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Swahili Loanwords in Jita: A Sociolinguistic Study of Patterns and Borrowing Factors

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Abstract

The thrust of this paper lies in Swahili loanwords in Jita, with particular attention to sociolinguistic patterns and the factors influencing lexical borrowing. Jita is a Bantu language mainly spoken in Mara Region, Tanzania. While loanwords from languages such as Swahili, English, and neighbouring languages reflect historical, economic, and political influences, the specific motivations and sociocultural changes behind their adoption have not been thoroughly investigated in the language. In this regard, this study has identified the common lexical categories borrowed from Swahili into Jita, as well as the factors underlying this lexical borrowing. This study was guided by the interpretivism paradigm, and it employed qualitative descriptive design. The study employed convenience purposive sampling. The data was collected using non-participant observation and semi-structured interview to explore and thematically analyse Swahili loanwords in Jita and the sociolinguistic factors behind their borrowing. The findings were analysed using thematic analysis, in which the data were grouped according to their similarities (common borrowed words and factors) and sub-themes. In the first objective, the study revealed that in 1,000 Swahili loanwords studied in Jita, 684(68.4%) were nouns, 253(25.3%) were verbs, 34(3.4%) were adjectives, 24(2.4%) were adverbs, 4(0.4%) were conjunctions, and 1(0.1%) was a preposition. In this regard, the nouns and adjectives are the most borrowed words in Jita. The findings for the second objective highlighted that the primary reasons for borrowing in Jita include expressing new concepts and prestige, as Swahili holds more social prestige than Jita. The findings also show that cultural and economic interactions with other languages, particularly through Swahili and English, lead to lexical borrowing in Jita, introducing terms related to technology, trade, and social structures. The analysis dealt with the dynamic nature of linguistic evolution, emphasising factors such as cultural contact, socio-political influences, and technological advancements. The study recommends that future studies should investigate how globalisation and technological changes continue to affect lexical borrowing in Jita and other Bantu languages, encouraging cross-linguistic studies in African languages.

Keywords: Jita, borrowing factors, lexical borrowing, loanword, sociolinguistics

1 Introduction

Borrowing refers to a linguistic phenomenon that occurs when a word or phrase from one language is adopted into another language (Crystal, 2003). Language borrowing may include lexical, phonological, morphological, syntactic, and semantic borrowing. Lexical borrowing involves incorporating words to fill gaps in vocabulary (Hock & Joseph, 2009). For example, the English word "cool" has been adopted into Albanian with a broader meaning, referring to anything fashionable. Phonological borrowing adopts sounds or phonemes from another language (Campbell, 2013). Morphological borrowing transfers affixes or word formation patterns, affecting grammatical structure (Thomason & Kaufman, 1988). Syntactic borrowing involves the adoption of sentence structures or grammatical rules, thereby influencing the overall syntax (Matras, 2009). Semantic borrowing involves the adoption of a word from one language into another with a different or expanded meaning. These types highlight the dynamic nature of language evolution and inter-community interactions. Specifically, this study focused on lexical borrowing.

The lexical items adopted from a different language are called loanwords. Loanwords are words that are adopted with either little or no modification in spelling or pronunciation (Spahiu & Nuredini, 2023). For example, the English word "computer" is a loanword in many languages, including Swahili, but it is modified to conform to the borrowing language's orthographic and phonological system, hence "kompyuta". Lexical borrowing without modification is evident in the Swahili word "safari" (meaning a trip to see), which has been borrowed by English as "safari" with no modifications. Lexical borrowing from different languages plays a vital role in the evolution of languages, as it facilitates cultural exchange, addresses lexical gaps, and reflects contact between diverse linguistic communities.

Through this process, languages increase their lexicons and adapt to societal needs through a constantly changing procedure (Crystal, 2008a). For instance, the large number of words in the English language comes from the regular inclusion of words from French, Latin and other languages throughout history (Aitchison, 2012). Similarly, Swahili has incorporated Arabic elements due to its long-standing cultural and trade connections along the East African coast (Nurse & Hinnebusch, 1993). Thus, this process not only enriches the recipient language's vocabulary but also reflects the historical, social, and cultural interactions between speech communities.

To comprehend linguistic borrowing, it is crucial to explicitly elaborate on the socio-cultural environments that drive language interaction and borrowing (Aitchison, 2012). Various studies indicate that lexical borrowing is influenced by various factors, each contributing uniquely across different languages and contexts. Lexical voids or the necessity to label emerging cultural and technological ideas is a frequent driving force, as noted in Kihehe (Kasavaga & Alphonce, 2023), Giha (Mnyonge, 2011), and Igikuria (Riro, 2020). The prestige associated with the donor language, typically connected to its economic, political, or social influence, promotes borrowing in Gĩkũyũ (Kinyua, 2016), Sindhi (Ilyas *et al.*, 2021), and throughout Eurasian languages (Carling *et al.*, 2019). Modernisation affects lexical borrowing particularly in semantic areas such as architecture, where new vocabulary arises to represent evolving circumstances (Lusekelo, 2017). Stylistic choices and the formation of identity, especially in young people, result in borrowing to convey modernity or social inclusion, as demonstrated in Gĩkũyũ (Kinyua, 2016), Armenia (Stepanyan, 2022), and among Anglicism users (Drljača, 2012). These facts imply that lexical borrowing is not merely a linguistic adaptation but a dynamic response to social change, where language evolves to meet communicative

needs, reflects cultural shifts, and expresses identity within specific historical and sociopolitical contexts.

Other factors, including the impact of colonialism and historical elements, also influence borrowing trends, particularly in areas that were once colonised, where the colonial language continues to hold symbolic significance (Kinyua, 2016). Geopolitical and economic elements also influence borrowing in broader contexts, such as in Armenia, where globalisation and democratic principles intersect with linguistic changes (Stepanyan, 2022). Code-switching and bilingualism serve as effective instruments, promoting the seamless incorporation of foreign words into the local language.

Although these studies extensively cover borrowing in different Bantu and global languages, a significant research gap remains in examining Swahili loanwords in Jita, particularly regarding the specific categories borrowed and the sociolinguistic reasons behind them. Therefore, this study aimed to explore Swahili loanwords in Jita with particular attention to sociolinguistic patterns and the factors influencing lexical borrowing. It was guided by two specific objectives: to identify the common lexical categories borrowed from Swahili into Jita, and to determine the factors for lexical borrowing in the language. It is essential as it contributes to the existing insights of lexical borrowing and lexicography among Bantu languages. By sharing knowledge on the specific lexical categories commonly borrowed from Swahili into Jita and the underlying factors that influence the lexical borrowing in the language, the study is valuable for linguists, academicians and language planners aiming to preserve and develop indigenous languages while promoting effective bilingual communication in multilingual communities.

Jita is a Bantu language spoken in Tanzania's Mara Region, particularly around the southeastern shore of Lake Victoria and Musoma. It is classified as JE25 within the JE20 Haya–Jita Group of Bantu languages (Maho, 2009), and carries the ISO 639-3 code [jit] (SIL, 2006). As of 2009, it had approximately 365,000 native speakers (LOT, 2009), though the number may have increased in recent years. The language is also known by alternate names, including Jita, Ecijiita, Jita, and Kijita, and it uses the Latin script (Lewis *et al*., 2014). According to Lewis *et al*. (2014), Jita is a vigorous language, used daily across generations and spoken as a second language by Kara speakers (Odom, 2016). The name Jita reportedly originated from a German mispronunciation of the local mountain name Masita (Hill *et al*., 2007). While some studies suggest minimal dialectal variation, despite lexical similarities with neighbouring languages, Jita is typically divided into Northern and Southern dialects, which are mutually intelligible, with the Southern dialect showing greater influence from the Kerewe language (Hill *et al*., 2007). Despite its vitality, Jita remains under-researched, particularly regarding its contact-induced lexical changes, highlighting the need for focused studies on phenomena such as Swahili loanword integration.

The crux of this study is that when languages come into contact, lexical borrowing becomes inevitable, with loanwords serving as clear indicators of cultural, social, historical, economic and political interactions. The patterns and nature of borrowed vocabulary often vary across languages, reflecting distinct sociolinguistic dynamics. Although numerous studies have examined lexical borrowing in various Bantu languages, these findings do not represent a universal experience applicable to all Bantu-speaking communities. In particular, the motivations behind Swahili loanwords, the sociocultural shifts influencing their usage, and their specific impact on the Jita language have not been comprehensively explored. This study, therefore, sought to investigate Swahili loanwords in Jita, with a focus on sociolinguistic patterns and the underlying factors that

drive lexical borrowing. By identifying the common lexical categories borrowed from Swahili into Jita and the factors for this lexical borrowing, the study aimed to provide a nuanced understanding of how and why these borrowings occur. Essentially, this analysis contributes valuable insights to the broader field of Bantu linguistics by highlighting the unique linguistic dynamics within the Jita-speaking community.

2 Empirical literature review on lexical borrowing

Numerous empirical studies have investigated the phenomenon of lexical borrowing, revealing both linguistic and sociocultural aspects of the process. In Tanzania, Mnyonge (2011) examined how Swahili impacts the Giha language via lexical borrowing. Employing purposive and simple random sampling, data were collected through questionnaires, interviews, and observations in three villages of Kigoma Urban District. Driven by Optimality Theory and Wave Theory, the research uncovered considerable lexical borrowing from Swahili into Giha. The results emphasised the systematic strategies of phonological and morphological integration used by Giha speakers, including modifications to vocabulary structure, phonology, and semantics. The research suggested additional inquiries due to the scarcity of studies on Giha.

Complementing this, Kasavaga and Alphonce (2023) examined 1,152 loanwords in Kihehe, uncovering borrowings from eleven languages, including Swahili, English, and Arabic. Data gathered in Iringa District were examined through the lens of the Cognitive Lexical Semantic Theory. The research revealed that nouns were the most commonly borrowed type, while conjunctions were borrowed very little. The influence of loanwords on Kihehe semantics involved processes like semantic broadening, narrowing, and innovation. Notably, the research found that loanwords often addressed lexical deficiencies caused by technological and cultural shifts, enriching the language while also modifying its semantic framework.

Lusekelo (2017) provides an emphasis on architectural terminology, analysing both additive and substitutive borrowing in Tanzanian Bantu languages. Utilising information from elderly speakers, student research aides, and dictionaries, the study revealed that additive borrowing (for instance, using *mulango* for "modern door") was more common than substitutive borrowing. However, the latter appeared in instances such as *dirisha* replacing native terms in languages like Chimakonde and Runyambo. The results highlighted how modernisation has influenced the semantic change in conventional vocabulary. This suggests that modernisation has a significant impact on lexical transformation, as additive borrowing expands vocabulary to accommodate novel ideas, whereas substitutive borrowing indicates the replacement of conventional terms, particularly in fields such as architecture.

In a more localised context, Msuya and Mreta (2024) explored loanword adaptation in Chasu, whereas Riro (2020) investigated the impact of English on Igikuria. Riro's research, informed by Borrowing Transfer Theory and Wave Theory, gathered 186 English-derived nominals from ten semantic fields through interviews and native speaker insights. The results showed that lexical borrowing was motivated by prestige, stylistic preferences, and the necessity to address lexical deficiencies. Adaptation within the morphological framework of Igikuria was apparent, primarily through affixation, pluralisation, and phonological modifications. This suggests that in Tanzanian and Kenyan settings, borrowing lexically from English serves not just to fill lexical voids but also embodies sociolinguistic drivers such as prestige and style, alongside consistent morphological and phonological incorporation into indigenous languages.

Similarly, Kinyua (2016) examined English lexical borrowing and semantic shifts in Gĩkũyũ through the lens of cognitive lexical semantics. Drawing on information from public discussions and media exchanges, the research revealed considerable borrowing and nativisation, with sociopsychological elements such as prestige and colonialism significantly influencing these results. This indicates that the incorporation of English lexicon into Gĩkũyũ entails various semantic and structural modifications, influenced by linguistic processes as well as profound sociohistorical and psychological elements, especially prestige and the impact of colonialism. This suggests that grasping lexical borrowing necessitates both linguistic examination and a focus on the wider social and historical frameworks that affect language evolution, emphasising how prestige and colonial backgrounds can propel the adoption and alteration of loanwords in recipient languages such as Gĩkũyũ.

Expanding the geographic scope, Stepanyan (2022) conducted field research in Armenia and examined the impact of loanwords on cultural and democratic development. Through qualitative methods, such as focus group discussions and interviews, the research revealed that the adaptation of loanwords was intricate and closely tied to geopolitical and economic influences. Concerns were also expressed regarding language purification, particularly in relation to democratic identity and cultural integration. The research suggests that increased borrowing from English might accelerate the decline of native Sindhi words, particularly among younger speakers. It also emphasises the necessity for strategic actions to safeguard Sindhi by tackling vocabulary deficiencies and encouraging its application in contemporary settings. This suggests that lexical borrowing, although aiding cultural and democratic interaction, may endanger linguistic heritage, requiring intentional language planning and revitalisation approaches to harmonise modernity with the safeguarding of indigenous linguistic identity.

From a global linguistic perspective, Carling *et al.* (2019) examined borrowing in 115 Eurasian languages, focusing on 104 key concepts from a worldwide linguistic viewpoint. Their study showed that borrowing was motivated by two primary factors: necessity (lexical deficiencies) and prestige (standing of source languages). Although need was associated with semantic areas and cultural gaps, prestige mainly influenced the direction rather than the speed of borrowing. In a worldwide linguistic context, Carling *et al*. (2019) indicate that lexical borrowing is a systematic and universal process shaped by communicative needs and sociocultural factors. The difference between "need" and "prestige" as motivators suggests that languages develop not just to address lexical deficiencies but also to represent social stratifications and cultural power. This holds significant consequences for language planning and policy, highlighting the necessity of grasping both practical and symbolic reasons for borrowing, particularly in multilingual and contact-heavy contexts.

Studies on borrowing into Indonesian and Sindhi offer further empirical support. Gustara (2015) examined how Indonesian adolescents often adopted English terms due to their limited native vocabulary, social status, and routine. Loanwords, primarily nouns, frequently underwent phonological simplification, such as monophthongisation. These trends were observed throughout different school levels. Likewise, Ilyas *et al.* (2021) examined English borrowing in Sindhi, pinpointing code-switching, restricted native vocabulary, and the prevalence of English in formal areas as key influences. The research emphasised a generational change in which younger speakers favoured English words. These studies suggest that the lexical borrowing of younger speakers is influenced by linguistic constraints, sociolinguistic status, and frequent exposure, resulting in gradual changes in language structure and usage.

From a linguistic-historical perspective, Sergiivna *et al*. (2020) explored the integration of French and English loanwords, noting that oral borrowings adapt more significantly than written ones. The author cements his findings with the study by Drljača (2012), which observed that younger speakers are particularly inclined to use Anglicisms to appear modern. Phonological, morphological, and semantic integration strategies were prominent, reflecting both linguistic necessity and social identity motivations. This suggests that historical and social factors, particularly among younger speakers, significantly influence the adaptation of loanwords, with integration strategies reflecting both communicative needs and the construction of identity. This implies that the adaptation of loanwords is not merely a linguistic process but is also profoundly shaped by historical context and social dynamics, where younger generations actively use borrowed forms to negotiate modern identities while addressing practical communicative demands.

Across these diverse studies, a shared conclusion arises that lexical borrowing is an active linguistic phenomenon shaped by interaction, necessity, status, and sociocultural transformation. It encompasses not just the import of foreign terms but also their adjustment through the morphological, phonological, and semantic frameworks of the receiving language. This highlights that lexical borrowing serves as a reflection of social interaction and cultural exchange, while also being a catalyst for continuous language evolution influenced by functional needs and identity-related elements within speech communities. While many studies have investigated lexical borrowing in East African Bantu languages such as Giha, Kihehe, and Igikuria, there is a distinct deficiency of targeted sociolinguistic research about Swahili loanwords in Jita. The distinct sociohistorical and cultural environment of the Jita community remains insufficiently explored, particularly in terms of the motivations, perspectives, and social elements that influence Swahili borrowing. This gap necessitated an in-depth sociolinguistic investigation to comprehend the common lexical categories borrowed from Swahili into Jita and to determine the factors underlying this lexical borrowing.

3 Methodology

This study adopted interpretivism, a paradigm that focuses on understanding the subjective meanings and interpretations individuals and cultures attach to their experiences and actions (Morgan, 2020). This philosophy enabled the researcher to integrate a qualitative research approach using a descriptive design, which provided a detailed understanding of the subject through detailed explanations, descriptions, and elaborations of common lexical categories borrowed from Swahili into Jita, as well as the factors influencing lexical borrowing in the language. Participants were selected through convenience purposive sampling, focusing on informants proficient in both Jita and the contact language (Swahili) to support data collection. The study employed non-participant observation to record 66 conversations in various social settings over a one-month period, alongside semi-structured interviews with six Jita speakers to verify and elicit loanwords. Collected data were edited, coded, and analysed thematically, grouping items by common themes and sub-themes.

This study is guided by the Borrowing Transfer Theory proposed by Terence Odlin (1989). This theoretical framework provides both linguistic and sociolinguistic perspectives to explain how and why Swahili loanwords are adopted and adapted into Jita. According to the theory, borrowing occurs when elements from one language are transferred into another due to language contact. In this model, Odlin (1989) demonstrates that contact between languages leads to the transfer or diffusion of linguistic materials, which can occur through verbal or written forms, specifically through hearing

or seeing. Therefore, interaction becomes a necessary condition for the spread of linguistic features. However, according to Houssos (2020), the theory emphasises that interaction does not determine the direction of linguistic influence; instead, the flow is governed by the socio-cultural status and attitudes of the speakers involved. The theory posits that transfer is influenced by the similarities and differences between the target language and previously acquired languages. Crucially, the theory asserts that linguistic influence typically flows from a higher-status language to a lower-status one. For instance, English, regarded as a high-status language, influences Igikuria, which holds a lower sociolinguistic status. This dynamic explains why Igikuria borrows from the English language. The prestige and functionality of the dominant language often dictate the direction of influence, which, Odlin notes, could only be reversed by a social upheaval or cultural resistance.

Odlin (1989) further distinguishes between two types of transfer: borrowing transfer, which refers to the influence of a second language on an already acquired first language and substratum transfer, which is the influence of a native language on the acquisition of a second language, regardless of how many languages the speaker knows. This study focuses specifically on borrowing transfer, as it captures the influence of Swahili (as a second language) on Jita (as the first language). Substratum transfer is beyond the scope of this study. Borrowing transfer involves adapting foreign linguistic elements into the indigenous system, often beginning at the lexical level due to the dominant language's power and prestige (Odlin, 1989). Thus, borrowing transfer provides a suitable framework for understanding how Swahili lexical items are integrated into Jita through sustained language contact and sociolinguistic influence.

