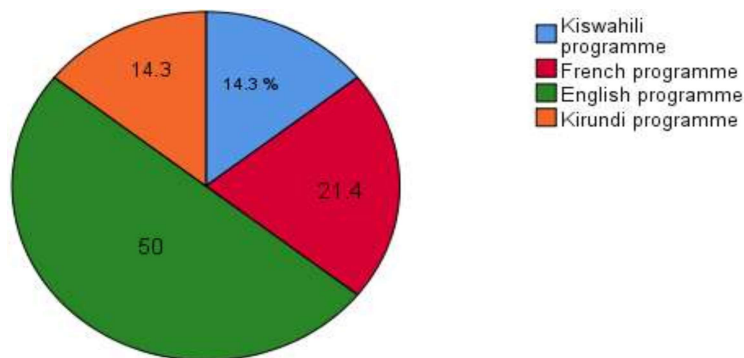


Figure 9: Parents' favorite language programme of studies at university. Source: Field data, 2022

4.7. Impacts of the lack of Kiswahili communication competence on Burundi

Data collected from both teachers (Figure 10) and students (Figure 11) also helped to explore negative effects of lack of communication competence in Kiswahili on Burundi, one of East African community member states.

Data collected from both teachers (Figure 10) and students (Figure 11) also helped to explore negative effects of lack of communication competence in Kiswahili on Burundi, one of East African community member states. From the figure below (figure 10), teachers indicated that incapacity to express Burundi's needs during EAC meetings (35 %) because the Community only use English and Kiswahili, barriers to Burundi's commercial and social collaboration that hinder development (20 %), obstacle to Burundi effective integration to EAC (30 %) and missing opportunities from that Community (30 %), are negative impacts on Burundi the first francophone EAC member state before the Democratic Republic of Congo to join.

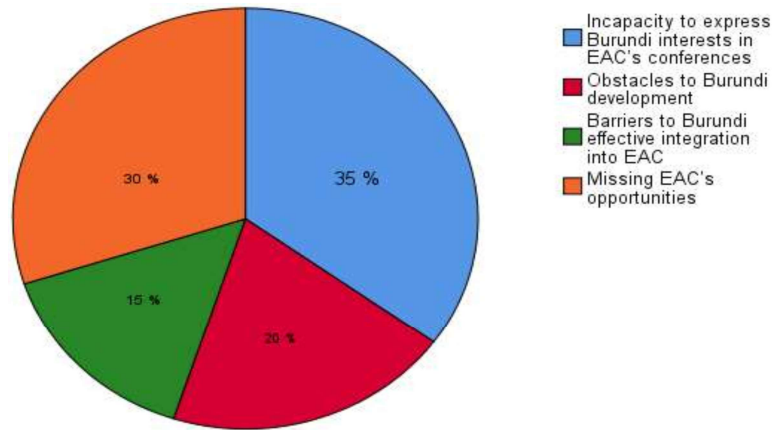


Figure 10: Parents' opinions on the impacts of the lack of communication competence in Kiswahili on Burundi.

Source: Field data, 2022

The study also explores negative impacts of the lack of Kiswahili competence communication on Burundi. Students provided the following responses.

Findings from students revealed that negative consequences of the phenomenon on Burundi are the absence of effective cooperation within EAC (14 %), lack of mutual understanding (22 %), and barrier to Burundi's interests and opportunities from the community (18 %). Both lecturers and students are aware of the negative impacts of the lack of Kiswahili communication competences on Burundi cooperation.

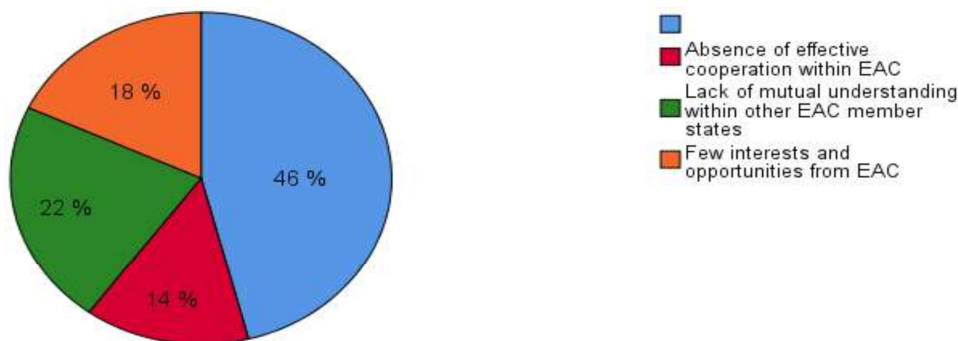


Figure 11: Students' opinions on impacts of the lack of communication competence in Kiswahili on Burundi.

