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Kiswahili in Contact and Conflict: The Case of Namanga Border Town in East Africa[1]

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Abstract

Language conflict is commonly studied and understood as an outcome of contact between speakers of different languages. In this article, we explore language conflict in the conversations of speakers of a sole language – Kiswahili. We argue that language conflict can as well occur among speakers of the same language. Using sociolinguistic data collected ethnographically among ordinary speakers of Kiswahili at the Namanga border town in East Africa, we show that these conflicts arise as a result of issues such as (i) citizen mobility, (ii) existence of several varieties and labels, (iii) varying attitudes of people towards different varieties, and (iv) demonstrating linguistic power. Consequently, we demonstrate that contrary to the assumptions of many scholars of Kiswahili and others, the Namanga border town bares a perfect example of a space in East Africa where meaningful and informative studies relating to different sociolinguistic aspects of Kiswahili, such as contact and conflict can be undertaken.

Key words: Kiswahili, language contact, language conflict, Namanga, East Africa.

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Introduction

One of the fundamental issues involved in language contact studies is language conflict. Consequently, language conflict has been recognized as a common occurrence in language contact situations involving speakers of not only different languages but also different varieties of the same language. The case of different varieties of the same language manifest simply as misunderstandings, tensions, and frustrations in face-to-face conversations.

The aim of this article is to explore the contact and conflict situations involving speakers of Kiswahili at the Namanga border town (hereinafter, Namanga) – an East African town located on the Kenya-Tanzania border. Namanga is a border town that houses one of the busiest customs offices in East Africa. It, therefore, experiences high mobility of different kinds of citizens[2] who use it as an entry and exit route into and out of Kenya and Tanzania. The town also experiences high convergence of people, both natives and non-natives who move into the town in search of livelihoods and leisure.

The high mobility and convergence of citizens of diverse backgrounds at Namanga brings about a socially multilingual setting in which several languages and language varieties come into contact, requiring the use of a common language for communication.

[2] The theoretical model which we invoke in this article uses the term 'citizen' in a specialized way to refer to ordinary people who stay in a particular place and participate in social activities in such a place.

The talk of a common language for communication in East Africa has been popular for quite some time now because East Africa has been recognized as a highly multi-ethnic and multilingual region in which many languages are spoken (Habwe 2009; Mwaniki 2010). Among these languages, Kiswahili has been reported to be the most widely spoken and one that functions as a lingua franca among the many ethnolinguistic communities that exist in the region (Mazrui & Mazrui 1993, 1995; Merritt & Abdulaziz 1985; Moshi 2006; Mukuthuria 2006, 2009; Mulokozi 2002).

Kiswahili is widely used in East Africa and has a long history in Tanzania and Kenya as the language of national identity (Merritt & Abdulaziz 1985; Lodhi 1993; Nyongani 1995; Petzell 2012; Vilhanova 1996). It is almost a foregone conclusion by many scholars of Kiswahili that the ordinary citizens at Namanga would effortlessly, and without any form of 'conflict' use Kiswahili as a common language of communication when they come into contact with each other.

However, as Peter Nelde (1987) has argued, no two languages or language varieties come into contact without any form of conflict. Nelde summarizes this argument in the popular phrase that "there can be no language contact without language conflict" and that "language contact means language conflict." There exists a number of works that demonstrate contact between Kiswahili and other

languages, notably English, and some Bantu languages (see Akidah 2013; Bosha 1993; Dzahene-Quarshie 2010; Gowers 1952). However, there is lack of significant literature regarding conflict within Kiswahili.

Methodology

The data presented in this article is part of a sociolinguistic study conducted at Namanga about the use of Kiswahili as a tool for social integration in the East African Community. The data was collected ethnographically within a period of six consecutive months beginning February 2019. Individual interviews and observations were the main methods employed in the course of the study.

We received ethical approval from the Makerere University School of Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee. The first phase of data collection involved carrying out observations in market places, religious gatherings, bus parks and customs areas, and football screening halls. We selected these areas after examining the multilingual social nature of the participants. Thus, research in the markets targeted the buyers and sellers while the research in religious gatherings targeted religious adherents.

The research in the bus parks and around the customs area targeted the road travellers, and in football screening halls the research targeted the football fans. As part of the observations, the researchers also engaged in incidental casual talk with different people targeting specific aspects of the use of Kiswahili that constituted contact and conflict. The data in casual conversations and observations was written down in a notebook.

The second phase of the research involved face-to-face interviews with 16 individuals. The 16 consisted of two ordinary citizens drawn from each of the four study sites. We selected the interviewees purposively based on our judgement of their knowledge of the day-to-day social life in their respective areas. Their experience in interacting with citizens from all walks of life and on a daily basis was considered.

The interviews were largely unstructured and proceeded in the form of open conversation. The conversations were based on guiding question developed following (Bowern 2008). Sample guiding questions for the topic of this article included: (i) if and when the participants spoke Kiswahili; (ii) if and when they used a particular variety; (iii) general impressions of participants about Kiswahili; (iv) impression about who spoke 'the same' and 'differently'; (v) how participants judged particular varieties, that is, which varieties are prestigious and which ones were considered inferior; and (vi) language perceptions and attitudes of the citizens. The interviews also yielded information about the demographics and the kinds of mobility and linguistic repertoires at Namanga.

We conducted all of the interviews in Kiswahili as the participants' code of choice. The interviews were audio-recorded with informed

consent from the participants. The interviews were then transcribed and eventually translated into English. The transcription and translation were done by the principal researcher of the study who has experience as an English-Kiswahili/Kiswahili-English translator.

The analysis was done qualitatively based on the themes of the study. Four main codes (issues) that constitute the theme 'language contact and conflict' were derived from the data collected, these are: (i) citizen mobility; (ii) varieties and labels; (iii) citizens' attitudes to language; and (iv) demonstration of linguistic power. We have presented these in section four of this article. Each issue is illustrated with relevant extract(s) from data transcripts. We have used a roman number enclosed in double brackets to mark each extract.

English words and phrases in the original Kiswahili extracts have been italicized, and so are the Kiswahili words and phrases in the English translation of the extracts. Speech marks are used to mark direct quotations from responses of the participants. Ellipsis is used to show that some parts of speech have been left out of the extracts. Bold typeface is used to mark that part of the extract that is emphasised in the context in which it has been used.

Theoretical and Literature Review

The discussion in this article is informed by the Citizen Sociolinguistics (CS) model proposed by Betsy Rymes and Andrea Leone-Pizzighella (2014). The CS model is conceptualized both as a theoretical and methodological framework that draws from other theories such as citizen science, participatory culture, orders of indexicality and communicative repertoires. According to Rymes and Leone, the CS model seeks to provide an understanding of language and social life by tracing the ways ordinary citizens comprehend and make use of the world of languages around them. As such, the CS model is summarized as the study of language-use based on citizen (public) participation (Rymes and Leone 2014). The model pays attention to the participation of ordinary citizens in social interactions, also called 'citizenship' (Hausendorf and Bora 2006). It traces the way discourse genres, texts and people circulate back and forth in social interactions (Moore 2015).