In addition to Odlin's theory, Ringbom (1991) identifies two key processes of cross-linguistic lexical influence: lexical transfer and borrowing. Lexical transfer occurs when learners mistakenly assume semantic equivalence between words in their L1 and L2, leading to loan translations or semantic overextensions. For example, Finnish learners might say "oldboy" for "bachelor" based on a literal translation of the Finnish word vanhapoika. Similarly, a Swedish learner might write "carry a baby in one's fathom" due to confusion with the Swedish word famn, which means both lap and fathom. Moreover, false cognates, such as French prévenir (meaning "to warn") and English "prevent", can cause further confusion due to their similar forms but different meanings (Odlin, 1989). This highlights how cross-linguistic lexical influence not only facilitates borrowing but also introduces semantic interference, which can shape the adaptation and interpretation of loanwords in complex ways within multilingual communities.

This theoretical framework was highly relevant to the present study, as it addresses the core issue of linguistic influence between languages in contact. The theory's principles align with the observed influence of Swahili, a socially, politically, and economically dominant language, on Jita, a less dominant local language. The morphological modifications identified in the study exemplify this influence, which aligns with Odlin's view of borrowing transfer. Generally, this framework also supports the broader observation that languages of higher prestige, such as Swahili, exert influence on those of lower prestige, like Jita.

4 Findings and discussion

This part presents and discusses the findings on Swahili loanwords in Jita. It analyses and discusses the data collected from the field in line with the two specific objectives: to identify the common lexical categories borrowed from Swahili into Jita, and to determine the factors underlying this lexical borrowing.

4.1 Swahili loanwords determined in Jita

The first objective of this study was to identify the common lexical categories borrowed from Swahili into Jita. To achieve this, the researcher collected a sample of 1,000 Swahili loanwords used in Jita. The findings revealed that speakers of Jita predominantly borrow nouns, verbs, adjectives, conjunctions, and prepositions from Swahili. The distribution and frequency of these lexical categories are presented in Figure 1.

Lexical Categories

Category	Percent	Frequency
Prepositions	0.1	1
Conjunctions	0.4	4
Adverbs	2.4	24
Adjectives	3.4	34
Verbs	25.3	253
Nouns	68.4	684

■ Percent □ Frequency
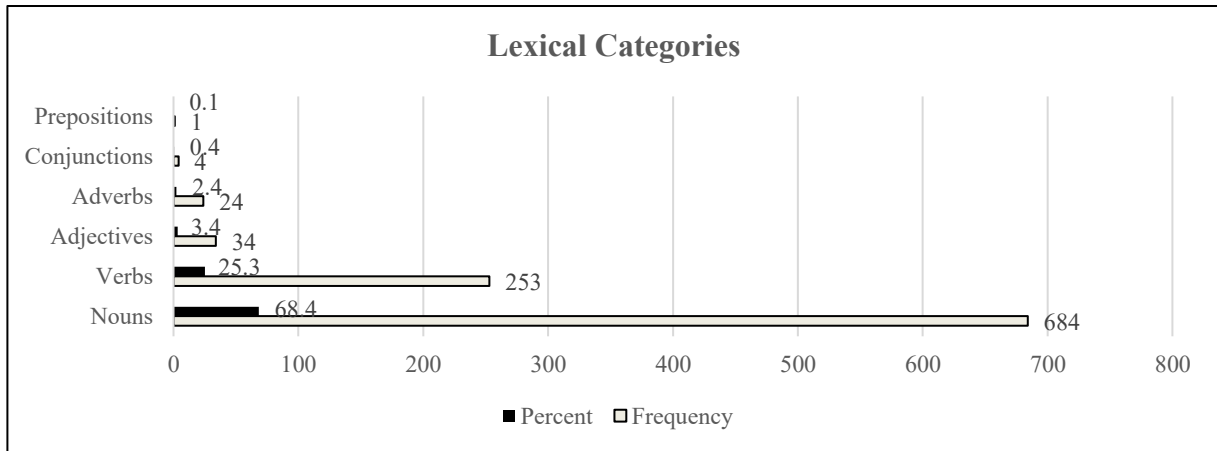
Figure 1: The common lexical categories borrowed from Swahili into Jita
Source: Field data (2019)

The data in Figure 1 presents the distribution of 1,000 Swahili loanwords identified in Jita, categorised by grammatical class. A distinct pattern appears, with nouns overwhelmingly dominating the dataset, comprising 684 items (68.4%), which supports the widely observed linguistic trend that nouns are the most frequently borrowed lexical category. This finding aligns with Mnyonge (2011, p.72), who reported that nouns comprised 188 out of 275 loanwords in Giha. The predominance of nouns is likely due to their essential function in labelling new objects, technologies, concepts, and experiences, especially those introduced through cultural or technological contact. Given that many of these items may lack equivalents in Jita, borrowing becomes a practical solution to address lexical gaps. Moreover, nouns are often preferred due to their semantic transparency and perceptual saliency, which facilitates the easier integration and expansion of the language's referential scope (Luhende, 2018, p. 83). Verbs represent the second most borrowed category, accounting for 253 items (25.3%). Although less frequently borrowed than nouns, their presence indicates that action-based terms, particularly those associated with modernity and service-related contexts, also drive borrowing. However, their comparatively lower frequency may stem from their greater grammatical complexity, which often requires significant morphological adaptation during integration. These findings also reflect Mnyonge's (2011, p.72) results in Giha, where verbs were the second most borrowed category, with 34 entries.

Adjectives and adverbs appear significantly less frequently among the borrowed items, constituting 3.4% (34 items) and 2.4% (24 items), respectively. This low incidence aligns with broader linguistic patterns in which descriptive elements are more likely to be retained or generated within the native language using indigenous morphological strategies. Mnyonge (2011, p.72) similarly found that out of 275 loanwords in Giha, only 34 were adverbs and 19 were adjectives, reinforcing the idea that such word classes are less susceptible to borrowing. Even more striking is the rarity of conjunctions

and prepositions, with only 4 conjunctions (0.4%) and 1 preposition (0.1%) identified. These categories are generally considered part of a language's core grammatical structure, and their stability across language contact scenarios is well-supported by the Borrowing Transfer Theory (Odlin, 1989), which asserts that grammar-related elements, due to their syntactic centrality and limited semantic flexibility, are less prone to borrowing. Overall, the findings emphasise that lexical borrowing primarily targets content words (especially nouns), where gaps in expression or sociolinguistic incentives (such as prestige, modernity) drive adoption. In contrast, function words are typically preserved due to their deep integration in the syntactic system and their critical role in maintaining linguistic coherence.

So, how were these loanwords identified? Swahili loanwords in Jita were recognised and categorised based on several criteria, namely phonological, geographical, and historical considerations, as outlined hereinafter:

4.1.1 Phonological criterion

The phonological criterion that assisted the researcher in identifying Swahili loanwords in Jita was the phonological gap between the two languages. By examining words that contain sounds not native to Jita phonology, the researcher could pinpoint Swahili loanwords. According to the literature, Jita phonology lacks the sounds: [b], [ð], [ɣ], [h], [l], [ʃ], [θ], [v], and [z]. Therefore, any word containing these sounds was classified as a Swahili loanword. The following examples provide evidence under this criterion.

Words with sound [b]

The study found that some Jita words contain the voiced bilabial plosive [b], a sound not initially present in the Jita phonological system. As observed, words such as *abiriya* (passenger), *-abudu* (worship), *babayika* (be confused), *baabu* (grandfather), and *baaba* (father) were identified as Swahili loanwords because they contain the [b] sound, which aligns with their Swahili equivalents. This pattern demonstrates that lexical borrowing from Swahili has contributed to phonological enrichment in Jita by introducing new sounds, such as [b], that were previously absent in the language.

Words with sound [ʃ]

It was observed that some Jita words contain the voiceless post-alveolar fricative [ʃ], a sound not initially present in the Jita phonological system. All words with this sound that align with the Swahili lexicon were identified as Swahili loanwords. The examples include *shangaaza* (amaze), *-shawishi* (entice; tempt), *shemeeji* (brother/sister-in-law), *isheree* (celebration, festival), *shetaani* (devil), and *ishiriingi* (shilling). These examples confirm that the occurrence of [ʃ] in Jita marks clear cases of Swahili borrowing, illustrating how language contact can introduce new phonemes into a recipient language's sound system.

Words with sound [v]

It was observed that certain Jita words contain the voiced labio-dental fricative [v], a sound not native to the Jita phonological system. All such words that correspond to the Swahili lexicon were classified as Swahili loanwords. The examples include *jinguvu* (energy, strength), *vibaya* (badly, wrongly), *-vumiriya* (persevere, tolerate), *-vuuja* (leak, seep), and *ivuumbi* (cross a river, e.g., on a bridge). These words demonstrate that the presence of [v] serves as a reliable phonological marker

of Swahili borrowing in Jita, highlighting how language contact introduces new sounds into the phonemic inventory of the recipient language.

Words with sound [z]

It was realised that certain Jita words contain the voiced alveolar fricative [z], a sound not native to the Jita phonological system. All such words corresponding to the Swahili lexicon were classified as Swahili loanwords. The examples include *rizimwi* (goblin, ogre), *-zingiira* (surround), *riziwa* (lake)*, -zungushiya* (encircle)*, -zurura* (loaf around), *zoea* (get accustomed), and *zozana* (dispute/argue). These examples demonstrate that the presence of [z] in Jita serves as a phonological marker of Swahili borrowing, illustrating how contact with Swahili has led to the integration of non-native sounds into Jita's phonemic system. Eventually, the presence of non-native phonemes such as [b], [ð], [ɣ], [h], [l], [ʃ], [θ], [v] and [z] in Jita words indicates these are loanwords, as these sounds are not part of the native Jita phonology. This observation supports Crystal's (2008b) view that phonological criteria are crucial for identifying loanwords, with phonetic gaps revealing linguistic borrowing. The non-native sounds in Jita suggest borrowing from Swahili, highlighting the influence of one language on another. Additionally, Harris (2002) emphasises that loanwords often undergo phonological adaptation to fit the borrowing language's constraints, providing insights into the dynamics of language contact and the modifications made to integrate borrowed terms. Examining these phonological characteristics helps researchers understand borrowing mechanisms and the influence of Swahili on Jita.

4.1.2 Historical criterion

Some Swahili loanwords in Jita were realised through the historical knowledge of the Jita speakers who were interviewed and the researcher's content analysis.

Swahili loanwords borrowed after the establishment of formal education

Some loanwords entered Jita following the introduction of formal education during the missionary, colonial, and post-independence periods. These include *iyaada* (fee), *echuwo* (college/university), *ridafutaari* (exercise book), *ridaraasa* (classroom), *omwanafuunzi* (pupil), and *omwaarimu* (teacher). Such terms represent educational concepts that were previously absent in Jita's traditional system, which relied on oral knowledge passed down by elders without formal institutions or written materials. Their emergence reflects the linguistic adaptation needed to accommodate new concepts introduced through formal schooling.

To address new educational practices and institutions, Jita speakers borrowed terminology from Swahili, which has historically been linked with formal education in East Africa. This borrowing reflects a common phenomenon of language contact, where languages adopt foreign words to meet new communicative needs arising from cultural or technological changes. This process aligns with Ferm (2006) and Crystal (2008b), who discuss how languages evolve by integrating new terms to enhance their expressive capabilities in response to societal shifts. The inclusion of Swahili loanwords in Jita illustrates how languages adapt to incorporate and institutionalise new concepts, such as formal education.

Moreover, some words were determined as new concepts in Jita, which emerged due to the development of science and technology. Moreover, some words in Jita were identified as representing new concepts that emerged with the advancement of science and technology. These

include *ibhasikeeri* (bicycle), *dakitaari* (doctor), *izamana* (surety/guarantee/bail), *rigajeeti* (newspaper), *omushumaa* (candle), and *isimu* (telephone). These concepts were previously unknown in the traditional Jita context and thus lacked native equivalents. Their introduction into the language through Swahili borrowing reflects the community's adaptation to modern innovations and the growing influence of science and technology on everyday life. The word *omweenge* (national torch) entered Jita from Swahili (*mwenge*) immediately after the establishment of the national torch as a symbol of Tanzania's independence in 1961. Moreover, the word *ireseeni* (license) was entered in Jita after the new system of formalising and registering businesses was implemented.

Furthermore, some Jita loanwords were borrowed from Swahili when Jita speakers began to use Swahili in a bilingual situation. Some Jita loanwords were borrowed from Swahili when Jita speakers began using Swahili regularly, a situation of bilingualism. From that point, speakers started adapting Swahili words even for concepts that already had native equivalents. The examples include *Jumataatu* (Monday) for *Kuchorumwi*, and *Ariyaamisi* (Thursday) for *Kuchakana*. This borrowing pattern is rooted in the historical context of growing bilingualism in the Jita community. It implies that bilingualism can facilitate the replacement of native vocabulary with borrowed terms, highlighting the impact of language contact and sociolinguistic factors such as prestige and convenience.

Nevertheless, some Swahili loanwords in Jita emerged due to historical differences between the traditional Jita political system and the new forms of governance introduced before and after independence. The findings indicate that the listed loanwords and similar terms were borrowed, adopting the new political terminology. For instance, the local ruler of the Jita territory was titled *Omukama*. Thereafter, the new political system established in Tanzania led to the emergence of words like *diwaani* (councillor), *akimu* (judge), *omubuunge* (a member of parliament [parliamentarian]), *rayisi* (president), and *omuungano* (unity/union), which were adopted to represent political roles and concepts absent in the native system. The establishment of modern political structures in Tanzania introduced new terms, prompting their borrowing into Jita to reflect the changing sociopolitical landscape.

Additionally, some Swahili loanwords in Jita were influenced by the historical development of religious practices in the region. These words entered the language with the introduction of a new system of worship through churches, bringing unfamiliar concepts and practices. The examples include *-abudu* (worship), *Kirisito* (Christ), *Maryaamu* (Mary), *omusarabha* (cross), *shetaani* (devil), and *Yeesu* (Jesus). Previously, for instance, the Jita people used the word "okuramya" to refer to worship. However, with the spread of Christianity, these new terms were borrowed from Swahili to align with the emerging religious context. This implies that the adoption of a new religious system significantly shaped lexical borrowing in Jita, enabling the language to express evolving spiritual and cultural experiences.

Another historical source of Jita loanwords relates to Jita traditions and practices. Some words denote concepts unfamiliar or absent in the culture, for example, *-keketa* (circumcising a girl), a practice not part of the traditions of the language, where circumcision applies only to males. Additionally, some loanwords, such as *iduwa* (when referring to the Muslim faith), *isara*, or *amaombi* (special prayer), were adopted not as new concepts but to differentiate nuances within existing practices, replacing the native term *risabhwa*. This illustrates that Swahili loanwords in Jita serve both to introduce new cultural concepts and to create finer semantic distinctions within traditional ones, reflecting language adaptation for innovation and refinement.

It was also evident that some loanwords can be identified through the emergence of diseases that were previously unknown or unnamed in the Jita community. From the findings, words like *obhukimwi* (HIV/AIDS), *echiyaruusi* (stroke), *marariya* (*malaria*), and *ipepopuunda* (tetanus) were borrowed from Swahili to name these new health conditions. This demonstrates that historical developments, especially in health, drive lexical borrowing in Jita, reflecting the language's adaptation to new realities.

4.1.3 Geographical criterion

Another factor used to identify loanwords in Jita is the geographical location of the speech community, which influences the presence or absence of certain concepts in the native lexicon. For example, words such as *nyanguumi* (whale), *ibaari* (sea, ocean), and *ibandaari* (harbour) in Jita, corresponding to Swahili *nyangumi*, *bahari*, and *bandari* respectively, are considered loanwords. These terms reflect concepts that are not native to the Jita-speaking region, as there is no sea or ocean within their territory. The absence of relevant geographical features means that Jita lacks the indigenous words necessary for concepts, thus necessitating the borrowing of words from Swahili. The data, therefore, highlight the significant role of geographical factors in shaping the vocabulary of a language, where lexical borrowing occurs to fill gaps created by the local environment.

4.2 The factors for lexical borrowing from Swahili to Jita

The second objective of the study was to identify the factors influencing lexical borrowing from Swahili to Jita. The researcher employed content analysis to analyse data collected from fieldwork and interviews. Key factors identified for lexical borrowing included the need to express new concepts, prestige, avoiding synonyms, and avoiding homonymy. In Jita, the primary reasons for borrowing were found to be the need to express new concepts and the desire for prestige. The data were analysed and presented to reflect these findings.

4.2.1 Lexical borrowing for expressing new concepts in Jita

Previous research has highlighted that a key factor in lexical borrowing is the need to express new concepts. This occurs when the borrowing language community encounters novel ideas or objects that are unfamiliar to them, leading them to adopt terms from the lending language rather than creating new words (Deutschmann, 2006). In the context of Jita, it was observed that some loanwords from Swahili were incorporated to address the need for new concepts. This reflects the adoption of terms to represent new ideas in Jita, as evidenced by the influx of new concepts indicated by specific loanwords. Consider data (1).

(1) Swahili	Jita	English Gloss
(a) UKIMWI	*obhukimwi*	HIV/AIDS
(b) *rais*	*rayisi*	president
(c) *risasi*	*irisaasi*	bullet
(d) *rubani*	*rubaani*	pilot
(e) *Kristo*	*Kirisito*	Christ
(f) *mwanajeshi*	*omwanajeeshi*	soldier

Source: Field data (2019)

The loanwords in (1) demonstrate how Jita employs lexical borrowing from Swahili to introduce new concepts, objects, or ideas that lack existing terms. This phenomenon often occurs in situations involving cultural exchange, technological advancements, and social interaction. The results coincide with numerous languages. This shows that borrowing in Jita fills lexical gaps, especially for concepts absent in the local context, reflecting functional language expansion.

This is similar to the adoption of words such as *pizza, robot, ballet, guru,* and *safari* by English speakers, illustrating how languages borrow words to fill vocabulary gaps and adapt to new cultural and technological developments. The English word *pizza* was borrowed from Italian to describe a novel food concept, reflecting cultural exchange between Italy and English-speaking countries (Ferm, 2006). The term "robot" originated from the Czech *robota*, meaning compulsory labour, highlighting its introduction alongside the concept of labour (Asimov, 1995). "Ballet," borrowed from French, entered English with the dance style itself, representing French cultural influence (McCoubrey, 1983). These examples illustrate how borrowing enriches languages by introducing new concepts and facilitating cross-cultural communication.

4.2.2 Lexical borrowing for prestige-seeking in Jita

Some scholars have explained that speakers adopt such new words to be associated with the prestige of the donor language (Haspelmath, 2009). Daulton (2013) also notes that words are sometimes borrowed despite having native equivalents, typically because new words convey fresh nuances, such as sophistication. From the explanation of this factor, along with examples from other languages, the researcher realised that lexical borrowing has occurred in Jita, even though there are native or indigenous terms for the borrowed words. This is because Jita speakers perceive Swahili words as more prestigious than their native ones. This was also mentioned by all the interviewed informants, who stated that some speakers, especially youths, tend to use Swahili words because they feel the prestige associated with using them. The main reason for Jita speakers to borrow Swahili words instead of using the indigenous ones is that Swahili is dominant over Jita as it is the national and official language of the country (Tanzania). In contrast, Jita is only used for domestic communications. Examples of Swahili loanwords borrowed for this reason are indicated in (2).