Source: Computed data from field, 2022

5. Discussion

The aim of this paper was to explore negative effects of Burundi multiculturalism on the effective use of Kiswahili. The study also sought to determine negative impacts of the lack of communication competence in Kiswahili as member state of EAC. In this section, findings are discussed to verify the achievement of the objectives of research. To this end, results indicated that a large number of teachers (95 %) do not use Kiswahili due to people's negative attitude to the language (Figure 1). Multiculturalism has therefore become a barrier to the spread of Kiswahili in Burundi. The results have a direct relationship with the research of Rongmei (2020: 944) who stated that cultural factors are ubiquitous elements which affect foreign language learners in multiple aspects. That phenomenon may be either negative or positive. In the case of Burundi, cultural elements have negatively affected the learning and using of Kiswahili. The findings of this study contradict the research of Moshi (2006:167) who indicated that Kiswahili has surely earned major place as a language of choice by many people in EAC, its neighbours and other countries around the world. Burundians still have negative perceptions towards Kiswahili.

The findings also indicated that lack of Kiswahili consideration in academic and administrative institutions (15 %), people's negative historical perceptions towards Kiswahili (25 %), lack of sensitization to Kiswahili in high class families and Burundi language policy which does not provide Kiswahili with important place comparing to English and French (6 %) slows down the effective use of the language. The results of this study relate to Ezechias (2021: 29) where the researcher showed that Burundians hated Kiswahili for they perceived in it the image of Arabic and German colonisers of their country. Accordingly, Burundians felt offended by learning and speaking the pretended Rumariza's language. They end up by negating the Kiswahili competencies which should be effectively used among EAC members apart from English.

Furthermore, the results indicated that low class studies and communicates in Kiswahili (50 %) than high class. The group of teachers confirm that the second class studies and communicates more in that African language than the first class (15 %). The reason is that low class was historically supposed to contain poor people. They hence learn Kiswahili for the purpose of being able to communicate when they go to work in Tanzania and Kenya where citizens mostly use the language. The results support the research of Winkleby et al. (1992: 1) who stated that socioeconomic status is usually measured by determining education, income, occupation, or a composite of these dimensions. Education and income are indicators that relate to how rich Burundian parents discourage their children when learning and speaking Kiswahili. Another study showed that Burundians from economic high class consider Kiswahili a language of thieves and marginalize Kiswahili speakers (Benaou, 1982 :38).

Results also indicated that incapacity to express Burundi's needs during EAC meetings (35 %) is one of impacts of the lack of communication competence in Kiswahili because the Community only use English and Kiswahili. Barriers to Burundi's commercial and social collaboration (20 %), obstacle to Burundi's effective integration into EAC (30 %), lack of mutual understanding in regional conferences (22 %) and missing opportunities from that Community (30 %), are negative impacts on Burundi the first francophone EAC member state before the Democratic Republic of Congo to join in 2022. The negative attitude of Burundians towards Kiswahili controvert the study of Mukuthuria (2006:154) where he revealed that the whole East African Community and Central African region are considering Kiswahili a language for wider communication, improving quality of education, galvanizing unity, economy, among other sectors of life.

Kiswahili as lingua franca is undoubtedly a tool of regional integration of East African Community. This research contributed to the assessment of cultural barriers to Kiswahili use in Burundi and exploring the importance of a cross-cultural language competences in regional integration. Further study might be done on the role of EAC member states language policy and implementation in promoting Kiswahili, since it is the African official language of the community and working language of the African union. The present research was carried out on impacts of multiculturalism on the use of Kiswahili in Burundi. The choice was based on the fact that foreign language learning and use depend on target people's attitudes.

6. Conclusion

This paper aimed at examining the cultural elements that impede effective use of Kiswahili the official language of EAC. The study also sought to investigate how the lack of communication competence in Kiswahili negatively affects Burundi's integration into the community. The significant role played by various cultures in regional integration and cooperation motivated the research. Although Kiswahili is the official language of EAC, findings revealed that due to bad historical perceptions towards the language, high class, villagers and women limit their use of Kiswahili. Results also indicated that teachers and students use less of Kiswahili out of classroom and parents consider uncivilised or assimilated a woman who speaks the language. The findings finally showed that lack of mutual understanding, absence of effective cooperation and incapacity to express Burundi's needs during EAC member states decision making are negative effects of the lack of communication competence in Kiswahili.

This research recommends that the government of Burundi should establish and implement a language policy which provides Kiswahili with crucial status like one of French and English. The government should also consider the language as a requirement to job accession. The decision will hence motivate students, public and private administrators to learn and practice Kiswahili. To ensure Burundi's effective integration and cooperation, the study recommend Burundians to develop positive attitudes towards Kiswahili which is irreversibly an intercultural communication tool around the EAC. People from high class families, villagers and administrators should take Kiswahili as a paramount communication tool which will enable them enter and benefit from the EAC market. The research finally recommend parents to avoid gender bias against women and girls who want to learn and speak Kiswahili. Burundians should also understand that women and girls need too to benefit from EAC opportunities, and Kiswahili might be one of the communication tools.

To enhance mutual understanding, Burundians should finally bear in mind that Kiswahili is not only a medium of communication, but also an individual's identity in Burundi and East African region. Learning Kiswahili as a foreign language will therefore facilitate the understanding of other people's ways of living. On the contrary, refusing to learn the language will surely cause the lack of cross-border understanding within EAC member states.

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