The CS model considers language as a social act, and speaking as a social action, and hence looks at situated uses of language and other modalities of communication in the day-to-day interactions. It emphasises the need to obtain research data empirically from the social contexts where the language is used. It calls for the investigation of a myriad of issues such as (i) varieties of language in use; (ii) language choice decisions that speakers make as reflected in the local patterns of language use; (iii) ideologies that citizens have about language; and (iv) attitudes of citizens towards language as reflected in what

they do with it. We found these issues directly related to language in social interactions and language contact situations, hence, the suitability of the methodology for the study.

Peter Siemund (2008) observes that systematic studies of language contact situations seriously started with the publication of Uriel Weinreich's seminal monograph *Languages in Contact: Findings and Problems* (1953). Siemund adds that it is for this reason that Weinreich is considered the founder of contact linguistics. Following Weinreich's publication, language contact received considerable attention from linguists, such as Clyne (1998, 2003); Sankoff (2009); Siemund (2008); Thomason (2001); Thomason and Kaufman (1998) among others.

Another group of scholars from the late 1960s through 1990s, such as Haarmann (1986, 1990); Mackey (1967); Nelde (1987, 1994, 1997); and Ninyoles (1969) recognized language conflict as an integral outcome of language contact situations in multilingual communities (Darquennes 2010). Language conflict was then defined as a form of open (and sometimes violent) disagreements, tensions, resentments and differences of opinion between and among ethnic groups, and which came about as a result of language or simply expressed through language (Nelde 1994). These kinds of language contacts and conflicts became the most studied the world over. Nelde opines that the initial studies in inter-ethnic language conflicts suggested that most conflicts originated in historical, political and economic factors between members of the ethnic groups in a multilingual community.

However, she argues that this is not always the case as some conflicts can also be self-generated in a multilingual community. She adds that these kinds of conflicts are mostly characterized by competition between language groups, each trying to find space in the linguistic hierarchies in a multilingual society, and dominant languages trying to outdo the less dominant languages. According to Darquennes (2010), in some cases, the disadvantaged or weaker groups choose to cooperate with the dominant groups and lead to some other outcomes, but in other cases, they may choose to put up some form of political resistance.

Previous studies in East Africa have been limited to understanding linguistic outcomes of contact between Kiswahili and other languages (Akidah 2013; Bosha 1993; Dzahene-Quarshie 2010; Gowers 1952). These studies have concerned themselves with how Kiswahili and other languages such as Arabic, English and indigenous African languages influence each other through borrowing. Essentially, these studies have taken the approach of looking at contact as a product of inter-ethnic influences in multilingual societies. However, as Mattheier (1984) has shown, conflicts over language use can also occur in 'monolingual

communities' – communities in which one dominant language is used. It would appear that what Mattheier alludes to is what Gumperz (1982) referred to as 'social conflicts'. These kinds of conflicts can best be studies in face-to-face conversations.

Face-to-face conversations are considered vital in interactional sociolinguistics on the basis that a conversation is more than just the exchange of information, but also some form of social event in which different individuals come to play (Gumperz 1982; Madsen 2006). Gumperz and Madsen argue that in a conversation, every linguistic act can be seen as a social act in which speakers negotiate social relations through various strategies. Many issues suffice in the process of negotiating identities and relations. Thus, to understand the communicative phenomena that arise in human interaction, Gumperz & Cook-Gumperz (1982) advise that we need 'to go' gain insights into the communicative processes by which the phenomena arise. This article looks into these issues in communicative processes in which Kiswahili functions at Namanga.

Issues Emerging out of the use of Kiswahili at Namanga

Our analysis of the data collected in language contact and conflict situations among the ordinary citizens at Namanga revealed four major issues that we present and discuss below. These are:

- varieties and labels;
- attitudes of the citizens to language;
- demonstration of linguistic power; and
- citizen mobility

Varieties and Labels

Variety is used as a neutral term for language and dialects (Meyerhoff 2006), and also, any of the human speech patterns associated with a group within a dialect or an individual within a group (Wardhaugh 1986). Our data revealed socially constructed varieties of Kiswahili at Namanga which are in turn assigned unique labels by the ordinary users. Notable varieties include: (i) *Kiswahili cha Tanzania* (Tanzanian Kiswahili); (ii) *Kiswahili cha Kenya* (Kenyan Kiswahili); (iii) *Kiswahili cha Uganda* (Ugandan Kiswahili); (iv) *Kiswahili cha Coast* (Coastal Kiswahili); and (v) *Kimaaja* (Street Kiswahili).

'Kiswahili cha Tanzania' (Tanzanian Kiswahili) ("clean Kiswahili[3]")

The *Kiswahili cha Tanzania* variety was ascribed to Kiswahili speakers of Tanzanian nationality at Namanga. It was referred to as *Kiswahili safi* (clean Kiswahili) or *Kiswahili kizuri* (good Kiswahili). The following extract relates to this variety.

[3] "Clean Kiswahili" is our direct translation of "Kiswahili safi", a term used by participants to describe the *Kiswahili cha Tanzania*. We chose a direct translation in order to capture the metaphorical sense in which participants understand and speak of the variety, but later in the analysis we show that they actually mean 'pure Kiswahili'.

In extract (1) the participant who is a Kenyan mentions that there exists a variety called *Kiswahili cha Tanzania* and goes ahead to label it *Kiswahili safi* (clean Kiswahili) and constitutes 'incorrect' Kiswahili. But still, some people are unable to learn and speak that 'correct' Kiswahili even when they are aware that the variety they speak is not 'correct' Kiswahili.

(1)	…Kiswahili ya Tanzania enyewe inakuanga poa sana. Yaani ni ile Kiswahili…sijui nikwambie aje…yaani ni ile Kiswahili *safi* kabisa. Yaani akiongea unasikia Kiswahili *kimenyooka* kabisa…	…The Tanzanian Kiswahili is very good. I mean it is that kind of Kiswahili… I don't know how I can explain it to you…I mean it is a kind of Kiswahili that is very pure. I mean when one speaks you understand that the Kiswahili is very streamlined...
(2)	Watanzania wanazungumza Kiswahili kizuri sana. Kiswahili chao si kama chetu. Chao ni *pure* kabisa. Basi kama kuna Kiswahili *original* ni kile cha Tanzania.…	Tanzanians speak very good Kiswahili. Their Kiswahili is not like ours. Theirs is very *pure*. So, if there is an *original* Kiswahili, it is that spoken by Tanzanians. …

Kiswahili kimenyooka (streamlined Kiswahili). When asked to elaborate, the participant in extract (2) assigns morelabels as "Kiswahili pure" and "Kiswahili original".