(2) Swahili	Jita	Indigenous Word	English Gloss
(a) *adabu*	*iyadaabu*	*intuungwa*	good manners
(b) *ahidi*	*-ayidi*	*raga*	promise
(c) *alizeti*	*iyarizeeti*	*nyamasubhagabhiri*	sunflower
(d) *baba*	*baaba*	*raata*	father
(e) *bahati*	*ibaati*	*ribhaando*	fortune; luck
(f) *chimbuko*	*richimbuko*	*-obhusooko*	beginning; origin
(g) *choo*	*echoo*	*ichorooni*	latrine; toilet
(h) *dada*	*daada*	*omusubhaati/ omuyarawaasu*	any female sibling
(i) *jirani*	*jiraani*	*omwikasyaanya*	neighbour

Source: Field data (2019)

The data in (2) provide evidence of the existence of some loanwords of Jita borrowed for prestige. Lexical borrowing for prestige is a common linguistic phenomenon even in Jita, where words from Swahili are adopted due to their association with high status, cultural sophistication, or technological

advancement. This type of borrowing reflects the social dynamics and cultural exchanges between Swahili and Jita, as Swahili, being the donor language, holds socio-political or economic power.

This is relevant to many existing findings. For instance, between 1650 and 1770, France, being the leading political and cultural nation in Europe, attracted many wealthy Germans who were impressed by the culture and therefore learned French, becoming bilingual. As a result, many French loanwords managed to enter the German vocabulary. Examples include: *kostüm, parfüm, promenade* and *balkon* (Ferm, 2006). This occurs, especially when BL speakers perceive loanwords as being more prestigious than native words. In Arabic-speaking countries, French words like "television" and "restaurant" are widely used, reflecting the cultural and historical influence of France in the region (Ryding, 2014). These borrowings highlight the ongoing dynamics of cultural prestige and the complex interplay between language and identity.

5 Conclusion

This study provides a comprehensive examination of Swahili loanwords in Jita, identifying the common lexical categories borrowed from Swahili into Jita and the factors underlying this lexical borrowing. The first objective was to identify Swahili loanwords in Jita. Findings showed that Jita borrows words from various classes, with nouns being the most frequent (68.4%), followed by verbs and adjectives. Loanwords were identified using phonological, historical, and morphological criteria. Nouns dominate because they expand vocabulary by naming new concepts, things, animals, places, and ideas that often lack native equivalents. Unlike verbs or adjectives, nouns fill lexical gaps and are easier to borrow due to less grammatical adaptation and prestige factors. Under the second objective, the study explored why Jita speakers borrow Swahili words. The findings revealed two main reasons: expressing new concepts and achieving prestige. First, many borrowed nouns represent new or unfamiliar ideas lacking native equivalents. Second, speakers borrow words sociolinguistically, favouring Swahili terms for their prestige, since Swahili is the national language, while Jita is mainly used at home. This preference spans all word categories.

The study concludes that, in relation to the Borrowing Transfer Theory proposed by Terence Odlin (1989), lexical borrowing from Swahili into Jita is a clear case of borrowing transfer, whereby a second language (Swahili) exerts influence on a previously acquired language (Jita). As Odlin posits, such transfer is driven by both linguistic correspondences and social dynamics between languages in contact. The findings demonstrate that Swahili, as a high-prestige national language, provides lexical items, particularly nouns, that are adapted into Jita due to communicative necessity and sociocultural motivations. This supports Odlin's claim that borrowing often begins at the lexical level and is shaped by the sociolinguistic context in which language contact occurs, reflecting how speakers integrate foreign elements into their indigenous linguistic system to meet evolving expressive and identity-related needs. Based on the findings and conclusions, the study recommends that an investigation of this nature be extended to other Bantu languages to stimulate cross-linguistic studies on lexical borrowing in African languages. Furthermore, the study is also expected to serve as a basis for further constructive studies relating to Bantu languages, beyond Jita. Since Jita is a Bantu language, the findings from the current study can influence the understanding of the sociolinguistic dynamics of Swahili loanwords in other languages.

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Syntactic Analysis of Left Dislocation in Swahili

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Abstract

Left dislocation (LD) is a significant syntactic phenomenon in simple sentences across many languages. For instance, in the Luganda and Kuria languages, the left-dislocated elements are incorporated into the transitive verb through an object marker. In English, left-dislocated elements are often resumed by resumptive pronouns. However, in the Embɔsi language, left-dislocated elements are neither incorporated by an object marker nor resumed by resumptive pronouns. In Swahili, there have been limited studies on left dislocation. For example, Edelsten et al. (2013) and Ndumiwe (2023) note changes in arguments and non-argument word order related to left dislocation in Swahili. Moreover, a study by Kabasele (2012) focuses on comparing left dislocation between Swahili and Lingala, examining meaning, vacated site, and its structure. This paper aimed to conduct a syntactic analysis of left dislocation in Swahili, focusing on three key issues: (i) syntactic properties, (ii) types, and (iii) functions of left dislocation in the language. Data were collected from two oral narrative texts using the narration method. The selected narratives include "Mwanamalundi" and the "Mv. Bukoba" accident. The analysis utilised the modern version of the Minimalist Program, specifically the Phonetic Form Scrambling Theory proposed by Kidwai (1999, 2000). The findings reveal two types of left dislocation in Swahili: Clitic left dislocation and non-clitic left dislocation. Both types exhibit various syntactic properties, such as the presence of an intonation break between left-dislocated elements and subsequent parts of the sentence. The study reports that left dislocation does not alter subject-verb agreement, co-exists with transitive verbs, and changes word order. Lastly, left dislocation in Swahili serves to encode ex-situ focus, mostly argument focus. The displaced elements are situated before the verb or subject to facilitate focus. The findings carry theoretical implications for changes in word order and the structuring of information structure in Swahili.

Keywords: *Focus, object marker, Swahili, left dislocation, resumptive pronouns.*

1 Introduction

Dislocation is a syntactic operation that allows an external argument of a predicate to be moved outside of its canonical position, typically to the clausal edge, where it is resumed by a pronoun within the core clause from which it originates (Fernández-Sánchez & Ott, 2020; Lambrecht, 2001) as shown in Example (1a-b) from German and Spanish.

(1)   a. Den   Peter, den kenne ich gut.
            the.ACC Peter him know   I well
            '**Peter**, I know him well.'   [German]

         b. Pedro lo   vio en el parque   a   Juan.
            Pedro him saw in the park   DOM Juan
            'We saw him at the park, **Juan**.'   [Spanish]

         Source: Fernández-Sánchez & Ott (2020, p. 1)

In these constructions, the object or subject is moved from its natural position and placed outside of its canonical position. The moved elements are resumed by their respective pronouns within the core clause in which they originate. This syntactic movement is known as dislocation in linguistics.

The dislocation site varies depending on the canonical structure of the specific language. Some languages exhibit SVO Patterns, such as those found in many Bantu languages, English, and French (De Cat, 2002, 2007; Kayne, 1994; Vitale, 1981). Others utilise Verb-Subject-Object (VSO) patterns, as seen in languages such as Arusa, Arabic, Hebrew, and those of the Semitic family, and Subject-Object-Verb (SOV) patterns, as in Japanese, Korean, and Turkish (Andrason & Karan, 2017; Cachetto, 1997; Rodman, 1997). Cross-linguistic studies have identified two primary types of dislocation: left dislocation and right dislocation (see Cechetto, 1999, for Romance languages; De Cat, 2002, 2007, for French; Aborobongui et al., 2014, for Embɔsi; Zeller, 2009; Calaire & Zeller, 2015, for Zulu; Westbury, 2016, for English; and Fernández-Sánchez & Ott, 2020, for German and Spanish). The following examples illustrate left and right dislocation in English and Zulu.

(2)   a. **My father**, he's Armenian.   [LD in English]
         b. It is beautiful, **this painting**.   [RD in English]
         Source: Lambrecht (2001, p. 1051)

(3)   a. **UJohn** intombazana   i-**m**-qabul-ile.   [LD in Zulu]
            John1a girl9   SA-OM1a-kiss-PERF
            John, the girl kissed (him)'.

         b. Ngi-ya-yi-thenga-a   **i-moto**   [RD in Zulu]
            1SA-DJ-9OM-buy-FV AUG-9.car
            'I bought (it), the car'.

         Source: Zeller (2009, p.133); Zeller (2015, p.19)

This paper focuses specifically on left dislocation (LD) constructions in Swahili, which is characterised by an SVO structure. In SVO languages, left dislocation typically involves the syntactic movement of right-predicate elements to the left edge of the verb (Rodman, 1997; Westbury, 2016). Cross-linguistic studies suggest that various elements, such as objects, prepositional phrases, adjuncts, and pronouns, can undergo left dislocation in different languages (Van der Spuy, 1993; Zeller, 2009; Ranero, 2019). The dislocated elements may either precede the verb or the subject, depending on the presence of an overt or covert subject.

Variability in left dislocation constructions exists across languages, including differences in types, functions, resumption, number, and nature of dislocated elements. Languages such as Zulu, Italian, Greek, and English feature three types of left dislocation: Contrastive Left Dislocation (CLD),

Hanging Topic Left Dislocation (HTLD), and Clitic Left Dislocation (CLLD). In Luganda and Arusa, only CLLD and CLD types are present (Ranero, 2019; Andrason & Karan, 2017). These classifications depend on the presence or absence of overt or covert anaphoric co-indexation between the dislocated element and the resumptive pronoun in the predicate. In English, for instance, a vacated site is filled by overt or covert resumptive pronouns (Westbury, 2016), while languages like Luganda and Arusa employ clitic object markers incorporated within the verb (Andrason & Karan, 2017; Ranero, 2019). In contrast, the Embɔsi language lacks co-indexation between left-dislocated elements and resumptive pronouns or object markers (Aborobongui et al., 2014).

Studies indicate that various elements, including objects, prepositional phrases, adjuncts, and pronouns, can be left-dislocated across languages (Van der Spuy, 1993; Zeller, 2009; Ranero, 2019). The number of left-dislocated elements varies; for example, Zulu and Luganda allow two objects to be left dislocated, whereas only one object can be left dislocated in Arusa (Andrason & Karan, 2017). In some languages, such as Lingala, prepositional phrases and obliques can also undergo left dislocation (Kabasele, 2012). The functions of left dislocation also vary by language. For instance, in Zulu, English, and Luganda, left dislocation serves to mark topics within propositions, granting focus prominence to the dislocated elements (Zeller, 2009; Westbury, 2016; Ranero, 2019). In Arusa, left dislocation is explicitly employed to mark focus.

In Swahili, there have been limited studies on left dislocation. For example, Edelsten et al. (2013) note changes in word order related to left dislocation in Swahili. Additionally, Ndumiwe (2023) examines canonical changes resulting from left dislocation in Swahili. Moreover, the study by Kabasele (2012) focuses on comparing left dislocation between Swahili and Lingala, examining its meaning, vacated site, and structure. Hence, the status of syntactic properties, types, and functions of left dislocation in Swahili is unknown. In this regard, this study aimed to analyse the syntax of left dislocation in Swahili, focusing on its properties, types, and functions to bridge the existing gap.

2 Theoretical Framework

This study is guided by the Phonetic Form Scrambling Theory proposed by Kidwai (1999, 2000), a contemporary revision of Chomsky's (1995) minimalist program that addresses syntactic movement and the realisation of focus in free word order languages. The Phonetic Form Scrambling Theory (hereafter, PFS Theory) posits that restructuring of phonetic forms (sentences) is associated with focus encoding within propositions. The PFS Theory comprises three key tenets for analysing phonetic form scrambling: syntactic movements, feature checking, and the XP adjunction principle.

In terms of syntactic movements, the theory encompasses both left and right movements of sentence elements. According to Kidwai (2000), NPs can be moved from the left edge to the right edge of a verb, or vice versa. Figure 1 demonstrates.
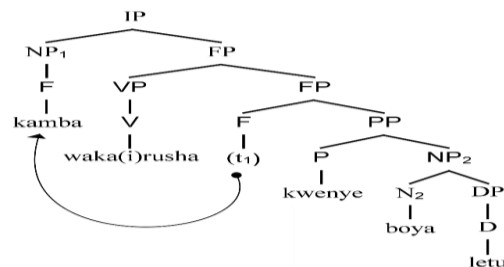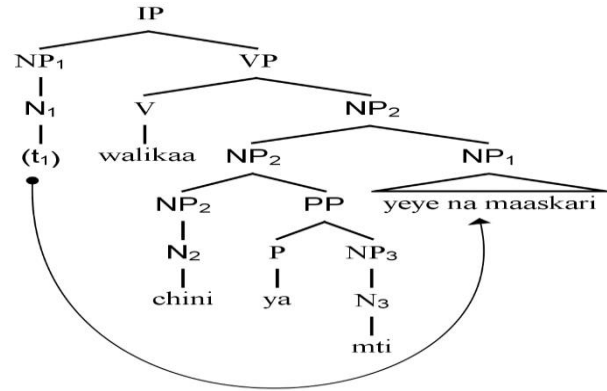

Figure 1: Left Movement in Swahili

As illustrated in Figure 1, the NP is relocated from the right edge of the verb to the left portion of the verb, representing a left movement in Swahili where specific sentence components are displaced to encode information structure. Similarly, in Figure 2, an NP is moved from the left edge of a verb to the right.

Figure 2: Right Movement in Swahili

Figure 2 shows that the NP *yeye na maaskari* 'soldier and him' have been relocated from the left edge of the verb to the right edge. Both movements (left and right) are governed by feature checking and the adjunction principle. The feature checking process marks the displaced elements within the verb using subject or object markers. For instance, in Figure 1, the left-moved element *kamba* 'string' is marked in the verb *waka{i}rusha* 'they threw it' by the object marker **{-i-}**, while the right-moved element *yeye na maaskari* is marked in the verb by the subject marker *{wa-}* in *walikaa* 'they sat'. The adjunction principle allows moved elements to be attached to the sister or daughter nodes of tree structures. Thus, all tenets were utilised to analyse the findings of this study. The first tenets (syntactic movements) were used to analyse left-moved elements before the verb or subject. The second tenet (feature checking) was utilised to check agreements as a syntactic feature between the left-moved elements and the verb or vacated site. Lastly, the adjunction principle was utilised in attaching moved nodes to sister or daughter nodes of the left edge of tree structures (Figure 1-7).

3 Methodology

This study utilised two oral narratives: the "Mwanamalundi" folktale and the "Mv. Bukoba" accident. Two informants (one informant for each narrative) were selected through snowball sampling based on familiarity with the particular narrative and proficiency in the Swahili language. The researchers use local leaders from Mwakubilinga and Kirumba wards to recruit the narrators of "Mwanamalundi" folktale and the "Mv. Bukoba" accident, respectively. Two informants and narratives were deemed sufficient, as the researchers' intention was not to compare narratives or narrators, but to obtain oral narratives from which the Swahili sentence could be drawn. To determine the narrator's proficiency in the Swahili language, an oral placement test was administered to obtain the required informants.

The data collection method employed narration, during which the narratives were recorded by an audio tape recorder to obtain oral stories for transcription. Following transcription, the written text was analysed to extract left dislocation constructions. These constructions were subsequently evaluated for acceptability by four native speakers of Swahili. Data analysis utilised an analytical method known as componential analysis of narratives as proposed by Gimenez (2010). According

to Gimenez, componential analysis enables a detailed examination of the language structure within narratives, including free clauses, coordinate clauses, and subordinate clauses. The obtained data were presented in figures, along with explanations that align with the qualitative approach. Additionally, TreeForm Syntax Tree Drawing Software was used to create the tree diagram structure, illustrating sentence analysis.

4 Findings and discussion

This study identified that left dislocation constructions in Swahili typically involve a single left-dislocated element. The dislocated element can be a noun (phrase), infinitive, or adverb, depending on its anaphoric co-indexation with the object marker incorporated within the verb. Left-dislocated elements in Swahili are positioned before the verb or subject, determined by the presence of a covert or overt subject, as shown in Example (4).

(4)   a. **Wizi   wa   ng'ombe**,   Mwanamalundi   a-li-u-kom-esh-a
       14.theft   of   9.cattle   Mwanamalundi   1SMPST-OM-root-CAUS-FV
          'Cattle rustling, Mwanamalundi abolished it.' [OSV]

       b. **haya   ma-boya   yote**   ni-me-ya-fung-u-a   mimi
          these   6.buoy   all   1SM-PF-OM-root-REV-FV   I
       'All these buoys, I have untied them.' [OVS]

       Source: Field Data (2023)

In examples (4a) and (4b), the objects *wizi wa ng'ombe* 'cattle theft' and *haya ma-boya yote* 'all these buoys' are left dislocated before the subject and verb, respectively. The left-dislocated elements are incorporated within the verbs *aliukomesha* 'stopped it' and *nimeyafungua* 'released it', using the object markers *{-u-}* and *{-ya-},* respectively. These object markers agree in number and noun class with the left dislocated objects; for instance, *-u-}* corresponds to noun class 14, and *{-ya-}* corresponds to noun class 6 in Swahili.

4.1 Properties of Swahili left dislocation constructions

Different constructs exist in left dislocation across various Bantu languages and others. The properties of left dislocation constructions in Swahili exhibit notable characteristics. Firstly, there are intonation breaks between left-dislocated elements and subsequent parts of the sentence. Left dislocated elements are separated from the other sentence elements by a prosodic break in conversation, indicated in writing by a comma as illustrated in Example (5).

(5)   a. **palepale**,   u-le   mti   u-ka-kauk-a
          immediately,   AGR3.that   3.tree   3SM-NTM-root-FV
       'Instantly, the tree dried up.'

       b. **abiria   w-engine**,   tu-li-wa-ach-a   bandari   ya   Bukoba
       2.passenger,   AGR2.other   3SM-PST-OM-root-FV   9.port   of   16.Bukoba
        'Other passengers, we left them at the port of Bukoba.'

       Source: Field Data (2023)

As shown in Example (5), left dislocated elements in Swahili must be separated by an intonation break, which provides prominence to the dislocated elements. In the gloss, a comma is employed to denote the break (pause) from the subsequent part of the sentence.

Secondly, the left dislocation in Swahili does not alter the subject-verb agreement on the verb. The subject marker on the verb remains constant even when the left dislocated object precedes the verb. However, Swahili's left dislocation retains the subject marking following left displacement, as seen in Example (6).

(6)   a. **ku-le**   **ki-siwa-ni**, wa-li-lal-a   chini ya mi-ti yeye   na   mw-enzake
        AGR16.that 7.island.LOC 2SM-PST-root-FV 16.under of 4.tree him and his fellow
        'In the island, they slept under the trees, him and colleagues.'

    b. **i-le**   **mi-ti**,   Mwanamalundi   a-ka-i-sont-a   ki-dole.
        AGR4.that 4.tree   Mwanamalundu 1SM-NTM-OM-root-FV   7.finger
        'Those trees, Mwanamalundi pointed at them with his finger.'

    c. **Mwanamalundi**, tu-li-m-heshim-u   sana hapa Mwakubilinga.
        Mwanamalundi 2SM-PST-OM-root-FV   alot here 16.Mwakubilinga
        'Mwanamalundi, we respected him a lot at Mwakubilinga.'

    Source: Field Data (2023)

As demonstrated in Example (6), different elements have been left dislocated before the verb (6a and 6c) or the subject (6b). These elements do not influence the subject-verb agreement on the verb. The agreement is determined by the overt or covert subject in these constructions. For example, in (6a), the agreement is controlled by the subject *yeye na mwenzake* 'him and his fellow,' positioned after the locative *chini ya miti* 'under the trees.' In Example (6b), the overt subject controls the agreement, while in Example (6c), the agreement is governed by an implied covert subject (omitted by the narrator). According to PFS Theory, agreement is one of the features checked after the scrambling of the phonetic forms, and the subject-verb agreement remains constant following the left displacement of different constituents in Swahili left dislocation.

Thirdly, left dislocation in Swahili features anaphoric co-indexation between left-dislocated objects and incorporated object markers within the verb. In Swahili, the incorporated affix belongs to the verb template, and it agrees with the number and noun class of the dislocated constituents. Thus, left-dislocated elements should typically be noun phrases. Each noun class in Swahili possesses its own object marker, which can be incorporated within the verb (Ndumiwe, 2023). Example (7) illustrates the correlation between left-dislocated elements and object markers incorporated in the verb.

(7) a. **m-temi wa hapa**, wa-tu wa-ke   wa-li-m-pelek-e-a   i-le   taarifa
    1.chief   of here 2.people AGR2.his 2SM-PST-OM-root-APPL-FV AGR2.that 9.information
    'Chief of this place, his people gave him the information.'

   b. **ma-ziwa ma-bichi**, mama   yake a-li-ya-tumi-a   ku-ju-a   uhai   wake
     6.milk   6.fresh   1.mother his 1SM-PST-OM-root-A-FV INF-root-FV 14.life his
     'Fresh milk, his mother used it to foresee his life.'

   c. '**pembeni mwa   jiwe   refu**,   u-ka-ot-a
     17.side   of   5.stone tall   4SM-NTM-root-FV
     m-ti u-na-o-it-w-a   musubhata.'
     3.tree 4SM-PRT-RM-root-PASS-FV   3.musubhata.
     'Beside a high rock, grew up a tree called musubhata.'

   Source: Field Data (2023)

In examples (7a) and (7b), object markers *{-m-}* and *{-ya-}* in the verbs *walimpelekea* 'they sent to him' and *aliyatumia* 'she used it' indicate anaphoric co-indexation with nouns from classes 1 and 6, respectively. However, Example (7c) does not exhibit an incorporated object marker for the left dislocated noun, as the left dislocated element belongs to noun class 17, which lacks anaphoric co-indexation with an object marker incorporated within the verb.

Fourthly, left dislocation in Swahili alters the SVO canonical structure. Word order typology across different languages is based on three functional constituents: Subject (S), Verb (V), and Object (O) (Kayne, 1994). These word orders form the canonical structures of specific languages. Swahili is recognised as an SVO canonical language (Vitale, 1981). However, left dislocation modifies this order into OSV or OVS structures, which depend on the presence or absence of additional syntactic operations. Within an OSV structure, the object occupies a position before the subject, while other constituents (the subject and verb) maintain their natural positions as shown in Example (4a), where the object *wizi wa ng'ombe* 'cattle theft' precedes the subject *Mwanamalundi*. In the OVS structure, right dislocation occurs, where the object is left dislocated while the subject is right dislocated: only the verb retains its natural position, as seen in Example (4b), where the object *haya maboya yote* 'all these buoys' precedes the verb while the subject *mimi* 'I' is positioned afterward.

Lastly, left dislocation in Swahili co-exists with transitive verbs. Transitive verbs require objects as predicate arguments. Various elements, such as prepositional phrases, adverbs, infinitives, or nouns (phrases), can be left dislocated across languages (Van der Spuy, 1993; Zeller, 2009; Ranero, 2019). In Swahili, the object is a key candidate for left dislocation when transitive verbs are involved. For instance, in Example (5b), the verb *tuliwaacha* 'we left them' necessitates an object; the left-dislocated object *abiria wengine* 'other passengers' is positioned before the verb. In contrast, with intransitive verbs, other constituents positioned on the right of the verb can be left dislocated, as shown in Example (5a), where the adverb *palepale* 'immediately' is left dislocated before the subject *ule mti* 'that tree' along with the intransitive verb *ukakauka* 'dried up'.

4.2 Types of Swahili Left Dislocation Constructions

The study identified two main types of left dislocation in Swahili: clitic left dislocation (CLLD) and non-clitic left dislocation. Each type is further divided into subtypes. In clitic left dislocation, sub-types include patient, recipient, experiencer, and beneficiary LD. These subtypes are known as dislocated semantic roles functioning as objects. Non-clitic left dislocation encompasses locative, prepositional phrase, infinitive, and adverb LD. These subtypes are known as left dislocation of syntactic elements. These classifications depend on the presence or absence of co-reference with the object marker incorporated within the verb template.

4.2.1 Clitic left dislocation

In CLLD, left-dislocated elements must be marked with an object marker that is incorporated within the verb. The object marker agrees with the number and noun class of the dislocated noun (phrase). This type specifically concerns object left dislocation.

Patient LD

Noun phrases with semantic roles of patients can undergo left dislocation. The constituents with patient roles reside in situ at the right edge of the verb (Mkude, 2005). LD in Swahili allows any constituent appearing in situ at the right edge to be left-dislocated. When a patient is left dislocated in Swahili, it should be marked with the incorporated object marker within the verb, as illustrated in Example (8).

(8) a. **abiria**   **w-engine**   tu-li-wa-ach-a   bandari   ya   Bukoba
       2.passenger,   AGR2.other   2SM-PST-OM-root-FV   9.port   of   16.Bukoba
       'Other passengers, we left them at the port of Bukoba.'

   b. **kamba**,   tu-ka-**i**-fung-a   ku-enye   li-le   boya
      9. 'rope'   2SM-NTM-OM-root-FV AGR18.to   AGR5.that   5.buoy
      mimi na   mw-enzangu.'
      me   and   2.fellow my
      'The rope, we tied it to that buoy, me and my colleagues'.

       Source: Field Data (2023)

In examples (8a) and (8b), *abiria wengine* 'other passengers' and *kamba* 'rope' serve as left dislocated patients. These patients are co-indexed with the respective object markers *{-wa-}* and *{-i-}* within the verbs *tuliwaacha* 'we left them' and *tukaifunga* 'we tied it'. Such object markers agree with noun classes 2 and 9 in Swahili, revealing the derived noun (phrase). According to PFS Theory, agreement features are verified post-scrambling of the phonetic forms in left dislocation.

Recipient LD

In Swahili sentence structure, constituents with semantic roles of recipients typically occupy the right edge of the verb (Mkude, 2005). Any constituent positioned at the right edge of the verb can undergo left dislocation. Left-dislocated recipients must be marked with an object marker incorporated within the verb template, as shown in Example (9).

(9) a. **m-temi wa hapa**, wa-tu   wa-ke   wa-li-m-pelek-e-a   i-le   taarifa
       1.chief   of   here 2.people AGR2.his 2SM-PST-OM-root-APPL-FV   AGR2.that 9.information
       'Chief of this place, his people gave him the information.'

   b. **Mwanamalundi**,   wa-fuasi   wake   wa-li-m-poke-le-a   pale
      Mwanamalundi   2.followers   his   2SM-PST-OM-root-APPL-FV   there
      'Mwanamalundi, his followers received him from there.'

       Source: Field Data (2023)

Both left dislocated recipients *mtemi wa hapa* and *Mwanamalundi* (a name) are marked by the object markers *{-m-}* and *{-m-}* in the verbs *walimpelekea* 'they sent to him' and *walimpokelea* 'they received him', respectively, indicating co-indexation with the left dislocated nouns. These object markers correspond to noun class 1 in Swahili. Following PFS Theory, the agreement features are verified post-scrambling of the phonetic forms.

Experiencer LD

Constituents with semantic roles of experiencers occupy the right edge of the verb in the Swahili sentence structure. In Swahili, these constituents can undergo left dislocation and may be positioned before the verb or subject based on the presence of covert subjects. Left dislocated experiencers should be marked within the verb template with an object marker, as shown in examples (10a) and (10b).

(10) a. **Mwanamalundi**, tu-li-m-heshimu   sana   hapa   Mwakubilinga.
     Mwanamalundi   2SM-PST-OM-root-FV   a lot   here   Mwakubilinga
     'Mwanamalundi, we respected him a lot here at Mwakubilinga.'

     b. **abiria   wengi**,   ni-li-***wa***-on-a   wa-ki-fi-a   maji-ni
     2.passengers   many   1SM-PST-OM-root-FV   2SM-CM-root-FV   water-LOC
     kwa   ku-kos-a   m-saada
     by   INF-root-FV   3.rescue
     'Many passengers, I saw them dying for lack of rescue.'

     Source: Field Data (2023)

Example (10) illustrates left-dislocated experiencers, *Mwanamalundi* and *abiria wengi* 'many passengers'. The object markers *{-m-}* and *{-wa-}* in the verbs *tulimuheshimu* 'we respected him' and *niliwaona* 'I saw them' indicate anaphoric co-indexation with the left dislocated elements. These markers correspond to noun classes 1 and 2, respectively. Under PFS Theory, agreement represents a feature checked following the scrambling of phonetic forms.

Beneficiary LD

Noun phrases with semantic roles of beneficiaries in Swahili are subject to left dislocation. Beneficiary nouns appear after the right edge of the verb before displacement. Following left dislocation, these elements occupy the left edge of the verb, appearing either before the verb or the subject. Left dislocated beneficiaries should incorporate an object marker within the verb, as illustrated in examples (11a) and (11b).

(11) a. **mw-enz   angu   naye**,   wa-li-**m**-vut-a   m-kono
     1. fellow   my   also   2SM-PST-OM-root-FV   3.hand
     a-ka-ingi-a   ndani   ya   m-tumbwi
     1SM-PST-root-FV   in   of   3.canoe
     'My fellow also, they pulled him into the canoe with his hand'.

b.   mimi **na w-enz-angu ku-enye li-le**   **boya**,
      me   and 2.fellow my AGR18.to AGR5.that   5.buoy
      wa-li-**tu**-vut-a   kwa   kamba
      2SM-PST-OM-root-FV   by   9.rope
      'I and my fellows on that buoy, they pulled us by a rope.'

      Source: Field Data (2023)

The left dislocated noun phrases *mwenzangu naye* and *mimi na wenzangu kwenye lile boya* are indicated with object markers *{-m-}* and *{-tu-}* in the verbs *walimvuta* 'they pulled him' and *walituvuta* 'they pulled us', respectively. The object markers correspond to noun class 1, from which the dislocated noun (phrase) is derived. Based on the principles of PFS Theory, agreement is evident in the features verified post-scrambling of the phonetic forms.

4.2.2 Non-clitic Left Dislocation

In non-clitic left dislocation, left dislocated elements are not marked with object markers, but they can still be incorporated within the verb template. In this type and its subtypes, dislocated constituents may be either noun phrases (typically from noun classes 15-18 in Swahili) or other constituents that naturally occur at the right edge of verb arguments.

Locatives LD

In Swahili, locatives include nouns from noun classes 16-18 or other noun phrases denoting location or place. These locatives normally occur in situ at the right edge of the verb and can be left dislocated before the verb. However, left dislocated locatives do not influence subject-verb agreement, despite appearing before the verb, as shown in examples (12a) and (12b).

(12) a. **Kemondo**,   tu-li-wa-ach-a   abiria   wengi   pia
        16.Kemondo   2SM-PST-OM-root-FV   2.passengers   many   too
        'Kemondo, we left many passengers too.'

    b. **ndani ya chumba chake**, ha-ku-ingi-a   m-tu   yeyote
       in   of 7.room his   NEG.OM-root-FV 1.person   anybody
       'In his room, nobody entered.'

       Source: Field Data (2023)

In examples (12a) and (12b), the locatives *Kemondo* and *ndani ya chumba chake* 'in his room' are left dislocated. Their natural positioning is at the right edge of the verb. The presence of locatives at the left edge indicates they have been displaced or inverted.

Prepositional Phrase

Prepositional phrases (PPs) typically reside at the right edge of the verb in Swahili. For emphasis, they can be moved from their natural positions to the left edge of the verb, prior to the subject. Left dislocated PPs do not function as subjects; the grammatical agreement remains governed by the overt or covert subject. Examples (13a) and (13b) illustrate this phenomenon.

(13)   a. **kwa   bahati mbaya**,   i-le   kamba   i-ka-kat-ik-a
          for   9.bad   luck,   AGR9.that   9.rope   9SM-NTM-root-STV-FV
          'Unfortunately, the rope broke up.'

       b.   **kwa   mbali**,   tu-li-on-a   meli   ya   Mv Klariasi
             in   distance   2SM-PST-root-FV   9.ship   of   Mv Klariasi
             i-li-yo-kuwa   i-ki-toke-a   Ukerewe
             9SM-PST-RM-be   9SM-CM-root-FV   16.Ukerewe
          'In the distance, we saw MV Klariasi, which was coming from Ukerewe.'

          Source: Field Data (2023)

In Example (13), the PPs *kwa bahati mbaya* and *kwa mbali* are moved from the right edge of the verb to the left for emphasis. With PFS Theory, agreement signifies a feature checked after scrambling of phonetic forms, while the subject-verb agreement is consistently governed by overt or covert subjects.

Infinitives LD

In Swahili, infinitives derive from verbs and are marked with the [ku-] inflexion prefix. Infinitives can occur either before or after the verb; when positioned pre-verbally, they serve as subjects and control grammatical agreement. Frequently, they appear post-verbally and can be left dislocated before the subject, as shown in examples (14a) and (14b).

(14)   a. **ku-fik-a**   kwake pale,   wa-tu   wa-li-shangili-a   sana
          INF-arrive-FV   him   there   2.people   2SM-PST-root-FV   too much
          'On his arrival at that place, people celebrated too much.'

       b. **ku-ju-a**   safari   yake,   Mwanamalundi   a-li-mu-achi-a   shoka   mama yake
          INF-know-FV   9.journey   his   Mwanamalundi   1SM-PST-OM.root-FV   5.axe   1.mother his
          'To know his journey, Mwanamalundi left an axe with his mother.'

          Source: Field Data (2023)

Examples 11a and 11b demonstrate that the infinitives *kufika kwake pale* and *kujua safari yake* can be left dislocated before the subject. Nonetheless, this displacement does not affect grammatical agreement. Following PFS Theory, the subject-verb agreement remains intact, as illustrated in both examples.

Adverb LD

Adverbs in Swahili can co-occur with adjectives, verbs, or other adverbs. A left-dislocated adverb in Swahili typically appears before the subject, emphasising the action performed within the utterance. This is evident in examples (15a) and (15b).

(15) a. **taratibu**,   boya   letu   li-ka-anz-a   ku-sukum-w-a
            slowly,   5.buoy   our   5SM-NTM-root-FV   INF-root-PASS-FV
            ku-fuat-a   u-eleke-o   wa   u-pepo
            INF-root-FV   15.direct-NS   of   14.wind
            Slowly, our buoy began to be pushed towards the wind direction.'

    b. **palepale,**   u-le   mti   u-ka-kauk-a
            immediately,   AGR3.that   3.tree   3SM-NTM-root-FV
   'Instantly, that tree dried up.'

    Source: Field Data (2023)

The adverbs *taratibu* and *palepale* are examples of left-dislocated adverbs placed before the subject. This movement does not trigger grammatical agreement on the verb; instead, the subjects retain control over the agreement. Under PFS Theory, the agreement is checked after the scrambling of phonetic forms, indicating that overt subjects continue to manage the subject-verb agreement observed in examples (15a) and (15b).

4.3 Function of Swahili Left Dislocation Constructions

Left dislocation in Swahili serves as a syntactic mechanism for ex-situ focus marking. Focus signifies the crucial part of an utterance or represents new information introduced within it. Focus can be used to highlight or emphasise elements within the utterance. Various constituents, ranging from entire sentences to sub-constituents or specific phrases, can occupy the focus area. In Swahili, left dislocation helps encode argument focus in ex-situ contexts. According to Krifka (2007), focus pertains to the section of an answer that aligns with the wh-part of a constituent question.

Left dislocated elements in Swahili embody a pragmatic function of focus. The displaced elements are situated before the verb or subject to facilitate focus, thereby interpreted as new, highlighted, or emphasised constituents within the proposition. Such focus marking is elucidated by PFS Theory, which demonstrates the movement of focal elements from the right edge of the verb to positions preceding the verb or subject within an utterance, as depicted in Figure 3.
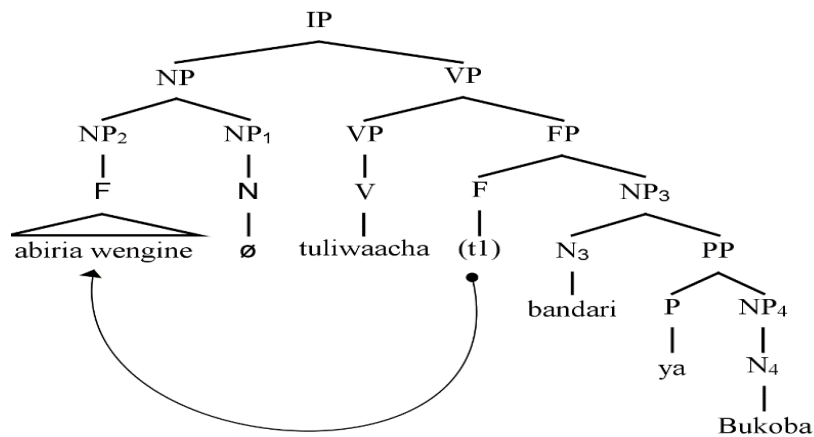

Figure 3: Focus on Object Left Dislocation

Figure 3 depicts the displacement of constituent *abiria wengine* from the right edge of the verb *tuliwaacha* and its relocation before the verb for the purpose of focus. The moved element signifies

new information in the utterance, such as the indication of passengers left at the port of Bukoba, answering the question: *nani waliachwa katika bandari ya Bukoba?* 'Who were left at the port of Bukoba?'