Other participants referred to this variety as *Kiswahili sanifu* (standard Kiswahili), "Kiswahili fluent", and "*Kiswahili cha ndani*" (deep Kiswahili). The speakers of this variety were said to occupy a particular space on the Tanzanian side of Namanga. This geographical positioning implied that not every citizen at Namanga can speak it. The fact that most of these descriptions and labels were assigned by speakers who do not speak this variety implies that the participants have certain socially constructed ideas of what constitutes 'original' and 'correct' Kiswahili and what

The "clean Kiswahili" was described as being grammatically correct and 'clean' in the sense that it does not employ any form of code-mixing. Our observation confirmed that while the grammatical correctness of the Kiswahili spoken in the identified space on the Tanzanian side of the border, it was not exactly similar to standard Kiswahili as used in formal domains of language use, the participants strove to maintain some level of fluency of spoken Kiswahili by maintaining word agreement. They were found to have a bigger Kiswahili vocabulary.

Words, such as *bibi* (grandmother), *parachichi* (avocado), *nauli* (fare), *njoo* (come), *mhudumu* (waiter), *agizia* (place an order), among others were heard in this space and not in other spaces where English language equivalents

were used. Conversations among the people portrayed more of the traditional Swahili cultural honorifics in forms of relational titles such as *mamangu* (my mother), *mjomba* (uncle), *kaka* (elder brother), *ndugu* (brother), *dada* (sister), and *mzee wangu* (my elder). Such features formed the basis on which the Kiswahili *cha* Tanzania was labelled clean and original.

'Kiswahili cha Kenya' ("broken-broken Kiswahili")

Kiswahili cha Kenya described as "broken-broken Kiswahili" is a variety that was ascribed to the Kenyan speakers at Namanga. This type has characteristics represented in extracts (3) and (4) below.

(3)	…wengi wanasema Kiswahili cha Kenya kweli kimepinda. Yaani hakijakaa sawa. Kiko *broken* kidogo …	…. many say that the Kenyan Kiswahili is not streamlined. Meaning it is not in good shape. It is a bit *broken* …
(4)	Wakenya wanazungumza Kiswahili isipokuwa ile Kiswahili yao ni *broken-broken* …. Wanazungumza tu yao *broken*.	Kenyans speak Kiswahili although their Kiswahili is a *broken-broken* one. …They just speak their *broken* one.

In extract (3) the participant, who is a Tanzanian, labels the Kenyan variety of Kiswahili spoken at Namanga as "broken" and in extract (4) the Kenyan[4] participant labels it as "broken-broken". When probed further, participants mentioned that *kimepinda* (it is 'bent'), which is the opposite of *kimenyooka* as applied to the Tanzanian Kiswahili in extract (1). Other participants said that this variety is *kombo* or *kombo-kombo* which is a synonym of *pinda* (bent).

The participants further said that this variety is not "original Kiswahili" because it is mixed with English unlike the Tanzanian Kiswahili which was said to be 'pure' Kiswahili. Thus, code-mixing stands out as the major salient feature that characterized the variety of the "Kenya Kiswahili" at Namanga. The following extract illustrates code-mixing:

(5)	"…*fungueni Bibilia zenu kitabu cha* Mark chapter eight verse ten." Open your Bibles at the book of Mark chapter eight verse ten.

The participant in extract (5) is a pastor in a religious gathering who starts speaking in Kiswahili and then draws in an English phrase before switching back to Kiswahili. This appeared to be a result of lack of fluency in the Kiswahili language, not only for the interlocutor but also for the addressees whom the pastor believed would not understand

[4] Although this participant is Kenyan, he reports of the form of Kiswahili used by Kenyans as though he is not part of them. Several other participants spoke this way, perhaps as a way of trying to prove their objectivity.

the part of the phrase if stated in Kiswahili.

The observation was also made at the lexical level in the domains of transport, entertainment, and trade. Many English and other non-Kiswahili words were used in speech by the ordinary participants on the Kenyan side of the border. The transport sector used words such as driver, fare, stage, and *doh* (slang for money). Words, mainly extracted from the English language, such as goalkeeper, goal, linesman, penalty, league, among others were observed in the area of entertainment. This was different from the Tanzanian variety which attempted a Kiswahili rendering of the words so that, for example, goalkeeper was rendered as "golikipa" or simply "kipa".

Another feature of the "broken-broken" variety is probably what one participant in a casual conversation described as *hakina mpangilio* (it has no order). This implied that there was disorderliness indexes and ungrammatical practices. In this regard, Kenyan Kiswahili in conversations included statements, such as *ile gari imejaa* (that vehicle is full). This construction defies the Kiswahili noun class system[5] where the noun *gari* (vehicle) which is normally placed in the (li/ya) noun class is in this example positioned in the (i/zi) noun class. The result of this is lack of intra-sentential agreement among nouns, verbs and adjectives, and the other components of the sentence.

'Kiswahili cha Uganda' ("little-little Kiswahili")

Kiswahili cha Uganda variety translated here as "little-little Kiswahili" is a variety of Kiswahili mapped onto speakers of Kiswahili from Uganda at Namanga. Participants labelled it as *kidogo-kidogo* (a little-little), *kidogo tu* (just a little) or *kidogo sana* (very little).

(6)	Kiswahili cha Uganda nacho ni *kidogo sana*. Wale kuongea kwao ni ngumu…. Ukimpata mmoja anaongea Kiswahili *then* ni *kidogo tu*.	The Ugandan Kiswahili is *very minimal*. Those ones find it hard to speak…. If you find one speaking Kiswahili, then it is *just a little*.
(7)	…Mganda hakifahamu kabisa. Na kama anafahamu, *kidogo kidogo*…	…A Ugandan does know it completely. And if they do, it is *very minimal*…

According to the participant in extract (6), it is rare to come across a citizen of Uganda at Namanga speaking Kiswahili. If one is found, he will be speaking very minimal or just a little Kiswahili. This view was shared

[5] There are 9 noun classes in Kiswahili grouped according to how the noun modifies verbs, adjectives and other grammatical entities in a sentence. Being an agglutinate language, Kiswahili allows each noun class to be represented by a particular prefix that is attached to the stems of grammatical categories when it is used in a sentence to allow for intra-sentential agreement among components of a sentence.

by other participants, including in casual conversations, who described the variety as *kidogo-kidogo* just as the participant in extract (7) observes. Their description of *kidogo-kidogo* was that the Ugandan citizens at Namanga rarely speak Kiswahili.