Moreover, in Swahili, locatives can be subjected to focus within left dislocation. Locatives are repositioned from the right edge of the verb to the left. This movement highlights them as focal information. PFS Theory illustrates the movement of locatives, which is then adjoined to the left part of a sister node, as shown in Figure 4.
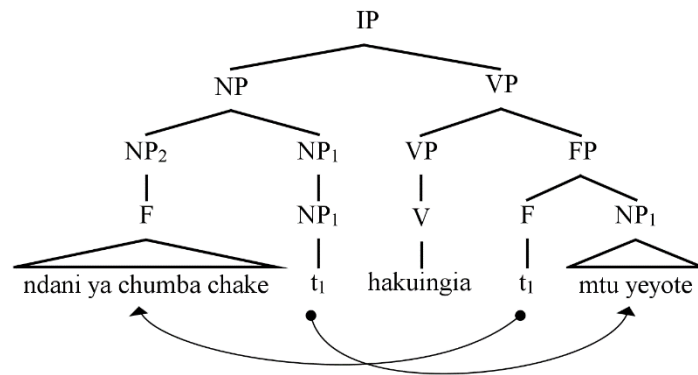
Figure 4: Focus on Locative Left Dislocation

Figure 4 illustrates the movement of the locative *ndani ya chumba chake* from the right edge of the verb *hakuingia* and its positioning at the left edge, performed to mark focus in the utterance.

Furthermore, PFS Theory suggests the possibility of left-dislocating prepositional phrases by positioning them prior to the subject. The entirety of a PP can be moved from the right edge of the verb and placed before the subject, where it functions as emphasised information complementing the presupposed content. Figure 5 represents this analysis of PP left dislocation under PFS Theory.
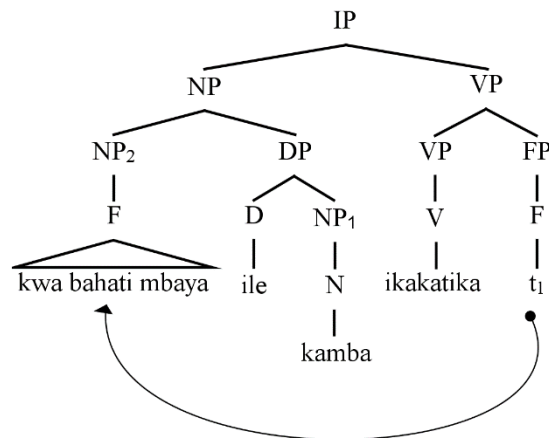
Figure 5: Focus on Prepositional Phrase Left Dislocation

In Figure 5, the PP *kwa bahati mbaya* is shifted from the right edge of the verb to a position prior to the subject *ile kamba*. This movement exemplifies ex-situ placement for the PP in Swahili, achieved through left dislocation for the purpose of focusing.

Additionally, PFS Theory signifies focus marking within infinitive left dislocation. Infinitives can be moved from the right edge of the verb and positioned before the subject to serve the function of focus. Left-dislocated infinitives are typically interpreted as highlighted information within the utterance, complementing the presupposed knowledge of the interlocutors. The displacement and positioning of infinitives prior to subjects are shown in Figure 6.
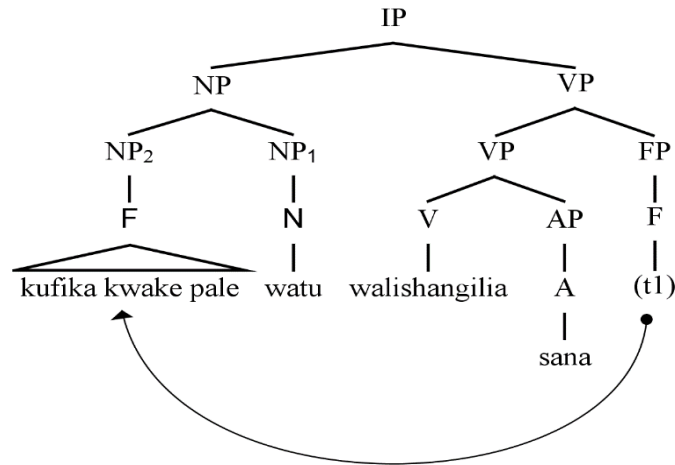
Figure 6: Focus on Infinitive Left Dislocation

Figure 6 illustrates the left dislocated infinitive *kufika kwake pale*, which is preposed via PFS Theory's prepositioning principle. The movement serves to indicate focus in Swahili utterances, as the relocated constituent is adjoined at the left node of the sister node preceding the subject *watu* 'people'.

Lastly, PFS Theory analyses focus positioning in adverb left dislocation. Adverbs are shifted from the right edge of the verb using prepositioning principles. The left dislocated adverb is interpreted as emphasised information in the utterance, highlighting the extent of action performed within the verb. Specifically, the adverb is left dislocated before the subject in the utterance, as demonstrated in Figure 7.
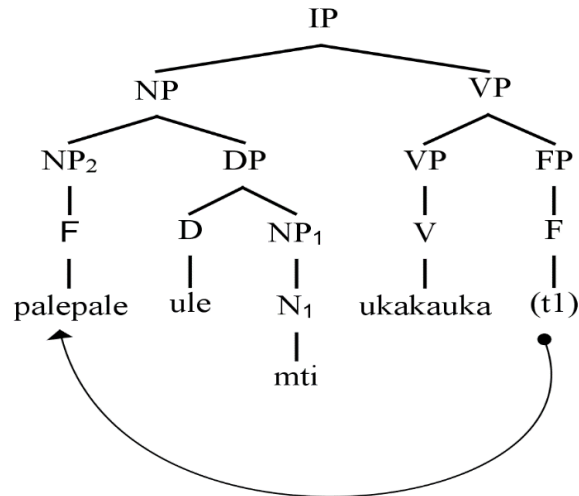
Figure 7: Focus on Adverb Left Dislocation

In Figure 7, the adverb *palepale* is displaced from the right edge of the verb and positioned after the subject *ule mti*. This movement adheres to the prepositioning and adjunction principle of PFS Theory. Thus, left-dislocated elements connect to the left edge of the sister node through sister adjunction principles. The placement before the subject represents ex-situ positioning for adverbs in Swahili, implemented for focusing purposes through left dislocation.

5 Conclusion and recommendation

This paper synthesises three principal findings related to left dislocation in Swahili. First, left dislocation represents a syntactic movement of constituents, maintaining the sentence's original meaning. While certain elements are repositioned from in situ to ex-situ, the sentence conveys equivalent meaning. The distinction between standard and inverted structures lies primarily in their information structure, where inverted structures convey new, highlighted, or emphasised information. Unlike other syntactic movements for focus, such as clefting, left dislocation in Swahili does not alter the type of sentence. Additionally, left dislocation in Swahili allows for any constituents present in situ at the right edge of the verb argument to be left dislocated. Notably, agents in Swahili cannot be left dislocated, as they typically occupy the left edge of the verb in their natural position. In instances with double objects, only one object (typically the direct object) can be left dislocated in Swahili. Lastly, Swahili has been classified as a non-resumptive language. This entails that there is no pronoun resumption of left-dislocated elements in the vacated site, a feature present in other languages, such as English and Zulu. In Swahili, left-dislocated elements utilise object markers incorporated within the verb. Therefore, Swahili employs a clitic object marker as in Luganda and Arusa. In cases of left dislocation of prepositional phrases, infinitives, locatives, and adverbs, there is often a bare object marking unless an object is left dislocated. Ultimately, the findings underscore the key characteristics and functions of left dislocation in Swahili, providing valuable contributions to the ongoing scholarly discourse on syntactic phenomena in Bantu languages. Furthermore, dislocation is subdivided into left and right dislocations as indicated in the introductory part. Overall, the current study examined the syntax of left dislocation in Swahili, focusing on its types, functions, and properties. Further studies can focus on right dislocation as the

counterpart mechanism of argument movement of simple sentence elements. This is because the status of left dislocation in Swahili complex and compound sentences is unknown. In some contexts, Swahili simple sentences with left-dislocated elements are used to construct complex and compound sentences. Other scholars can focus on this to bridge the existence gap. Again, the current study was limited to *argument* focus within left dislocation. Further researchers can highlight other types of focus, such as predicate focus and sentence focus with dislocation. Lastly, there are various mechanisms of moving sentence elements from one position to another, such as topicalization, preposing and postposing. The current study was limited to left dislocation. Other researchers and scholars can focus on these mechanisms by reflecting on the information structure.

6 References

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Notes

List of abbreviations:

1. PASS=Passive, 2. APPL= Applicative, 3. CAUS = Causative, 4. SM = Subject marker, 5. OM = Object marker, 6. FV = Final vowel, 7. REC = Reciprocal, 8. NTM= Narrative Tense Marker, 9. PRT = Present, 10. LOC = Locative, 11.INF = Infinitive, 12. RM = Relative marker, 13. STV = Stative, 14. NS = Nominalizer suffix, 15. IP = Inflectional phrase, 16. FP = Focus phrase, 17. PP = Prepositional phrase, 18. COP = Copula, 19. NP = Noun phrase, 20. VP = Verb phrase, 21. PF. = Present aspect, 22. REV = Reversive marker, 23.CM= Conditional marker, 24. SVO = Subject-Verb-Object. Numbers alongside the nouns indicate the noun class of a particular noun (Morphologically)

The Change in Personal Names and Naming Practices in the Iraqw Speech Community

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Abstract

Personal names and naming customs have changed in the contemporary Iraqw speech community. Most members of the Iraqw speech community today bear foreign names in their formal domain. This is revealed in aspects such as official documents, hospitals, and schools. The traditional naming customs and naming ceremonies for newborns have also evolved. Prior to the implementation of these modifications, the Iraqw speech community's traditional names and naming customs were based on customary ceremonies and rituals. This descriptive qualitative study was conducted in Karatu District, Arusha Region, to analyse the reasons behind changes in personal names and naming customs within the Iraqw speech community. Although many studies, including Arega (2016), Lusekelo and Muro (2018), and Mensa et al. (2020), have examined changes in personal names across different languages, the causes of these changes in the Iraqw language have not been adequately addressed. This study was grounded by the Communication Accommodation Theory. The data for this study were collected from Iraqw native speakers from three schools and two villages in Karatu District. The two villages and their respective schools were purposefully selected because of their limited interaction with other speech communities. To achieve the study's objective, a semi-structured interview was conducted with 50 informants from the two villages. These were selected through purposive sampling, and the number was determined using the saturation principle to determine an appropriate sample size. The school register books were also reviewed from the three schools, and the collected data were analysed thematically. The study found that foreign religions, specifically Christianity and Islam, as well as the Swahili language, have had a significant influence on Iraqw names. Other factors driving changes in Iraqw names include personal preference, mispronunciation, and spelling errors. Thus, this study suggests that, since Iraqw traditional names are potential lexicons in the Iraqw language, initiatives should be taken to safeguard the remaining Iraqw traditional names.

Keywords: Change in personal names, naming practices, naming dynamics, Iraqw

1 Introduction

Tanzania is a multilingual nation with 156 native languages, including Iraqw (Muzale & Rubagumya, 2008; LoT, 2009). The Iraqw language is historically a branch of the Southern Cushitic subfamily of East Africa, specifically Tanzania, and a member of the Afro-Asiatic language family (Greenberg, 1963, as cited by Mous, 1993; Kiesling, 2000). In Tanzania, the Iraqw society is concentrated in the northern highlands, located around 3°25 'and 4°30' South and 35° and 36° East longitude, which includes the Manyara Region and a portion of the Arusha Region (Mous, 1993; Alphonce, 2010, 2016). The primary economic activity for this society is agropastoralism.

Names are important language lexicons and labels assigned to sets or individual items, emphasising their significance across all speech communities (Al-Qawasmi & Al-Haq, 2016). Thus, names and naming practices are important aspects in any society worldwide. This is maintained by Chauke (2015) and Alphonce (2023) that personal naming is a universal and cultural practice, and each society in the world bestows a name to the child as an identity. Watzlawik *et al.* (2016) and Arega (2016) add that a personal name is both considered an identity and a way of distinguishing one individual from others. Agyekum (2006) adds that a personal name is a name given to a child to recognise, know, and differentiate a person from other members of the speech community. Apart from serving as an identity marker, personal names are also lexical items that convey profound information about one's circumstances of birth, sex, family hierarchy, day of birth, and the seasons of the year (Fakuade et al., 2018; Alphonce, 2023). Moreover, personal names convey the history and culture of a society in which they are used (Chauke, 2015). Additionally, African names are deeply rooted in their respective languages and cultures (Ehineni, 2019). Mutunda (2016) supports this argument by stating that, in the African context, a personal name is viewed as a message a name giver communicates to the society through the name bearer, and it is also considered a document that people read about the history and cultural heritage of a particular society in time and space. Mensah et al. (2020) support the idea that African personal names are imaginative cultural emblems that symbolise events, conflicts, or situations with strong historical resonances. Personal names thus embody a corpus of knowledge encompassing language, history, philosophy, spirituality, and worldview, among other facets of African culture. Moreover, personal names are believed to have a significant influence over their bearers' behaviour, emotions, and thoughts, as well as how other people perceive and react to them (Mensah et al., 2020; Fakuade et al., 2018).

Recently, many African societies have undergone a significant shift in personal names and naming customs. In this regard, scholars such as Arega (2016), Mensal et al. (2020), Aribowo and Herawati (2016), and Lusekelo and Muro (2018) point out that people in some societies have abandoned their traditional names and naming customs in favour of foreign and religious names, including Christian and Islamic ones. They posit that the abandonment of traditional names and naming customs has been the result of colonialism, political pressures, individual preferences, and cultural denial. For instance, Neethling (2003) argues that colonialism influenced changes in personal names within Xhosa society. Ngubane and Thabethe (2013) and Fakuade et al. (2018) report that religious influence has led to changes in personal names and naming practices. Agbontaen-Eghafona (2007) notes that African cultural commitments loosened due to social and religious imperialistic attitudes. The religious notion is that African names are challenging and do not fit into contemporary culture. These arguments significantly influenced modern African naming customs because religious imperialism compelled African societies to abandon their traditional names and naming practices. Thus, Christian followers adopted Christian names, naming, and baptism rituals instead of

traditional naming practices (Mensah et al., 2020; Arega, 2016). Similarly, Islamic naming customs and rites were embraced by people converted to Islam (Fakuade et al., 2018; Aribowo & Herawati, 2016).

Moreover, in some societies, the adoption of modern personal names and naming customs was influenced by political factors (Arega, 2016; Fakuade et al., 2018). This is supported by Arega (2016), who reports that the political pressure to abandon the use of Ethiopia's minority language led the Wolaita Society of Ethiopia to adopt religious and Amharic names and naming rituals instead of their own. Likewise, Fakuade et al. (2018) document that between the 1950s and the 1970s, the government forcibly transferred the Alune people of eastern Indonesia to the Malay speech community. According to Fakuade et al. (2018), the Alune community abandoned its traditional customs and adopted modern names from Islam, Christianity, and the Malay language. Once more, political advancements led the Batonu society to renounce its traditional names and adopt the Islamic names of the Hausa and Fulani groups (Fakuade et al., 2018).

Furthermore, Mensah et al. (2020) note that young people in modern Nigerian society are motivated to change their first names based on personal preferences, as they feel uncomfortable with the names their parents gave them. Presently, the majority of Iraqw society members are naming their children after modern religions and foreign languages. They have neither adopted names that represent their language, customs, or culture, nor adopted value-adding names in the context of their social culture. Many studies, such as those by Lusekelo and Muro (2018), Arega (2016), Fakuade et al. (2018), and Mensah et al. (2020), among others, have addressed the issue of change in personal names and naming customs across different societies. However, the area of change in personal names and naming practices in the Iraqw language has received less attention. Indeed, Alphonce (2023) studied Iraqw names, with a focus on traditional names and naming customs. Hence, this academic lacuna prompted scholars of this paper to investigate the causes of the shift in naming customs and personal names in the Iraqw society. This study is important to linguists and other scholarly communities as it brings to attention the contemporary personal names and the causes of the shift in personal names and naming customs within the Iraqw speech community.

2 Methodology

This is a qualitative study conducted in Karatu District, Arusha Region, Tanzania. The study employed purposive sampling to select participants from Masabeda and Endala villages in the Endamarariek Ward. The study interviewed the first to the fiftieth person at which the saturation point was reached. The 50 informants were aged 25 years and above, and were native speakers of Iraqw, born, raised, and still living in Karatu District. The criteria were purposively chosen to ensure the selection of Iraqw native speakers, with minimal interaction with other speech communities. This means that the data were collected in a natural environment. The gathered data were about Iraqw names, naming customs, and the factors that led to the shift in Iraqw personal names and naming practices. Likewise, the researchers reviewed registries from three schools: Masabeda, Endala, and Manusay to check the extent of change in personal names.

The analysis of the collected data followed the thematic steps suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006) as cited in Dawadi (2020). The researchers began by familiarising themselves with the data, coding it, identifying themes, revising the themes, and writing the report. Meanwhile, the researchers abided by all the research ethical principles. In this article, the reasons for the change in personal names and naming are explained through the Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) developed

by Giles (2016). The theory explains how people adapt their language to accommodate others' language when communicating, particularly in multilingual contexts, to create a welcoming atmosphere for a diverse range of speakers. CAT highlights that communication is more than just exchanging ideas; it is also about forming meaningful interactions through accommodation. According to Giles (2016) and Gudykunst (1995), this adaptation may entail adopting conversation partner-like behaviours, synchronising language and communication patterns, and conforming to non-native speaker standards in pronunciation. Concerning names and naming practices, CAT sheds light on how linguistic modifications lead to changes in given names in various cultural contexts. It demonstrates how people's linguistic adaptations mirror larger social interactions and influence the development of naming conventions. The CAT principle is evident in the observed changes in names and naming practices in the modern Iraqw speech community. For example, the Iraqw speakers who have adopted foreign religions have switched to religious names as an effort to foster connection, communication, and unification with modern religious leaders. This aligns with the Communication Accommodation Principle, which posits that meaningful communication is closely tied to interaction and accommodation among interlocutors (Giles, 2016). Dragojevic, Gasiorek, and Giles (2015) argue that long-term accommodation is a fundamental mechanism of language evolution that affects changes in name pronunciation and spelling over time, including the potential for hybrid names to emerge. Thus, due to long-term accommodation, some members of the Iraqw speech community have changed their traditional personal names and naming customs to non-native ones. The following sections present data analysis, highlighting the reasons for the change in personal names and the sources of personal names in the Iraqw society.

3 Findings and discussion

The researchers gathered 1025 names from Endala, Masabeda, and Manusay primary schools. The selection of names per school was determined by the saturation point, a point at which the researchers could no longer find new information. The researchers analysed three sets of names, including those of the students, parents, and their clans or grandparents, as seen in Table 1.

Table 1: **Findings from the three schools' registers**

Name of school	First names		Second name		Third name		Total
	Native	Non-native	Native	Non-native	Native	Non-native	
Endala	4	549	55	495	364	189	553
Masabeda	3	226	39	190	217	12	229
Manusay	2	241	45	198	208	35	243

Source: Field Data, 2024.