Participants claimed that Ugandans will mostly remain quiet in a group conversation and not contribute to a debate held in Kiswahili. But whenever they participate in a conversation involving Kiswahili, their responses will be short. One participant in casual conversations observed, "*Wanajua maneno tu na hawawezi hata tunga sentensi*" (They only know lone words and cannot even construct a sentence.) Though we did not observe any Ugandan speaker at Namanga, our conversation with some Ugandan citizens at another study site at the Busia border town on the Kenya-Uganda border supports this observation. Several Ugandan speakers we came across reported that they speak "a little-little Kiswahili." Our conversations with them displayed either lack of confidence, reluctance or wariness towards Kiswahili. Most of their speeches were accompanied and sometimes substituted with frequent gestures such as nodding and pointing. This assertion was evidenced by one participant in an interview who reported that whenever they go to the market where circumstances force them to speak Kiswahili, they normally do not engage in stories, but rather go direct to the point:

(8)	Sisi tunauliza tu, "Habari? Unauza ngapi?" au "Pesa ngapi?"…	We simply ask, "How are you? How much are you selling?" Or "How much money?"…

However, some Ugandan participants at Busia displayed some reasonable confidence in the use of Kiswahili. Their competence resembled that of most Kenyan participants, with similar codemixing between English and Kiswahili. This is illustrated by extract below:

(9)	Kujifunza Kiswahili ni *important mostly* kwa wale wanasafiri kama Nairobi, kama hata kufanya biashara, kama kutafuta kazi. Kiswahili inakusaidia kwa interaction …	Learning Kiswahili is *important mostly* for those who travel [to places] like Nairobi, like even to engage in business, like to look for employment, Kiswahili helps you in *interaction* …

Unlike most of the Ugandan participants who were unwilling to pick on Kiswahili as the preferred language of the interviews and interaction during the study, the participant in the extract above did not shy off speaking some Kiswahili. However, his Kiswahili was incoherent, and lacked subject-

verb agreement in addition to being a mixture of Kiswahili and English.

Kiswahili 'cha Coasti' / Kiswahili cha Pwani ("sweet Kiswahili")

Kiswahili cha Coasti/Kiswahili cha Pwani (Sweet Kiswahili) variety of Kiswahili was reported and observed in the transport domain at Namanga. It was associated with truck drivers who were said to originate from Mombasa or *Pwani*, Kiswahili word for 'coast'. The variety was labelled as "*Kiswahili tamu*" (sweet Kiswahili). The following examples illustrates the type:

(10)	Kiswahili cha *Coasti* ni *Kiswahili tamu*. Ukiwasikiliza kwa mfano hawa madereva wanaopita hapa kutoka huko… nakwambia utapenda Kiswahili chao… hicho ndio unasikianga *Kiswahili cha Pwani* sasa…	The Coastal Kiswahili is *sweet Kiswahili*. If you listen, for example, to these drivers who pass here from there…I tell you, you will like their Kiswahili … now that is what you normally hear [people call] *Kiswahili cha Pwani*.
(11)	Hawa…hawa tuseme kama madereva hawa wa matrela za kutoka Mombasa hisi…wao ndio unaweza sema Kiswahili chao kisuri. … Kiswahili kile kisuri, yani kinafurahisha kusikiliza… unajua huyu anajua Kiswahili. *Kitamu* nakwambia…	These… let us say for example these drivers of trucks from Mombasa… those are those whose Kiswahili is good… that good Kiswahili, I mean, it is pleasing to listen to…you will know that this one knows Kiswahili. It is *sweet* I tell you…

The description of the Coastal Kiswahili in extracts (10) and (11) show that this variety is based not on the grammatical 'correctness' as was the *Kiswahili cha Tanzania* in extracts (1) and (2) or 'incorrectness' for *Kiswahili cha Kenya* in (3), (4) and (5), but on the acoustic features. This comprised the way the speakers pronounce certain lexical items of Kiswahili. For example:

(12)	Wewe Kijana unaithwa nani?	(Young man, what is your name?)

Example (12) provided by a speaker shows a change in word forms where, instead of the normal /*unaitwa*/

(you are called), the pronunciation given is /*unaithwa*/. In this example, the dental stop /t/ is replaced with another dental stop /th/. Another example picked from a conversation is the use of palatal stop /dh/ instead of alveolar stop /d/ as in /*ndhugu*/ in place of /*ndugu*/.

This type of speech is similar to that of the traditional dialects of Kiswahili,[6] especially *Kimvita* and *Kiamu* as spoken on the mainland, Mombasa and Lamu island respectively. This shows that the participants and citizens at Namanga are attracted to this variety of Kiswahili mainly due to its 'pleasant' or melodious accent. While this variety was attributed to truck drivers from the coastal parts of Kenya, the variety could actually be a mixture of varieties from other traditional dialects other than those from Mombasa. Edgar Polome (1967) argues that there are features which cut across the dialects as a result of cross-dialect influences.

'Kimaaja' ("street Kiswahili")

Kimaaja or "*Kiswahili cha mtaa*" (street Kiswahili), is a variety of Kiswahili associated mostly with the youthful motor vehicle touts at Namanga. It was described as "*Kiswahili cha wahuni*" (Kiswahili for the hooligans), or more neutrally, "*lugha ya vijana*" (language of the youth). This is illustrated in extracts (13), (14) and (15).

(13)	…. Hiyo inaitwa *Kimaaja*. Ni *lugha ya vijana* ya mtaa. …tuseme ni Kiswahili tu lakini *kimepinduliwa* kwa nyuma.	…. That is called *Kimaaja*. It is a *street language* for the *youth language* (…). We can say it is just Kiswahili but it has been *reversed*.
(14)	…Hiyo *Kimaaja* ni kama *kurudisha tu Kiswahili na nyuma*. Kama "soda" unaita "daso". Yaani unarudisha Kiswahili nyuma. Kama ni "chai" unaita "icha"…	…. That Kimaaja is just like *speaking Kiswahili_ backwards*. Like "*soda*" you call it "*daso*". I mean you speak Kiswahili backwards. If it is "*chai*" you call it "*icha*"…
(15)	Kimaaja ni cha *vijana wachache* tu. Ma-*group ndogondogo sana*. Kama sasa hawa vijana makanga na hizo *group* zao. … *So* ni Kiswahili cha wahuni tu. Unawapata kwa stage za magari sana sana hawa wanaingiza watu kwa magari. Pia wale wanabeba mizigo…	Kimaaja is spoken by just a *few youths*. Very *small groups*. For example, these tout youths and their groups. So it is just **Kiswahili for the** *hoodlums*. You will find them at the car parks, these who lead people to vehicles. Also those who carry luggage…

[6] See Polome, E. C. (1967). *Swahili Language Handbook*.

The participant in extract (13) describes *Kimaaja* as a language for the youth spoken on the streets of Namanga. The participant in extract (15) affirms that the variety is not spoken by all the youths but a small section of touts, whom she refers to as "*wahuni*" (hooligans). Asked about how it is actually spoken, participant in extract (10), she said, "*kimepinduliwa*" (it is reversed), and the participant in extract (14) gives examples of *soda* as *daso*, and *chai* (tea) as (*icha*).

Our observation confirmed that the *Kimaaja* variety is based on a reverse order of syllables where, in most cases, the last syllable in a word comes first and the first comes last. Another example that illustrates such inflections is "*gari lile*" (that vehicle) as (*riga leli*). But in some cases, especially where a personal pronoun is involved, the pronoun comes first. A popular phrase we captured during our observations was "*tundae vihi*" instead of "*twende hivi*" (let us go this way). Thus, the reverse aspect of speech in *Kimaaja* is limited to the lexical level.

Kimaaja behaved as a "neutral" variety for the group consisting of members drawn from the other varieties of Kiswahili in contact at Namanga. This is considering the fact that the word *Kimaaja* itself is a reverse of the Kiswahili word '*Kijamaa*' (socialism/collectivism). Thus, while *Kimaaja* is said to be used for purposes of maintaining secrets and furthering anti-social behaviour, among its speakers, it could also be a product of linguistic tensions between the 'formal' varieties of Kiswahili spoken at Namanga. The variety's name has its roots in a predominantly Tanzanian vocabulary and a national development philosophy. The variety could also be looked at in terms of a deliberate defiance and protest against the grammatically demanding "clean Kiswahili" of Namanga.

The participants reporting about the varieties of Kiswahili, that we have presented, reveal their perceptions of each variety. These perceptions contribute to the conflict that arise when speakers of these varieties come into contact. This is mainly because the perceptions lead to varied attitudes towards not only the varieties themselves but also the speakers of the varieties. We now turn to discussing some of these attitudes.

Attitudes of the Citizens to Language

Language attitudes is defined as the feelings which people have about their own language or the language(s) of others (Crystal 1997). These attitudes form part of the communicative competence of the members of a speech community (Davis 1995), and have been shown to be powerful in influencing linguistic behaviour and ultimately, linguistic forms (Fasold 1979). The attitudes are normally reflected in a variety of perceptions, judgements and sentiments, both positive and negative, favourable and unfavourable, ambivalent and tolerant.

In the context of our study, language attitudes of the people were discovered as useful in explaining conflicts in language contact situations at Namanga. These were discoverable in the social varieties and labels that we discussed above. The analysis agreed with Mirriam Meyerhoff's (2006) view that labels and varieties provide a basis for identifying the close association between attitudes to language use and language users. Our examination of the data collected brings out three sets of feelings and perceptions, which we discuss below.

Positive/Favourable Attitudes

In response to direct questions requiring participants to rate the extent of the use of Kiswahili at Namanga and how they think the language should be used, some of the participants expressed positive attitudes towards Kiswahili. The following are examples from our findings:

(16)	…Lugha ni Kiswahili tu. Hiyo ndio tunatumia *100 per* cent...	…The language is just Kiswahili. That is the one which we use 100 per cent….
(17)	…Hiyo hiyo tu Kiswahili. *Kaka nimekueleza Tanzania nzima ni Kiswahili. Mijini, majumbani, Kiswahili.... Kaka...hivi nakwambia hamna lugha nyingine hapa. Mji huu wote unavyouona ni Kiswahili tu.* Kenya, Tanzania, Kiswahili, Kiswahili pekee… Watu hapa ni Kiswahili wanazungumza. Asiyejua ni mgeni. Labda kaja jana au leo. Iwapo ni juzi, huyo ashajifunza tayari. Hata kama ni kile cha maneno mawili tatu.	…Just that very Kiswahili. *Brother, I have told you that the whole of Tanzania it is just Kiswahili. In towns, in homes, just Kiswahili... Brother...I am telling you that there is no other language here. The whole of this town that you see is just Kiswahili.* Kenya, Tanzania, only Kiswahili… It is Kiswahili that people speak here. He who does not know Kiswahili is a stranger. Maybe he came yesterday or today. If it is yesterday but one, that one has already learnt it. Even if it is only a few words.

The participants were enthusiastic in revealing that Kiswahili is the "only" language spoken at Namanga. The participant in extract (16) went ahead to quote '100 per cent' as the extent to which citizens at Namanga use Kiswahili. Similarly, the participant in extract (17) claims that Kiswahili is the most used language in the whole of Namanga and Tanzania, both in homes (private spaces) and in towns (public spaces). The emphasis laid on these assertions by the participant serves to portray Kiswahili as the favoured language at Namanga.

However, casual conversations during observations and indirect questioning of the participants during the interviews revealed that only the variety labelled as "clean Kiswahili" is seen to be highly regarded and favoured by the citizens than the other varieties. As extract 4 shows, the positive and favourable attitude towards the "clean variety" can also be decoded from its several positive labels while the other varieties were described by the use of only one or two labels. In one of the public religious gatherings, the preacher asked the gathering for the equivalent of the word "lecturer" in Kiswahili. It took some guesses from the audience before the preacher almost settled for "*Mwalimu wa chuo kikuu*", as voiced by the gathering before changing his mind insisting that he wanted to hear from a Tanzanian.

(18)	.... *Watanzania mko wapi jameni? Nipeni neno mzuri... (kicheko)... Haya tafuteni*	…. Tanzanians where are you folks? Give me a good word…. (laughter)…okay, look for it…

Extract (18) above shows that the preacher does not trust the vocabulary supplied by speakers of other varieties, and believes that a Tanzanian citizen could have supplied a better word. The preacher believed that the phrase *'mwalimu wa chuo kikuu'* was not provided by a Tanzanian speaker of Kiswahili. The preacher's trust and preference for the "clean Kiswahili" variety demonstrates an ideologically rooted attitude towards varieties of Kiswahili spoken at Namanga.

Negative/unfavourable and Stigmatized Attitudes

Most of the citizens who reported that they did not to speak the 'broken-broken' variety of Kiswahili revealed concealed negative or unfavourable attitudes towards it. This was evident in their difficulty in explaining what 'broken' or 'broken-broken' actually means. Many of the participants replied "*sijui vile naweza kueleza*" (I don't know how I can explain). Compared with the "clean variety", this variety did not attract many labels. It was only explained as 'broken' or 'broken-broken'. Broken-broken served as a way of emphasizing the 'broken' nature of the variety.