The analysis reveals that a sizeable number of students have foreign names. According to data gathered from the school registration, only 9 (0.87%) out of the 1025 (100%) names in the first column are traditional names. In the second column, 136 (13%) out of 1025 (100%) names were the traditional names. In the third column, 789 (76.97%) names out of 1025 (100%) names were traditional names. This suggests a significant shift in personal names, indicating that the practice of changing them began a long time ago and evolved gradually over time. This is supported by data from the third name column, where there is little change in personal names compared to the second and first columns, which show a continuous change of native names.

To identify the causes of the shift in personal names within the Iraqw community, the researchers conducted 50 semi-structured interviews with Iraqw native speakers in their natural settings. Most of the questions were open-ended, designed to enable respondents to provide insightful information. The interviews focused on the shift in naming customs and personal names within the Iraqw community. The findings from the semi-structured interviews indicated that factors such as the Christian religion, the Swahili language, individual preferences, mispronunciations, and incorrect spellings of names contributed to the shift in personal names and naming practices in the Iraqw society. Likewise, the scrutiny of school registry records revealed that personal names are derived mainly from foreign names in Swahili culture and modern religions, such as Islam and Christianity. This suggests that personal names have changed due to parents' and guardians' preferences, and the names being used in formal settings do not accurately represent the Iraqw language and culture. In other words, foreign names derived from religious names (Christian and Islamic) and foreign languages have replaced the traditional Iraqw names. The next sections present data, analysis and discussion of the identified contemporary name sources in Iraqw society.

3.1 Christian religion

The results showed that the Christian religion had a significant impact on the shift in personal names and naming practices in the Iraqw society. The analysis showed that many people in the Iraqw society changed their names after converting to Christianity. The analysis of the interview data revealed that 47 out of 50 informants, or 96%, attributed the name changes to the influence of the Christian religion. For instance, one of the informants, during the field interview, gave the following reasons for changing his name:

> *Aning' uma unawaqes niwaba/aam, bara kanisaro umu'do' kuslaika amsa takay a umu'pakanay ne o giwi. Daxaa niwaba/aam tinabatisus tari umu diniri' hanis, tay lari an umu ni tumiumis.*

> "I am now a born-again Christian; thus, I have changed my name because traditional Iraqw names are dark and pagan. Thus, the church forbids people from using their traditional names. A Christian name, which I currently use, was given to me right away after my baptism" (Researchers' translation)

The quotation above supports the idea that traditional names are perceived as evil and pagan by Christian preachers. The preachers have influenced most of the Iraqw natives to believe that baptism and naming are prerequisites for a Christian's transformation from darkness to light. They have convinced them that the devil would readily torment them if they kept their identities. As a result, most of the Iraqw converts to Christianity had abandoned their traditional names. Regarding this, one informant had this to say:

> *Aning' bar umue o do' ukom ka inslahh tiwaidahi ne qeremoda netlame ne awa gii, asma umudu do' a koin aning' i haragamis ne inoin, sleme tam i bara saling'win kudu gii ani i ara arir asma umu doin u kom. Daxaa niwaba/aam umue unawarqes ar gidabani netlaangw,qerema tlawku ne gii kahhoo anislay aaka.*

> "Since my name links me to my ancestors, it is easy for the evil ancestors' spirit to torment me when I have a traditional name. I, therefore, got saved and changed my name

to make myself invisible to the devil, demons, and spirits of my ancestors. Indeed, they cannot see me because the conduit that links us has been cut" (Researchers' Translation).

The quotation shows that some Christians consider their Christian names as shields from evil spirits, demonic attacks and ancestral influences. This emphasises the idea that altering one's name affects one's social and personal identity. So, by taking on contemporary religious names, people essentially cut off their connections to ancestors and protect themselves from spiritual harm. According to the informant, having a traditional name makes people open to the devil's influences, while taking on a new name assures them of their loyalty to Jesus and provides defence against the spirits of danger. This implies that church teachings compel Iraqw Christians to switch to non-native names. By linking traditional names with evil ancestor spirits, the teachings instil fear, leading followers to seek out names believed to be holy. As a result, the use of traditional names has decreased noticeably, while Christian names have increased in popularity. Moreover, the Iraqw parents continuously hesitate to name their children after departed family members. This is also attributed to Christianity, which claims that naming customs might pass down unwanted traits from departed family members to the offspring. In connection with this, one of the Lutheran Church members, a father of six kids, gave his viewpoint during the interview:

> *Ni/iiee slemerow umu'er do' ng'ikonaaka, asma aslaaka dabema tlawk ng'iwa bara umuesingwa slayee. Tina do' kanisaraa intsahhamis argidabani umu'uer Iraqw ne dabema muksu umuer loo ti alkakonaa. Takay umu'ue muk uren i bademaa tlawk ne qerema netlame alwarahhamis. Asma muksu'u umu'er lo'o aning' bademoin i xuaaka, ne gar ang' na haratlintair anaxuaka sleme, an gar aning' ni/iiee ng'isa umuesingi hanisika.*

> "I have not given any of my children traditional names because I did not want them to inherit the bad behaviour of others. The church has taught us that bad habits like drinking, theft, hooliganism, and witchcraft are passed down from one generation to the next through traditional names. Therefore, my children cannot inherit those relatives' names because I am unaware of their behaviours and their gods" (Researchers' Translation).

The quotation above suggests that the speaker is a member of the Lutheran Church and follows the teachings that associate traditional names with evil spirits. It is for this that he chose religious names for his children. The findings imply that the Iraqw community's adoption of the contemporary religious names is due to religious beliefs. One of the responses from a Roman Catholic believer when asked about the reason behind the naming convention and personal name change is given below:

> *Aning' umu'e unawarqes niwa bara Krishaniumaridah, asma bara kanisaro umu'er do' kaslaika. Bar he kubatisumis aqo umu hesi o do' kun yahas, kuri goin ne umu dini kuri sahanis.Tam no/oo nina bar kubatisumis aqo adosing' sleme, alo o ta atetin dokanisaro aqo kudu do kanisa.*

> "I changed my name because the church prohibits the use of traditional names. The church leader gives you a Christian name during the baptism, after first asking your

> chosen conventional name and writing it down. They also do the same to young children, and they address congregations by their Christian names" (Researchers' Translation).

As shown in this quote, people who join the Roman Catholic Church change their names because they are not allowed to use their traditional names within the church. Both traditional and Christian names are recorded during baptism, highlighting the denomination's embrace of traditional naming practices. Nevertheless, the church addresses its followers by their religious names. Although the Roman Catholic Church acknowledges traditional names, it conforms to the belief that Iraqw names are not fundamentally Christian. As for born-again Christians, regardless of their denomination, believers completely renounce their traditional names, thereby highlighting the profound impact of religious doctrine on naming customs.

Moreover, the above quotation highlights how members of specific Christian denominations are influenced to view traditional names negatively, leading them to advocate for their abandonment. According to Groop (2006) and Christian (2017), Christian missionaries arrived in Karatu in the 20th century. Due to this, many Iraqw native speakers who were living in Karatu at the time were converted to Christianity by these missionaries' proclamation of the message of salvation. After accepting Jesus, those people got Christian names and were baptised. As Christianity continued to spread, most people in the community converted to Christianity and changed their names.

Adopting Christian names emphasises a change in identity, which is the main objective for followers, based on Christian scriptures and baptismal customs. Christian doctrines hold that renaming someone represents a spiritual metamorphosis and a departure from customs, that is, distancing oneself from pagan beliefs. Breaking links with customs, initiation rituals, and idol worship is a necessary part of embracing Christianity. Christian denominations, such as Pentecostal and some born-again Lutherans and Roman Catholics, emphasise that there is a link between traditional names and spiritual domains and therefore believe that following traditional customs exposes people to demonic and ancestor spirits. The Iraqw speech community, having been exposed to the teaching of modern religions, adopted foreign names, naming and the rituals of giving non-native names to newborn children or elders.

This is not unique to the Iraqw society; Mensah et al. (2020) described an analogous situation in Nigeria, where people altered their initial names to reflect their Christian faith. Many Nigerians were converted from their traditional beliefs to Christianity after the arrival of Orthodox and Pentecostal missionaries, who brought the gospel of salvation to the country during the 19th and 20th centuries. Many of them then altered their names to reflect their newfound Christian faith. Arega (2016) adds that the priest was the name-giver to the bearer when the Wolaita society in Ethiopia altered their names to reflect their Christian beliefs. Furthermore, Fakuade et al. (2018) clarify that following their conversion to Islam, the Batonu community abandoned their old names and traditions in favour of Islamic ones. This only suggests that many communities throughout the world, including the Iraqw society, have changed their names and naming customs because of religion.

3.2 The influence of the Swahili language

The analysis revealed that some members of the Iraqw language community have been Swahilised by the formal contexts, such as schools, hospitals, and workplaces. Such names include Shauri, Upendo, Safari, and other Swahilized names, such as Joni, Vitalisi, Karani, and Paskali. During the

interview, 40 out of 50 informants, which is equal to 80%, responded that the majority of the Iraqw community members were aware of and found the Swahili orthography to be simple. The reason for this is that schools teach Swahili orthography, but not Iraqw orthography. As a result, Iraqw orthography is unfamiliar to both non-native speakers and most native speakers of the Iraqw language. This prompts a switch from traditional names to Swahilised names on the grounds of the simplicity of the orthography. One of the informants gave evidence for the influence of Swahili on the Iraqw naming as follows:

> *Muk yari tsifri Kiswahili ga loir xu'u asma ka insla'ahh, ne kar loa ar axwees, tam ni/iiren awanawk sleme ng'in ar axwesir. Daxaa Kiswahili adorqa'a muk yari ng'iwaxui, m'u umu'er Kiswahili gana a/ansu'u tsatingo'dir ni/iin, asma ka'inslahha goiro ne atentingo, tam he tsifrir Iraqw gaxuaka sleme ga aslay goiro.Umu'er Kiswahili ka inslahh, ar Iraqw ka gawden loa ale dir mukdu tsifri' hatlae.*

> "Many people know and speak Swahili because it is an easy language, and even our younger children can speak it. Since many people know how to write in Swahili, currently, parents give their children Swahilised names allegedly because they are easy to write and pronounce, unlike Iraqw names, which are often challenging to write and pronounce" (Researchers' Translation).

The above excerpt demonstrates that most Iraqw society members are proficient in both spoken and written Swahili, which influences their naming practices. The argument aligns with Swilla (2000) and Lusekelo (2020), who suggest that Swahili is a dominant language in Tanzania. It serves as a lingua franca across various domains, including hospitals, schools, churches, higher learning institutions, courts, and marketplaces, and is spoken by most Tanzanians. They add that due to its widespread use, services are predominantly offered in Swahili, and children learn and use it as a medium of instruction in schools. Therefore, it has permeated all aspects of society and thus become easier for contemporary Iraqw people to adopt its aspects, including its naming system.

The arguments reveal how parents choose Swahili names over native names for their children. Most Iraqw natives are familiar with Swahili graphemes, which leads to the adoption of Swahilised names. Iraqw people find Swahili phonemes easier to use compared to Iraqw phonemes. Batibo (2005) supports the argument that Swahili, being the dominant language, has a greater influence on the minority Iraqw language than any counterforce. Due to this imbalance, Swahili is more prevalent and has led to a recent rise in the number of Iraqw people's names. Some of the Swahili/Swahilised names adopted by the contemporary Iraqw society are Tatu, Zawadi, Jumanne, Fikiri, Arusha, Shauri, Karani, Vitalis, Safari, and Mawazo. It is interesting to notice that names like Moshi and Arusha were once place names but are now used for people. This suggests that Swahili has a considerable influence on the contemporary names of the Iraqw.

Lusekelo and Muro (2018) found, like in the Iraqw society, that the Machame-Chagga of Kilimanjaro would equally prefer Swahilised names for their children rather than the traditional Machame names. This is because Swahili is widely used as a lingua franca in Tanzania, and most speakers of Iraqw are conversant in both written and spoken forms of the language. This illustrates the broader influence of dominant languages on traditions surrounding personal naming in minority language societies.

The result aligns with Arega (2016), who reported a similar phenomenon in contemporary Wolaita society in Ethiopia, where individuals adopted Amharic names due to the greater influence of the Amharic language over the Wolaita language. In a similar vein, Mensah et al. (2020) observed that some modern Nigerians choose English names because of the widespread popularity of English over their native languages. The pattern illustrates how powerful languages have an impact on local languages.

3.3 Personal taste or interest

The data analysis indicates that changing one's name is primarily influenced by personal preference in the modern Iraqw language community. Mensah et al. (2020) describe personal taste as an individual's choice or preference about their name. In contemporary Iraqw society, parents choose names more often according to personal taste than taking traditional connotations into account. Even while some parents may not know the significance of the names selected, they nevertheless find them endearing. For example, some names were derived from politicians, including Barack Obama, the former US president, and Wilbroad, the former Karatu Member of Parliament. Other names were adopted from gospel singers, like Rose, Travis, and Boni. Conscientiously, some parents selected these names in the hope that their children would achieve success like those of their role models. The pattern illustrates how individual preferences influence naming customs in contemporary Iraqw society. The informants' response below indicates that the adoption of contemporary personal names is heavily influenced by personal preference:

> *Qart'i deemaka umu'er /aben ar tsifri hatla'a ga loowaslaa igumisuwo, umue toin ne tsifriro ng'iloir waqaqair. Bahhale ni/iin ng'a umu'er 43u kia tleri' hanisir, ar gidabani ni/iin binda urarayee' sleme i ador muksi iatle'r tlehharutir. Slaqas umu Baraka a kudu Obamawoke, ne kudu Wilbodi, a kundu ang' o gitladu mbunge. Ne umuer dauser injili a ador tidar Rozi, Travisi, Boni.*

> "Instead of using their conventional names, this generation likes to copy and paste the names of their interests from other languages to their children. Some parents have named their children after leaders' names, for example, Baraka from Barack who was the president of the US, Wilbrodi, from Wilbroad who was the Karatu MP, and artists, realizing names such as Rozi, Travis, Boni, and other famous people, thinking that their children will follow in the footsteps of the name bearers and become wealthy and well-known" (Researchers' Translation).

This excerpt suggests that Iraqw speakers currently give more preference to the names of leaders and artists than to customary naming practices. As such, traditional and cultural naming norms based on specific situations or seasons are gradually diminishing. Consequently, local names are now primarily used informally within families, rather than in official settings. This implies that people's free and independent naming decisions may lead to a disconnection between names and the cultural history associated with them.

The study's analysis reveals that naming practices in the Iraqw cultural community have changed from being based on social functions, seasons, and places of birth. Instead, parents now choose names for their children based on their preferences. On the other hand, elderly people who adopted Christianity also chose names that reflected their interests. As a result, contemporary Iraqw personal

names no longer represent past customs and sociocultural experiences. The finding is consistent with Aribowo and Herawati (2016), who observed that members of modern Javanese society adopted names from Arab culture after converting to Islam, often at the expense of their traditional Javanese names. Similarly, Mensah et al. (2020) found that some individuals in Nigeria chose their own names rather than accepting the customary names given to them by their parents. This suggests a more widespread tendency in which modernisation is influencing cultural identity and personal naming customs in various societies.

3.4 Mispronunciation and incorrect spelling

The study found mispronunciation as a pivotal factor influencing the evolution of personal names within the Iraqw speech community. People tend to deviate from customary naming conventions by altering the sounds, structures, and written forms of names to conform to the linguistic norms of the dominant language or cultural context. Dali et al. (2022) note that mispronunciation and improper spelling of names can erode one's sense of identity and evoke feelings of marginalisation, undervaluation, isolation, and language difficulties. Mensah et al. (2020) support that mispronouncing names can lead to animosity, nervousness, and social disengagement.

The analysis in this study reveals instances in contemporary Iraqw speech communities where non-native speakers often mispronounce individuals' traditional names. These incidents occur more frequently in formal settings, such as churches, companies, hospitals, and schools, where interactions with non-native speakers are most common. Based on his own experience, an elderly man reported that even his medical acquaintances mispronounced his name, as supported by this quote:

> *Molqar' ee umu'ue o do' ngun lo'owa dakumisir. Aning' umu'e a Daqro, Molqamoe koko gar'ir ateti´n a Dakaro, o'hatlaa gar'ir atetin a Lazaro. Muki gar umue'ng'us dakumis iya/amut sauti 'q' bara tsifrir doin´e i'kahh. An gar'ng'is aleslaslay'aka. Aluo umu'e unawarqes, daxa ham´i umue a Lazaro.*

> "My name is mispronounced by my friends. Although my name is Daqro, one of my friends calls me Dakaro, and another calls me Lazaro, which means I have an entirely new name. This could be the result of their language not having the sound **q**, which makes it difficult for them to pronounce it. I eventually had to change my name, and now I go by Lazaro" (Researchers' translation).

The above quote illustrates how language barriers significantly impact communication and one's sense of identity. The choice to use Lazaro illustrates a practical strategy for easing communication and highlights the value of flexibility in negotiating linguistic differences. The finding proves that individuals from the Iraqw language community often change the pronunciation of their names to match that of non-native speakers as a means of simplification. For instance, /Hhawu/ becomes /hawu/, /Ni/ima/ becomes /niima/, and /Sla/a/ becomes /silaa/. To simplify pronunciation for non-native speakers, this change risks altering the pronunciation and potentially erasing the distinctive Iraqw sound. The finding vividly illustrates how someone's continuous mispronunciation of a name drove the name bearer to seek a change for more straightforward pronunciation. This is supported by Giles (2016), who states that people adjust language and communication styles for synchronisation and conform pronunciation to non-native speakers' norms.

Additionally, another participant brought to attention the fact that non-native speakers often miswrite Iraqw names because they are unfamiliar with some Iraqw sounds. The following is a quote from his observation:

> *Muuk yari o' Irqwarok'a umu'er Iraqw ga loa hhititin goir'o ne atetingo. Slaqas mwalimu bara shule umu' ako doren gunadakus goiro qomar umu' dasir 'er ng'uwagoin do' shulero. Umu'u akodoren a Qashan, Mwalimu bara goiro gar a goini a Kwashan, aning'adoda ng'iwa ar mwalimu unabaw umu'u akodoren adorkur goin are adosingeka. Alo analaqam ador umu'u ako' kurgoin.*

> "Many people miswrite Iraqw names, especially non-Iraqws. For instance, when registering my daughter for school, a teacher miswrote my father's name. Rather than writing Qashan, she wrote Kwashan. When I realised it, I had to go back to school to guide the teacher in writing the name" (Researchers' Translation) correctly.

This instance illustrates how misspellings affect personal names within the Iraqw community, leading to name changes, as evident in the incorrect spelling of Qashan as Kwashan. Accordingly, the researchers gathered misspelt personal names from both schools and the village register book, as listed in Table 2.