(19)	…**Siwezi kubadilisha. Kama nikipata mama anauza matunda siezi kumwambia "mama nipe matunda", nitamwambia "mama shikamoo, naomba uniuzie matunda"**. Yeye anajua maana ya "Shikamoo" … Lakini sasa nikienda Maili Tisa huko ama Kajiado nimwambie mtu "Shikamoo", hajui. **Na ni mtu mzima!** Sasa kama huko wanapenda tu kusema "mambo?" Wewe niambie mtu mzima wewe utamwambia "mambo?" **Kweli ? Ni rika yako huyo? Hapana! Mpaka umwamkue vizuri…**	… **I cannot change. If I come across an old woman selling fruits, I cannot tell her** *"Mama nipe matunda", I will tell her "Mama naomba uniuzie matunda".* She understands the meaning of *'Shikamoo'*. …. But now if I go past *Maili Tisa or Kajiado* and I tell someone "*Shikamoo*", they do not know. **And he is a grown up!** There they just like saying "*mambo*?" You tell me, can you tell a grown up "*mambo*?" **No! It is a must that you greet him well…**

Extract (19) demonstrates a negative attitude towards those varieties of Kiswahili spoken at Namanga that the speaker does not subscribe to. The participant vows that he will stick to his variety should he encounter a speaker of another variety even if the other speaker was elderly. The participant says that every citizen at Namanga should know at least some words, such as "*shikamoo*" and "*mambo*" that are associated with other varieties should not be used to address or greet a grown up! The participant says that for a grown up, "*mpaka umwamkue vizuri*" (you must greet him/her well). In this context, 'greeting well' is associated with the variety labelled as the "clean Kiswahili".

As to what language *Kimaaja* is, the response of the participant was:

(20)	Kimaaja si lugha kaka. **Hiyo ni style tu**. Ni kama kugeuza kama mtu unageuza gari. Ama unaendesha ukirundi nyuma… (kicheko)…Sasa wao wanazungumza wakirudi nyuma wakipindua maneno. Wanaita ni lugha yao lakini ni ya watu tu wa kupora watu. Hao ni matapeli kaka!	Kimaaja is not a language my brother. **That is just a style.** It is like reversing the way a person reverses a vehicle. Or you are driving going backwards… (laughter)… So they speak backwards reversing words. They call it their language but it is simply for people who rob others. Those ones are conmen my brother!

The way the sentiments of the speaker, in extract (20), are articulated conveys meaning that *Kimaaja* is a stigmatized variety at Namanga. In addition to being associated with 'unlawful' and anti-social activities such as fraud, the participant sounds unamused with the 'reversed' manner in which the variety is spoken. The negative attitude towards *Kimaaja* is not just as a result of the nature and conduct of its speakers, but also the 'reversed' nature of the code itself.

During observation, another participant denied being able to speak *Kimaaja* even though he was a tout. His reply was "*No no no! Hiyo si ya mtu kama mimi bro! Hiyo ni ya wengine*" (No no no! That is not for someone like me brother! That is for other people). Insisting that *Kimaaja* is not for people of his calibre, the participant was not ready to be associated with the variety, signalling its stigmatized nature. As Florence Bayiga (2016) has shown, speakers will definitely deny knowing a language that they do not respect, even if they know it.

Attitudes of ambivalence and tolerance

While some of the participants expressed indecisive attitudes towards the different varieties of Kiswahili, spoken at Namanga, others were accommodative. One such variety that attract faltering attitudes is the one labelled as "Kiswahili *tamu*".

(21)	Lakini kile cha Coast…. Yaani wanaivuta sana. Kwa mfano wanasema "Ewe Ali waithwa hapa wewe". (Kicheko)	But that one spoken at the Coast…. I mean they really stress it. For example, they say "You Ali, you are being called here". (Laughter)

In extract (21), the participant describes the "Coastal Kiswahili" and in the process performs the way it is spoken. The 'twisting of the voice', accent, facial expression, smile and laughter of the participant while making this performance shows that he feels thrilled and entertained at the speaker's variety. It could also be that the participant sees the dialect as comical.

The participant does not show outright positive or negative attitude towards this variety. Asked whether they could speak the variety, most participants declined because as they said, they cannot "twist" the tongue. This takes us back to Bayiga's remark about a speaker denying knowledge of a variety they do not revere. A further ambivalent attitude towards a variety of Kiswahili is given below in extract (22):

(22)	Wengine kama wafanyabiashara wanazungumza Kiswahili ingawa si kama hiki chetu hapa sisi. Wajua? Matamshi yao yanakwaruzana na lugha zao za mama. Yaani kaka unakuta mtu azungumza lakini ukisikiliza unapata anajua maneno ila kutamka kwakwe balaa… Kaka wewe wazungumza Kiswahili tena kile safi sana. Hukwaruzi wewe… (**kicheko**). Kuna watu wewe wakizungumza… (**kicheko**) yaani unahisi kuwacheka lakini unawaelewa tu.	Others like the business people speak Kiswahili although it is not similar to this one which we speak here. You know? Their pronunciation conflicts with their mother tongues. I mean my brother you find a person speaking, when you listen, you realize that he knows the words but his pronunciation is a problem… Brother you speak Kiswahili in fact a very **clean** one. You do not shrub… (**laughter**). There are people who when they speak… (**laughter**) I mean you feel like laughing at them but you just choose to understand them.

The participant in extract (22) laughs at the fact that there are some people who do not speak "clean Kiswahili". Although the participant is amused by the way some people speak Kiswahili, he chooses to "understand" rather than laugh. By choosing to tolerate such ways of speaking, the participant demonstrates an attitude of tolerance as a factor in resolving conflicts in talk.

From the way participants identify varieties of Kiswahili spoken at Namanga, to the way they assign labels of perception to the varieties, and finally the kind of attitudes they hold towards each variety, one can deduce that the participants believe that some of the varieties are linguistically more powerful than the others. This brings us to the third theme of this article, namely, demonstration of linguistic power.

Demonstration of Linguistic Power

Lian Malai Madsen (2003) illustrates the notion of power as a form of symbolic dominance and argues that language is the primary means of wielding linguistic power in the society. Madsen argues that this is so because the choice of language in a conversation is a practical linguistic means of negotiating power. Regarding this notion, Susan Gal (2001) contends that some linguistic variants are more valued and carry more authority than others. Gal's argument demonstrates that some variants are seen as more correct, superior and powerful; while others are seen as less correct, inferior and less powerful.

Gal proposes that the differing power status that these variants carry into an interaction is likely to create tension as the less valued ones try to resist and challenge domination by the powerful ones. Variants spoken at Namanga exhibit different degrees of linguistic power. The ordinary citizens are equally well aware of this. The following extracts from responses by participants in interviews illustrate this point.