Table 2: Misspelt Iraqw personal names

Original Spelling	Misspelt	Changes
/Awaki	Awaki	Dropping /
/Alay	Alay	Dropping /
Bo/ay	Boay or Boho	Dropping /, strange substitution of -ay with ho
Bee'e	Bee	Dropping '
Si'ma	Sima	Dropping '
Hhayuma	Hayuma	Changing hh to h
Hhoki	Hoki	Changing hh to h
Qashan	Kwashan or Kashan	Changing q to kw or k
Qamu	Kamu	Changing q to k
Sla/a	Silaa	Changing sl to si and dropping /
Xumay	Humay	Changing x to h
Axweso	Akweso	Changing x to k
Tsafu	Safu	Changing ts to s
Tsere	Sere	Changing ts to s
Matle	Mate	Changing tl to t
Tluwa	Tuwa or Tuluway	Changing tl to t and inserting extra graphene

The data in Table 2 shows that both non-native and some native speakers often write Iraqw personal names inaccurately due to their lack of knowledge of the graphemes. As demonstrated in Table 2, names such as 'Bo/ay' become 'Boay,' which illustrates the dropping of specific graphemes or replacing them with equivalents, and the introduction of irregular forms. Two key findings stand out: Firstly, there is a consistent omission of graphemes representing the glottal stop /ʔ/ (written as ') and the pharyngealised plosive /ʕ/ (written as /) in a written discourse of personal names due to

the lack of equivalence conventions in Swahili and English. Secondly, there is a propensity for simplification, frequently involving vowel insertions and splitting of double graphemes. Here, Iraqw graphemes are replaced with their Swahili and English equivalents as seen in the given examples: 'ts' for 's', 'hh' for 'h', 'tl' for 't', 'sl' for's', 'q' for 'k' or 'kw', and 'x' for 'h'. The study also found that the absence of capital letters for the glottal stop ʔ and pharyngeal ʕ complicates their use in Iraqw orthography, making it awkward to start names with symbols like ˈ for /ʔ/ and / for /ʕ/.

Simplification techniques can result in the misspelling of Iraqw personal names due to a lack of understanding of Iraqw graphemes and the absence of comparable graphemes in languages such as English and Swahili. Misspelt names are common on many written platforms, including school register books. This situation is made worse by the fact that schools do not teach the Iraqw language, which means that many natives and most non-natives do not have the knowledge needed to write Iraqw names correctly. The absence of direct Roman counterparts for some consonant sounds, mixed with a lack of literacy and writing experience, makes it difficult to pronounce and write Iraqw names appropriately. For example, non-native speakers find it challenging to pronounce Iraqw sounds because some sounds are absent in their native languages. When introducing oneself to non-native speakers, Iraqw people pronounce their names to ensure intelligibility and to make the names easier to pronounce. During the field interview, native speakers gave a list of names whose sounds have no direct equivalents in contact languages, leading to frequent mispronunciation by non-native speakers. The list is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Mispronounced Iraqw personal names

Original Sound	Mispronounced	Changes
/ʕawaki/	/awaki/	Dropping /ʕ/
/beeʔe/	/bee/	Dropping /ʔ/
/siʔma/	/sima/	Dropping /ʔ/
/ħayuma/	/hayuma/	Changing /ħ/ to /h/
/ħoki/	/hoki/	Changing /ħ/ to /h/
/qashan/	/kwashan or *Kashan*/	Changing q/ to /kw/ or /k/
/qamu/	/kamu/	Changing /q/ to /k/
/ɬaʕa/	/silaa/	Changing /ɬ/ to /s/ and dropping /ʕ/
/xumay/	/humay/	Changing /x/ to /h/
/axweso/	/akweso/	Changing /x/ to /k/
/tsafu/	/safu/	Changing /ts/ to /s/
/tsere/	/sere/	Changing /ts/ to /s/
/matɬe/	/mate/ or /*matile*/	Changing /tɬ/ to /t/ or inserting a vowel to break a consonant cluster tl
/tɬuwa/	/tuwa/ or /*tuluway*/	Changing /tɬ/ to /t/ or inserting a vowel to break a consonant cluster tl

Table 3 shows the cases in which the pharyngealised plosive /ʕ/ and the glottal stop sound /ʔ/ are not capitalised because they are represented as symbols and their orthography is not familiar to many users. The pharyngeal fricative sound /ħ/ is replaced with /h/, the palatal ejective fricative sound /tɬ/ is replaced with /t/, and vowels are inserted to separate clusters. Moreover, the velar fricative /x/ is replaced with /h/ or /k/, and the alveolar ejective affricate /ts/ is replaced with /s/. The ovular stop

sound /q/ is replaced with /k/ or /kw/, and the alveolar lateral fricative /ɬ/ is replaced with /s/ or by inserting vowels to break the consonant cluster.

The analysis suggests that the mispronunciation of Iraqw personal names contributes to the observed changes in personal names within the Iraqw society. It shows that individuals adapt their names to avoid phonotactic constraints in contact languages. Nonetheless, the accommodation leads to changes in pronunciation and spelling of Iraqw names.

A similar finding is reported by Mensah et al. (2020), who conducted a study in Nigeria and found cases where people changed their names because non-native speakers had difficulty pronouncing and writing them correctly. As a result of their irritation with the frequent corrections, some individuals decided to simplify their names to prevent further mistakes, as it made them feel alienated and discriminated against (Holbrook, 2017). In Ethiopia (Arega, 2016) and among the Batonu society in Nigeria (Fakuade et al., 2018), name changes are influenced by political and economic circumstances. Overall, alterations in personal names gradually dilute the unique phonetic characteristics of the Iraqw language and cultural identity. In this regard, there is a need for devising ways to preserve authentic grammar and spelling, which is crucial for safeguarding the linguistic distinctiveness of the Iraqw language.

4 Conclusion

The findings of this study demonstrate that personal names have evolved from traditional to modern forms. In traditional Iraqw society, names were derived from numerous factors, including the circumstances of a child's birth, the seasons of the year, the duration of the day, and the local fauna and flora. In contrast, the results from the school's registers indicate that names in modern Iraqw society are derived from the Swahili language or rather are influenced by the Swahili language and foreign religions (Christianity and Islam). The analysis of the school's registry reveals that, in the column of clan or grandparent's names, 789 (76.97%) out of 1025 (100%) names were traditional, and in the column of parents' names, 136 (13%) out of 1025 (100%) names were traditional. In the column of first names or students' names, 9 (0.87%) out of 1025 (100%) names were traditional names. This demonstrates how personal names are changing from traditional to foreign in contemporary Iraqw society. The study's findings revealed factors influencing the change in personal names within the contemporary Iraqw speech community, including mispronunciation and improper spelling, the Christian religion, the Swahili language, and personal taste. Considering these findings, the study suggests that urgent measures be taken, including the documentation of these customs for future reference. Furthermore, the Iraqw society should be made aware of the importance of preserving its traditional names, languages, and cultures to maintain its identity, pride, and continuity.

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Exploring Gender Honorifics in Tanzanian Sign Language: Cultural and Linguistic Perspectives

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Abstract

Sign Language is the primary mode of communication among members of the deaf community. Sign language is not only influenced by sex distinctions but also reflects the general concern about language and gender equality. That is, analysing sign language can unveil rich insights on how social identities are constructed and communicated within a deaf community. Sign language, as a tool for the transmission of deaf culture, bears cultural influence in both the formation of signs and their use. However, most sociolinguistic studies have been conducted on spoken languages, rather than sign languages. Studies in Tanzania, for instance, have focused on power and participation, as well as gender-responsive language use among students and teachers, leaving sign language discourse largely unexplored. It is against this backdrop that this study examines the influence of cultural-linguistic attributes on the formation of signs in Tanzanian Sign Language (TSL). The study focuses on the extent to which honorifics are represented in these signs. The study analysed the sign language lexicon to identify signs that denote gender, where 10 signs were identified from the Tanzanian Sign Language Dictionary to represent the male and female genders. Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis was adopted as the main analysis tool, complemented with Critical Discourse Analysis to highlight language and gender in their respective contexts of use. Thematic and ethnographic analyses were the main methods employed in the study. The analysis shows that cultural-linguistic attributes have contributed to the formation of gender-based signs. Language attributes, such as dominance and diversity, have underscored the choice and use of such gender-based signs.

Keywords*:* Honorifics, Sign Language, Gendered Honorifics, Language and gender, Sexist Language

1 Introduction

Language, as a tool for communication in society, is used to convey cultural values, social norms, and identity. Honorifics are important aspects of both spoken and sign language. This is due to their crucial role in shaping interpersonal interactions. Honorifics are categorised as addressee honorifics,

which show respect or social distance, referent honorifics, which are used when talking respectfully to someone not so important, bystanders' honorifics used in hierarchical settings, performative honorifics commonly used in rituals or religious contexts and relational honorifics which are based on the relationship between the interlocutors (Agha, 2007). Gendered honorifics are well-documented in spoken language worldwide, as evidenced by studies by Tanaka (2009), Afful (2010), Brown (2015), and William et al. (2025). However, little attention has been given to gendered honorifics in sign language, particularly in the African context. As the primary means of communication for most deaf individuals in Tanzania, TSL provides a unique socio-cultural and linguistic foundation for research, including the study of gendered honorifics in sign language.

Sign language is a form of communication that utilises visual-spatial modality, employing hands, face, body, and the space in front of the signer. Like spoken languages in the hearing communities, sign language is the main tool for both human communication and cultural transmission among the deaf community. In this regard, it portrays signs and experiences of human beings, including those related to gendering. Thus, sign language is viewed as a process and product of social interaction, given that it plays a pivotal role in influencing society, literature, and philosophy, due to its dynamism, which enables humans to establish themselves as gendered subjects. (Yaghoubi-Notash, Mohamed, & Mahmoud, 2019). Language and gender have been long-standing areas of research interest. Most researchers (e.g. Hirsch, 2002; Mhewa, 2020; Gu, 2013) have focused on the difference between the language of males and females in various areas like Power and Participation, Gender Responsive Language use among students and teachers, and Language and Gender: Similarities and Differences, respectively and arrived at different conclusions. Male and female, as omnipresent and universal linguistic labels, appear to be distinct enough in the way humans perceive themselves and others in the world. (Yaghoubi-Notash, Mohamed, & Mahmoud, 2019). Despite several studies on language and gender, including the studies mentioned above, the variability in language use between men and women in Tanzanian Sign Language has remained unexplored. The fact that Tanzanian Sign Language is a less-researched language compelled this study to investigate the use of honorifics in sign language, while also contributing to the field of sign language research.

The study examines the use of honorifics in gender marking in TSL, focusing on how its users demonstrate respect for gender when producing signs related to femininity and masculinity. This comes against the backdrop of gender inequalities rooted in long-established societal norms and attitudes that prioritise masculinity. In this paper, the discussion is based on the harmonised TSL that came into effect on 23rd September 2020, when Tanzania officially launched its first digital dictionary of harmonised signs across the country as the standard lexicon of TSL. The harmonised signs were chosen because Tanzania has over 120 ethnic groups, making it challenging to focus on a single ethnic group. The use of harmonised signs is a proper way to reduce levels of bias. The choice was informed by the understanding that every language has different ways of observing politeness and respect for others, such as adults and superiors.

The study uses the term ″honorifics″ to refer to language forms that typically express esteem toward an entity worthy of respect. Otherwise defined, honorifics refer to politeness markers in language pragmatics – the way people use language to show respect. (Sachiko, 2005). John (2010) reports that Kiswahili users employ different honorifics to convey social class and respect. In Kiswahili, words like *Bwana* 'Lord' and *Bibi* 'Maiden' are predominantly used to convey superiority in the language. This is underscored by Matthews (2007), who demonstrates that words such as nouns, verbs, and pronouns serve as honorific devices used to express respect to someone. TSL, as an

independent language for the deaf community, responds to pragmatic use of language, despite being bound by cultural ties. It is in this light that the present study explored the underlying interpretations behind the formation of signs with gender connotations among TSL users. The study explored the cultural influences surrounding the formation of signs that have gender motivations to investigate gendering in TSL use between the two sexes. The two questions that guided the study were: What cultural factors are most relevant to the formation of gender-based signs? Moreover, how does gender influence honorific forms in Tanzanian Sign Language?

2 Literature review

In the recent decade, much of the scholarship on language, gender, and honorifics has centred on spoken languages. Notable contributions have been made by researchers such as Tanaka (2009), Afful (2010), Brown (2015), and William et al. (2025), who have extensively documented gendered honorifics in languages across various cultural contexts. These studies consistently highlight how gender is linguistically constructed and reinforced through both explicit markers, such as pronouns and titles, and more subtle pragmatic features, including conversational strategies and forms of address. For instance, in spoken Kiswahili, terms like "*Bwana*" (Mr.), "*Bi*" (Ms.), and "*Mzee*" (elder) play a crucial role in indexing social hierarchy and respect, reflecting broader social structures and gender dynamics (Matthews, 2007; John, 2010).

Similarly, research grounded in the Dominance Model (Fishman, 1980) is conducted by scholars such as Hirsch (2002), Mhewa (2020), and Gu (2013). These have examined how power relations and societal norms influence language use and determine gendered communication. The studies demonstrate that linguistic behaviours, such as turn-taking, interruptions, and the use of polite or deferential forms, are shaped by cultural expectations and often mirror broader patterns of gender inequality. Mhewa (2020), for example, reveals how educational discourse in African contexts and exclusive language produce biases favouring boys.

As shown, studies of spoken language have dissected the socio-pragmatic functions of honorifics and their role in shaping gender identities. However, sign languages have been largely excluded from such studies, particularly in the African context. A handful of studies, such as those by Ceong and Saxon (2020), on honorifics in non-spoken modalities have primarily focused on East Asian signed languages rather than those in Africa. This gap is pronounced in Tanzanian Sign Language, a language that, despite its centrality to deaf culture and identity in Tanzania, remains under-researched in many of its aspects. The unique cultural and linguistic attributes of TSL, influenced by the country's diverse ethnic makeup and social norms, offer a fertile ground for examining how honorifics and gender are negotiated in a visual-spatial modality. Furthermore, the recent harmonisation of TSL and the launch of a digital dictionary in 2020 provide an unprecedented opportunity to systematically analyse the language's lexicon and its embedded social meanings.

Therefore, the present study is justified on several grounds. First, it seeks to redress the imbalance in sociolinguistic research by bringing sign languages, and specifically, TSL, into the conversation about gender and honorifics. Second, it aims to uncover the cultural-linguistic processes underlying the formation and use of gender-based signs, thus contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of how social identities are constructed within the deaf community in Tanzania. Lastly, documenting and interpreting the honorific forms in TSL is vital not only for enriching the academic literature but also for informing policy and educational practices, ensuring that language planning and instruction in TSL reflect the community's cultural realities and values.

3 Theoretical framework

This study employs the Dominance Model, as proposed by Pamela Fishman in 1980. The model accounts for the reasons behind language use variability between the two genders. The model examines language as a tool for social dominance and control. The framework makes a significant contribution to the variability in language use between men and women. In the context of gender honorifics, the Dominance Model examines how power relations are reflected and reproduced in everyday social interactions, conversational styles, and nonverbal behaviours. For example, men are often reported to interrupt more frequently, adopt an instrumental communication style, and have a larger personal space compared to women. These differences are evident in all areas, including asking questions, attention beginnings, minimal responses, making statements, and tonic initiations. In most societies, women are inferior to men because they lack societal power (Pamela,1980). Given this argument, women's use of language lies in their attempt to acquire conversational power to equalise their social positions. Whether dominance influences the formation of gender-based signs requires further examination. The model suggests that such behaviours emanate from power dynamics rather than inherent gender differences (Oxford Reference, 2024).

This model is particularly helpful for this study due to its ability to demonstrate social dominance as an attribute of language use. Additionally, the study employed Critical Discourse Analysis to analyse data on gender honorifics in TSL. The data were analysed within the analytical framework of Faircloughian (1995:59) Three-Dimensional Model of Critical Discourse Analysis: discourse as text (that is analysis of texts and discourse practices), discourse as discursive practices (analysis of relationships of discourse processes of production and interpretation of texts) and discourse as social practice (analysis of discursive practices and social practices). The gendered honorifics in TSL were analysed as a discourse. The theory was deemed particularly significant to this study, as it provides a robust framework for analysing gender honorifics as both textual and social practices, while unveiling the hidden discursive practices embedded within their uses.

4 Methodology

Qualitative research methods, incorporating participatory approaches, were employed in data collection, including group discussions, interviews, participant observation, and documentary reviews. The data collection was in two phases. The first phase involved exploring the respective signs from the Tanzanian Sign Language Dictionary (Muzale, 2004). The second phase involved verification of signs from 12 elders [five males and seven females] from four regions, namely, Tabora to represent the western zone, Mara for the lake zone, Morogoro for the Eastern zone and Mtwara for the Southern zone. Three deaf elders [one male and two females], one from each region, were selected randomly from among the twelve elders. The main selection criteria were firstly being deaf and secondly being over 50 years of age. The study was conducted over six months, from February to August 2024, within the deaf community. An auto-ethnographic approach was employed to facilitate data interpretation, allowing researchers to utilise self-reflection and language experience to align the interpretations from the deaf elders with those of Wayne, Colomb, and Joseph (2003). By integrating personal awareness of culture and its analysis, autoethnography provides a unique lens through which to understand complex social phenomena. It bridges the gap between the personal and the cultural, offering a rich and nuanced perspective that traditional methods may overlook. Since both researchers are linguists, we employed auto-ethnography as a baseline approach to the linguistic interpretation of signs based on gender. However, researchers remained

neutral on interpretations given by deaf elders to reduce biases. As emphasised by Mizzi (2010, p. 12), "Through reflecting inward and then reflecting outward, the presence of the researcher's life experience is acknowledged with all his vulnerabilities". Therefore, data were collected from among the harmonised signs of TSL, which are generally considered official signs for public use. For a better understanding of the socio-cultural attributes that contribute to the formation of signs, Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis, combined with Critical Discourse Analysis, were adopted as a qualitative research approach that focuses on exploring how individuals make sense of their personal and social experiences. In this regard, when some signs for gender-specific needs require sociocultural semantic clarifications, twelve deaf elders from multicultural societies were purposively sampled and consulted to bring their lived experiences and cultural knowledge to the interpretation process, ensuring that the communication is authentic and culturally relevant. Similarly, they could provide a nuanced understanding and representation of deaf culture.

In this regard, Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was employed to interpret the findings, emphasising an understanding of lived experiences from the individual's perspective. Researchers aim to capture the essence of what it feels like to experience a particular phenomenon. Similarly, IPA incorporated hermeneutic principles, recognising that understanding experience involves a process of interpretation. This creates a double hermeneutic, where researchers interpret participants who are themselves interpreting their experiences. On the other hand, IPA has an idiographic focus, meaning it aims to offer insights into how a particular person, in a specific context, makes sense of a particular situation. This approach is not about generalising findings but understanding individual experiences.

Thus, interpretations from elders were tape-recorded, transcribed, and coded into their respective thematic groupings, enabling the researcher to establish categories of honorifics based on cultural affiliations. Lastly, CDA was applied to interpret the meaning of the coded interpretations.