(23)	… Na sasa abiria akiona wewe una-*shrub* sana alafu huyu ananyoosha kidogo anajua wewe utaweza kumwelekeza vizuri kidogo kuliko huyu ana-*shrub*. Si ndio sababu inabidi wanajaribu kuigaiga.	… And now if a passenger sees that you falter a lot but this other one is trying to make it correct he will know that he will be able to direct him better than the one who falters. That is the reason why they will try to imitate.
(24)	Wale Watanzania hawawezi. Hawawezi kabisa. Na kama anaongea ile ya Kikenya, huwa anakuwanga ana-*kuenjoy*. (kicheko). Anakuambia "gari gani, gari gani imejaa?" Sasa yeye anakuwa ana-*kuenjoy* tu vile nyinyi huwa mnazungumzanga.	Those Tanzanians cannot. They simply cannot. And if he is speaking the Kenyan Kiswahili, he will be making fun of you… (laughter). He tells you "which vehicle, which vehicle is full?" Now he will just be mocking the way you speak.

The participant (a taxi driver) in extract (23) argues that some passengers at Namanga choose to be served by a tout who is a "fluent" speaker of Kiswahili as opposed to the one who mispronounces words. Hence, the touts, try as much as possible, to check on their pronunciation, often adjusting towards the "clean" variety. This shows that the "clean" variety is associated with more power than other varieties, such as the "broken-broken" variety and the "street language". The attempts to switch from variety to variety in conversations, demonstrates power struggles between different varieties of Kiswahili at Namanga. The less powerful variety is abandoned for the more powerful. In the end, the variety that is shunned by the citizens is dominated by the 'other'.

The participant in extract (24) stresses that Tanzanian citizens at Namanga, who are perceived to speak the "clean variety" cannot speak the other varieties spoken on the Kenya side of the town or any other type for that matter. To emphasise his point, the participant mockingly mimics how the Tanzanian nationals would pronounce it, if they were to speak it at all. This indexes not just the little power that is associated with the variety in question, but also how inferior it is considered to be, to the variety of the participant.

Further observations revealed that linguistic power at Namanga is demonstrated in relation to space as discussed under citizen mobility in the section that follows below. This is to say that each language variety carries more power in its respective space. For instance, the 'broken-broken' variety is more powerful on the Kenyan side of Namanga while the "clean variety" has more power in the Tanzanian side of the same town. Similarly, the *Kimaaja* variety is more powerful in the enclaves where it is spoken. A speaker of the "clean

variety" is humbled when in territories where, for example, *Kimaaja* is spoken.

The citizen mobility we discuss next accounts for the varieties and labels, citizens' attitudes, and demonstrates linguistic power that characterize the use of Kiswahili at Namanga. It illustrates the incidences of linguistic conflict in conversations of ordinary speakers of Kiswahili in the town.

Citizen Mobility

Citizen mobility is a term that is invoked in the CS model to refer to the movement of people in time and space in the current globalized world. Rymes and Leone (2014) argue that the mobility of citizens results in the convergence (and contact) of different kinds of linguistic repertoires in a particular space. This observation relates to an earlier one by Jan Blommaert and Ben Rampton (2011) that migration is not only about people but also their language varieties. Blommaert (2005:6) notes that

> …linguistically speaking, the spaces that people move into are never empty spaces…, the spaces are someone's space, and they are filled with norms, expectations, and conceptions of what counts as proper and normal language use and what does not count as such.

Blommaert adds that the "space is filled with complexities that organize distinctions between the 'good', 'normal', 'appropriate', 'acceptable' language use, and the 'deviant', 'abnormal' language use" (p.6). Correspondingly, Leonard Bloomfield (2007) asserts that as people move, the 'sedentary' patterns of language use come into contact with the 'translocal' forms of language use, and that the combination of both brings about unexpected sociolinguistic effects.

From the data gathered, mobility of the ordinary citizens at Namanga has a strong effect on Kiswahili spoken. When asked about which people are found at the Namanga border town, participants responded as illustrated in extracts (25), (26), (27), and (28) below.

(25)	Hapa mpakani kuna watu wa kila aina. Sampuli na sampuli. **Watanzania** wapo. **Wakenya** wapo. Hata **Wazungu** wapo. Kuna **Wamaasai wa Kenya** na wa **Tanzania**. Kuna **Wameru** huku pia upande ule mwingine…	There are people of different kinds here at the border. Different and different kinds. There are **Tanzanians. Kenyans** are here. Even **Whites** are here. There are **Kenyan Maasai** and also **Tanzanian Maasai.** We have the **Meru** here and also on the other side…

(26)	**Makabila ni mix**…Lakini nikianza na huu upande wa Kenya utapata kuna watu kama **Wakikuyu**, **Wameru**, **Wasomali**, **Waembu**, **Wamaasai** wenyewe, na hata watu kama **Waluhya**, **Wakisii** na wengine…	The **tribes are mixed up**…But if I start with the Kenyan side you will find that there are people like the **Kikuyu, Meru, Somali, Embu**, the **Maasai** themselves, and even people like **Luhya**, **Kisii** and others…
(27)	Halafu utapata hata **Wanyamwezi**, **Wanyaturu**, **Wachagga**, na wengine tu…	… Then you will also find even the **Nyamwezi**, **Nyaturu**, **Chagga** and others…
(28)	Gari inatoka Dar kwenda Nairobi na tena Nairobi hadi Dar. Inapepa **Wakenya**, **Watanzania**, na hata wafanyibiashara… unajua inapepanga watu wengi. So unaweza pata hata watu wa **Congo** huko, hata **Rwanda** na kila mahali wako kwa kari.	The vehicle comes from Dar and heads to Nairobi and also Nairobi to Dar. I carry **Kenyans, Tanzanians,** and even business people… you know it carries many people. So, you can even find that people from there in **Congo**, and even **Rwanda** and everywhere are in the vehicle…

In extracts (25), (26), and (27), participants are in concurrence that Namanga is inhabited by mostly the citizens of Kenyan and Tanzanian nationalities, who apart from speaking different varieties of Kiswahili, speak their vernaculars, including Kikikuyu (Kikuyu), Kimeru (Meru), Kimaasai (Maasai), Kisomali (Somali) on the Kenya side, and Kimaasai, Kinyamwezi (Nyamwezi), Kichaga (Chagga), Kinyaturu (Nyaturu), among others on the Tanzania side. The participant in extract (28) notes that their 'cross-border-bus' through Namanga carries not only Tanzanian and Kenyan ordinary citizens but also some Rwandese and Congolese. Some "Wazungu" (the Whites) are also found at Namanga (extract 25).

These reports by interview participants correlate with our observations where in casual conversations many of the participants revealed having moved to Namanga from different parts of Kenya such as Nairobi, Machakos, Kitui, Meru, Embu, Marsabit, Mandela, Nyeri, Kiambu, Kakamega, Bungoma, and Kisii, and others from different parts of Tanzania such as Moshi, Dar es Salaam, Mbeya, Tanga, Morogoro, Mtwara, and Tabora. Other people we interacted with, in the transport domain, reported to have travelled from other countries such as Malawi, South Africa, Congo and the USA and were routing to Kenya and Tanzania.

As to what the different groups of people do at Namanga, the following extracts will illustrate.

(29)	Nililetwa hapa na *uncle* wangu mwingine alikuwa ni **contractor**… Alikuwa anafanya hii kazi ya **kujenga manyumba**. So si akaniambia kuna *job* zinapatikana za **kupaka rangi** huku...	I was brought here by one of my other uncles who was a **contractor** … He was doing the work of **building houses**. So, he then told me that there are normally **painting jobs** here...
(30)	Eee…ndio wengi ni **wafanyibiashara** na wengine **wanasafiri tu**…	Eee…yes, many are **business people** and others are just **travelling**…

Citizens who reside at Namanga and those who visit are guided by different missions such as looking for jobs and travelling for leisure (extract 29), business activities (extract 30), and tourists and job-related journeys (from casual conversation). As we observed above, these citizens speak different languages and language varieties, and carry these codes into others' space(s), resulting into contact of opposing norms, values, conceptions and expectations. This paragraph shows that there are different ways of speaking, and that speakers take their ways to be the best. Tensions and collisions are bound to happen when they encounter others in talk. Speakers in conversations are always negotiating such struggles as reported in extract (31).

(31)	… kuna Wakenya wengine wakifika huko [Namanga Tanzania] pia **wanazungumza kama Watanzania**. Unajua ile kuzungumza yao ni kama *fashion*…Na pia kwa sababu wao ndio wengi huko. So utapata sasa **ukizungumza nao ni lazima umejaribu kuingia kwa ile Kiswahili yao ndio** *u-fit*.	… there are some Kenyans when they get there [Namanga Tanzania] **they speak like Tanzanians**. You know the way they speak is like fashion… And also because they are the majority there. So, when **speaking with them you must try to speak their Kiswahili so that you can fit.**

The divergence of Kenyan speakers of Kiswahili from their variety and the converge towards the Tanzanian way of speaking as in extract (31) above illustrates the notion of space as a guarded territory where varieties compete for recognition (Blommaert 2005). The varieties are always in implicit 'wars' where, in most cases, the variety that occupies the particular space wins.

However, our observation at Namanga revealed that this is not always the case. Sometimes, the variety

that is considered most powerful (as we discussed above) is superior in whichever space. For instance, touts operating from the main taxi park on the Kenyan side of the town spotted prospective passengers in the no man's land approaching from the Tanzanian side and immediately decided to switch to the variety of "clean Kiswahili". While it is understandable that their action was meant to attract the passengers by trying to identify with them as friendly people, it is worth noting that this happens in the space of the Kenyan variety of Kiswahili. Our take on this is that the Kenyan touts could also have converged towards the 'clean variety' in order to avert a possible conflict between their variety and that of the travellers. This observation is based on the fact that the touts are aware that the travellers from the Tanzanian side of the town harbour unfavourable attitudes towards their 'broken' or 'unclean' variety. The touts had to immediately switch back to their own 'local' varieties once the passengers got onto the vehicle as a way to reclaim their space. There were no free conversations between the different varieties of Kiswahili due to linguistic tensions between the speakers.

Another observation we made about how mobility contributes to conflict among the Kiswahili speakers at Namanga is in greetings. For example, the Kiswahili variety spoken on the Tanzanian side of Namanga uses the word "*shikamoo*" when addressing seniors. The variety also has a local way of saying greetings in respect to different times of the day. Phrases, such as "*za asubuhi*?" (morning news?), "*za mchana*?" (mid-day news), "*za jioni*?" (evening news) and "*za saa hizi*?" (current news?) are applied in respect to time.

In the *Kiswahili cha Kenya* variety, greetings such as "*habari*?" or "*habari yako*?" (how are you?) and "*mambo*" (slang for "news") are used as the standard irrespective of the time of the day. *Shikamoo* is not common on the Kenya side of the town. However, as the speakers on this side of town cross over to the opposite side, they are confronted with "*shikamoo*" which sometimes gets them unprepared. As already mentioned, our observations revealed that the speakers of the "clean variety" stick to their linguistic norms as they get into the other people's spaces, and so conflicts ensue. This serves to demonstrate linguistic power of the different varieties as well as citizens' attitudes towards them.

Conclusion

In this article, we have presented and discussed data on contact and conflict situations in relation to the use of Kiswahili at Namanga. Our central concern has been on the nature of contact and the concept of conversational conflict, particularly in conversations involving speakers of the same language – Kiswahili. The discussion has revealed that linguistic conflicts exist among the speakers

of Kiswahili when they come into contact at Namanga.

Four major sociolinguistic issues emerged as the bases for these conflicts: varieties and labels, citizens' language attitudes, demonstrations of linguistic power and citizen mobility. The four issues are closely linked to each other. Linguistic mobility leads to diversified linguistic repertoires at Namanga in form of varieties which then find labels in the context of use. These varieties carry inherent attitudes, with linguistic power being part of these attitudes.

The varieties and labels, the linguistic power, and the inherent language attitudes, and how these vary across spaces are key findings in this paper. These issues can be understood in two ways; first, in terms of the dynamic and versatile nature of language as a local practice[7] (Pennycook 2010). Therefore, Kiswahili, just like any other language, is dynamic and versatile, and prone to variation based on factors that are social as well as contextual (local).

Secondly, the above factors can be construed in terms of the varied trajectories that the development of Kiswahili in the East African region has taken over time. For instance, the fact that the Tanzanian Kiswahili is labelled as superior to other varieties can be understood as a product of Tanzania's "Kiswahili as the official and national language policy" that has been spearheaded by the Tanzanian government since independence.

Equally, the less superior varieties of Kiswahili that emerged in the study, that is, the Ugandan and Kenyan Kiswahili can also be understood in terms of the pro-English language policies in Kenya and Uganda that have given prominence to English over Kiswahili. As a result of the varied statuses accorded to Kiswahili in national and official matters in these countries. The use and perceptions about the language among the ordinary citizens have been affected by policy patterns. As a rejoinder, we conclude this article by emphasizing the fact that Namanga displays a perfect example of a local space, in East Africa, where meaningful and informative studies relating to different sociolinguistic aspects of Kiswahili, such as contact and conflict can be undertaken.

[7] The "theory" of 'language as a local practice' as conceptualized by Alistair Pennycook (2010) views language not as a pre-given entity, but as a byproduct of social practices of its speakers, and argues that knowledge of the immediate environment where the practices take place be taken into consideration when analyzing the language use.

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