5 Findings and discussion

Tanzanian Sign Language was examined to identify 12 gender-specific signs, which were later confirmed through interviews with deaf elders from four regions. After analysis, the signs for "aunt" and "uncle" were excluded as they semantically overlap with "mother" and "father." Findings were presented according to research themes.

5.1 Signs with gender connotations

Linguistic features, such as nouns, pronouns, and titles/honorifics, play a crucial role in gender marking. Tanzanian Sign Language does have signs for different genders, such as 'man,' 'woman,' 'boy,' and 'girl to reflect and reinforce gender distinctions. This concept can be observed in various factors and aspects of both verbal and nonverbal communication and is limited to sociocultural variabilities.

Lucas (2002) has clearly documented that language use between a man and a woman is influenced by several factors, one of which is gender. According to Gu (2013), gender variability extends beyond the way males and females use language. It also reflects their distinct living styles and attitudes. Several studies support this idea. For example, Gu (2013) and Posse & Melgosa (2011) have, at different times, indicated that language use between the two genders is closely related to psycho-social behaviours; hence, men's use of language is plain and rude compared to females' use

of language, which is polite and soft. Even though most researched languages are spoken ones, the question 'Where does semantic interpretation rely on?' remains fundamental in this regard. For an analysis of gender connotations in Tanzanian Sign Language, the current study selected 10 signs with gender connotations to capture the honorific use of language as identified by Mkama (2024). Interviews with deaf elders also contributed to the analysis and interpretation of such signs, aligning with how they convey honorific distinctions between masculine and feminine genders. According to Muzale (2004), the signs for "grandfather" and "grandmother" bear preconceptions of the cultural meanings embedded in the roles of grandparents. Consider examples (1) and (2) below.

(1)   *Babu* = 'Grandfather'   (2)   *Bibi* = 'Grandmother'
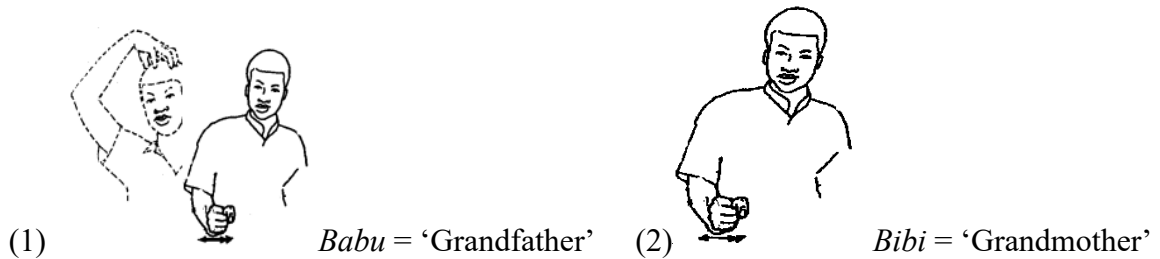
In his discussion, Mkama (2024) highlighted semantic principles as underlying the linguistic principles that govern the formation of signs, regardless of their categories. In gender studies, the same applies. Responses from interviews with elders showed that the formation of the sign in (1) relies on the concession that the grandfather wears a hat and holds a stick as a walking support. This has been the general conception of the traditions across the four regions, representing respective zones as elaborated in the methodology section. Despite this, wearing a *kofia* (hat) is a common honorific dress for Islamic elders; it has been adopted in TSL as an honorific indicator for male elders, as opposed to women, whose common dress is *hijab* and *khanga* in Swahili-speaking areas. Thus, the signs in (1) and (2) convey a similar meaning of 'elderly', but their formation reflects different social perceptions regarding the position of men and women in society. For man, the formation of the sign begins with configuring the palm to denote the shape of a *hat* on top of the head, then moving it down to form a denotative image of holding a stick. Interviews with elders have revealed that it is a regular tradition for male elders to wear hats on their heads and carry walking sticks in their hands, while female elders typically carry only a walking stick. The formation of signs for these two groups denotes the aforementioned traditions. Unwritten stories and cultures show that hats worn on the head entail certain social respect and status. This is exemplary among the societies of the coastal regions, and among pastoralists, where "when a man has acquired some social status and respect, it is usual to wear a hat and hold a black stick" (a response from one participant). This means a hat signifies authority, an authority that men have in society compared to women.

Another gender-distinguishing set is that of parents, father and mother, which are captured in (3) and (4), respectively.

(3) *Baba* = 'Father'   (4) *Mama* = 'Mother'
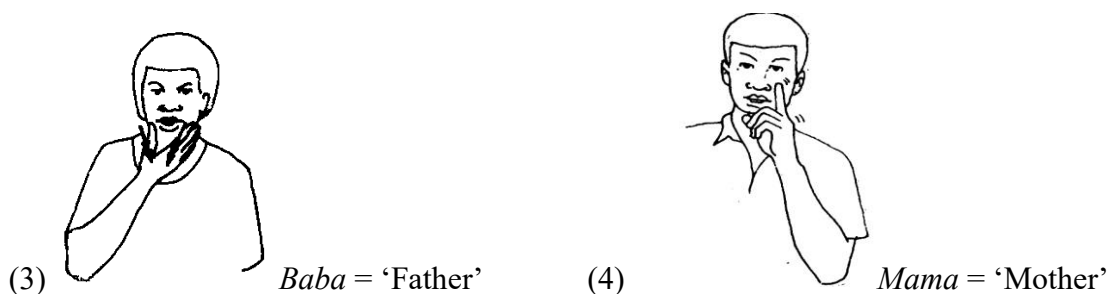
It was noted that the formation of a sign for the father involves the signer holding the chin with the five fingers while rolling the fingers down, whereas in (4), a sign for the mother involves the signer placing an index finger near his/her mouth. The formation of sign (4) is done under cued-speech principles. In most unwritten African traditions, holding the chin is a sign of respect, while placing an index finger near the mouth may not carry specific connotations. Interviews with elders revealed that, for example, a child cannot hold their chin when talking to elders, as it is perceived as a sign of disrespect.

Similarly, brother and sister were another set of gender markers that were identified. Consider examples (5) and (6) below.

(5) *Kaka* = 'Brother'   (6) *Dada* = 'Sister'
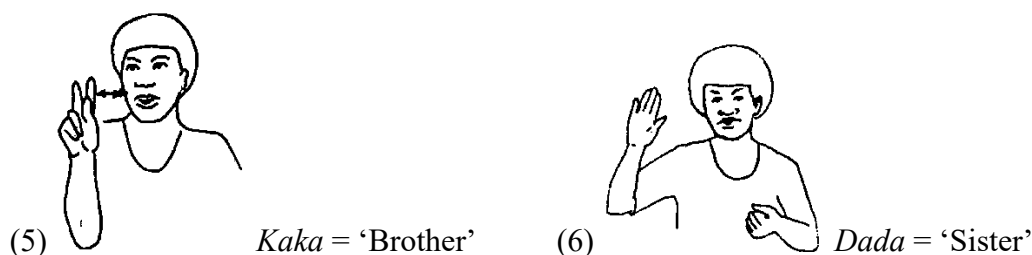
In (5), the formation of a sign for 'brother', the signer forms a 'V' shape with the index and middle fingers, with the thumb lying between them, and moves them forth and back near the mouth. This has been common in cued speech. In similar contexts, the formation of the sign for 'sister' in (6) involves the signer folding a palm and placing it at the breast while the thumb protrudes – technically forming the shape of the breast and a nipple. These findings provide a semantic connotation for 'brother' to have no definite honorific interpretation as distinguished from the sign for 'sister', which shows the stiffness of the breasts.

(7) *Kijana* = 'Youth'   (8) *Binti* = 'Lady'
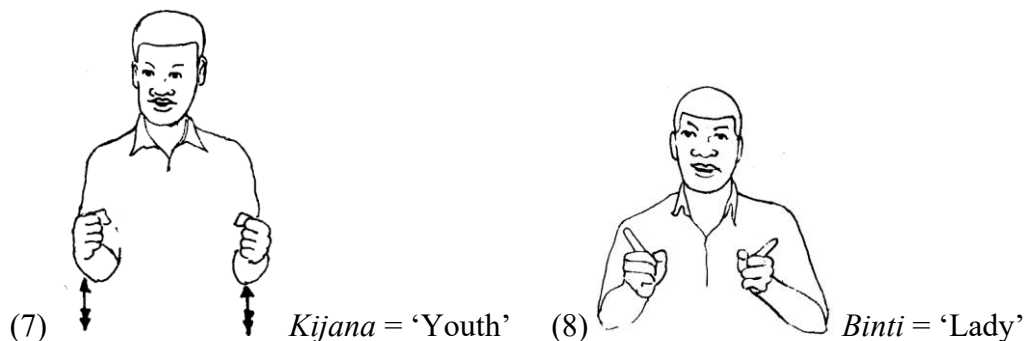
The formation of signs for 'youth' and 'lady' forms another set of gender-making in Tanzanian Sign Language. It was learnt that the sign for youth in (7) requires the signer to fold both palms and hold them near the chest, stiffly indicating health or strength. On the contrary, the formation of a sign for

'lady' needs the signer to hold both hands in front of the chest at the position of the breasts while folding the palms, leaving both index fingers upright (see 8) to indicate stiff nipples. As in sets 5 and 6, the set for youth and lady maintains the use of a woman's breast as the location for sign production as opposed to the man's sign, and they consistently apply in the formation of signs for 'man' and 'woman' as exampled in (9) and (10) below.

(9) *Mwanaume* = 'Man'   (10) *Mwanamke* = 'Woman'

As of (9), the formation of indicating 'man' involves holding the chin with five fingers while sliding them down, whereas the formation of a sign indicating 'woman' compels a signer to curve a palm, directing it inward and moving it from the upper part of the breast downwards (see 10).

5.2 Cultural implications of gender-related signs

Honorifics are titles or terms of respect used to address or refer to someone, often reflecting their social status, profession, or relationship to the speaker. The use of honorifics carries significant cultural connotations and implications that vary widely across different societies. The following subthemes were identified.

5.2.1 Social hierarchy, respect, and social dynamics

In spoken languages, including many Bantu languages, the use of honorifics is crucial in maintaining social harmony and showing respect to elders and superiors. Zubair (2019, p. 201) has demonstrated that one's perceptions and self-conception significantly influence language use. The theory of linguistic gender marking unveils that language users bring different dispositions towards language and their social positioning. In connection with this, women often bear secondary roles in many African societies, leaving men to hold the primary roles and receive the respect. Thus, the use of titles bears similar conceptions. Mhewa (2020, p. 31) mentioned that gender inequalities in various social contexts are rooted in the long-established masculinity and femininity societal norms and attitudes, which in most cases affect chances for the feminine gender. An analysis of the findings has shown that TSL has the same ways it signifies masculinity and femininity, which is reflected in power dynamics. The previous section has presented 10 gender-based signs of TSL. For example, signs (9), (7), and (3) for "man", "youth (male)", and "father", respectively, convey power associated with the male gender and its transition from youth to adulthood.

In most African traditions, there are specific symbols that carry either *negative or positive* connotations. Considering signs (1), (3), and (9), which stand for 'grandfather', 'father', and 'man', respectively, these signify positive connotations as opposed to signs (2) and (10) which stand for 'grandmother' and 'woman', respectively, and which do not have any honorific implication.

It was further revealed that among the five signs that were identified in this study to signify female gender, three of them [(6), (8), and (10)], which is 60% of female signs used in this research have

used female breast to signify the difference between 'sister', 'lady', and 'woman', respectively. Interviews with deaf adults revealed that 75% of the use of female sexual parts for their gender or sex marking was a simple choice made to indicate gender for women as opposed to men, whose signs are not formed from their private parts. On the other hand, 25% of respondents indicated that they were not aware of the reasons. The findings are congruent with Morgan (1977, p. 89), who asserts that "the very semantics of the language reflects women's condition" and the continued men's dominance over women. This is also captured by Judith (1990), who writes, "social attitude towards females," encompassing the social position of women. For instance, signs 9 and 10 for 'man' and 'woman', respectively, contain different connotations. Sign 9 implies respect, adulthood and dominance, whereas sign 10 portrays sagging breasts, implying subjugation on the woman's side.

Penelope and Ginet (2013) argue that gender is performed, not possessed. They add that gender, defined as a social distinction between males and females (Panelope & Ginet, 2013, p. 1), contributes to the manifestation of gender-based signs. The concept of gender stems from assigning and naming social responsibilities for each gender, such as masculinity being linked with energy and femininity with beauty. It is therefore right to argue that males are more linguistically privileged than females. For example, in signs 7 and 8, the formation of sign 7 for male youth implies strength as opposed to sign 8 for a lady, which implicates the biological make-up of the lady's upright breasts. The formation of signs 7 and 8 implies what males and females are expected to perform in their societies. Sign 7 suggests that young males are energetic and strong, which is precisely what society anticipates for young males. On the contrary, sign 8, referring to 'a lady', uses upright breasts to connote the age that has not breastfed and has a connection with a sexual impact on men. It is believed that upright breasts are sexually attractive, which means that the sign portrays how women are regarded as men's sexual attractions. In addition, the idea of using upright breasts as a sign for a lady implies dependence, in which women rely on and are controlled by men. Thus, the formation of these signs is closely associated with dominance and power by one gender over the other (Ball, 2010). That is, females are often signified as being inferior to men, rather than vice versa. Posse & Melgosa (2011, p. 121) argue that the dominance of the male gender over the female is a result of cognitive development between the two genders. According to Posse & Melgosa, behaviours are nurtured; hence, labels of 'man' and 'woman' grow in association with different behaviours. Boys often imagine substituting their fathers and having their mothers, and vice versa, which has contributed to the development of attitudes towards genders, hence the formation of the biased gender-related signs presented in this study.

6 Conclusion

Findings show that language reflects and perpetuates gender biases and stereotypes even in the form of sign language. Language, including sign language, reinforces traditional gender roles and uses more derogatory and negative terms for women than for men. The analysis has shown that males tend to enjoy more positive social connotations compared to females, who are often less socially privileged and linguistically marginalised. As mentioned earlier, signs 3 of 5, for females, have used 'breasts' to indicate femininity, whilst none of the signs use males' private parts for gender marking. As most spoken languages have favoured males, TSL has also been shown to favour males, hence making it sexist. The study has revealed that TSL exhibits similar linguistic behaviours to those of spoken languages. Therefore, this study calls for linguists, both locally and internationally, to focus their research on TSL to enrich it linguistically.

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Notes

[1] The term "Deaf" is used as a generic reference for Deaf, deaf, DeaF, and Hard-of-Hearing persons.

[2] Sign language is a visual communication system designed to help deaf or hard-of-hearing individuals understand spoken languages. It uses a combination of handshapes and placements near the mouth to represent consonants and vowels, respectively.

The Syntax of Arguments in Sukuma

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Abstract

Previous studies have primarily focused on the phonological, morphological, and morphosyntactic aspects of the Sukuma language (cf., e.g., Batibo, 1985; Matondo, 2003, 2006; Jackson, 2013; Alqarni, 2017; Luhende, 2018; Simon & Masanja, 2025), but a significant gap remains in relation to syntactic argument structure and movement processes. Hence, this study fills this gap by analysing the syntactic positions of arguments, their movement patterns, and the role of INFL in Case assignment, as accounted for within the Government and Binding (GB) framework. A sample of four native Sukuma speakers was deliberately selected based on their proficiency in the language. Data were collected using documentary review and unstructured interview. The study adopted a qualitative approach and a case study design, using the Kimunasukuma dialect as a representative of other Sukuma dialects. Sentences are analysed using syntactic trees that reflect the three levels of projection represented in the X-bar schema. The study reveals that the type of verb determines the number of arguments used in a sentence. Additionally, a syntactic argument may be moved from a non-Case-receiving position to a Case-receiving position to satisfy the Case filter. It is also shown that the moved element leaves a co-indexed trace (t_i) to fulfil the requirements of the structural preserving principle. Furthermore, the study displays that INFL assigns nominative Case to external arguments while verbs and prepositions are used to assign accusative and oblique Case to internal arguments, respectively. Consequently, the article contributes to the field of linguistics by examining the syntactic properties of arguments, an area that has been least explored in Sukuma grammar.

Keywords: A-movement, Case, Sukuma, Predicate, Syntactic Argument

1 Introduction

The term "argument" is not only commonly used in our daily conversations but also in various fields of study (cf. Harley, 2006; Radford, 2009). In the field of linguistics and syntax, in particular, the term 'argument' is understood and habitually used beyond its principal meaning of disagreement/debate. Radford (2009) affirms that linguists borrowed the term "argument" from philosophy, specifically from predicate calculus, to describe the role played by certain expressions within the semantic structure of sentences. For instance, in the sentence "Masanja applauded Kabula," the overall statement can be understood as a proposition composed of the predicate

"applauded" and its two arguments, "Masanja" and "Kabula." Syntactic arguments, typically noun phrases, are essential components of a sentence, functioning as subjects and/or objects. The term predicate argument structure refers to the number of arguments a specific predicate requires, also known as its valency. For example, predicates that take only one argument exhibit a valency of one (cf. Katamba & Stonham, 2006; Carnie, 2006). Intransitive verbs have a valency of one, with the subject as the only argument, while transitive verbs require both a subject and a direct object. Ditransitive verbs can accommodate three syntactic arguments: the subject, a direct object, and an indirect object (Carnie, 2006; Katamba & Stonham, 2006). Therefore, the type of verb used in a sentence serves as a determinant for the number of syntactic arguments.

Syntactic arguments can also be moved between certain syntactic positions. Van Valin (2004) describes NP-movement as an operation involving the relocation of XPs from positions devoid of Case assignment to positions where they can receive Case, thereby fulfilling the Case filter. NP movement is often done to satisfy the requirement that every NP in a sentence must be assigned Case (Radford, 1988; Chomsky, 1988; Cowper, 1992; Haegeman, 1994; Carnie, 2006). Furthermore, Haegeman (1994) claims that the NP movement is connected to passive structures, where an NP is moved into an empty subject position. Different types of movements depend on the element being moved, which can either be a head or a full phrase. For instance, verb movement entails head movement, while NP and WH movement involve a full phrase or maximal projection (cf. Radford, 1988; Cowper, 1992; Haegeman, 1994; Carnie, 2006).

Existing Sukuma studies predominantly focus on noun phrases in their phrasal aspects, analysing nouns primarily from phonological and semantic perspectives (see e.g. Matondo, 2003; 2006; Shigini, 2020). On the other hand, the surveyed studies on Sukuma syntax are restricted to meanings and roles played by functional words within sentences. For instance, Simon and Masanja (2025) provide a syntactic description of conjunctions in Sukuma, focusing on the roles and meaning they play in sentences. Alternatively, Jackson (2013) analyses Sukuma sentences focusing on prepositions with their spatial orientations and meanings within sentences. To put it another way, past studies by many Bantu linguists, such as those on the Sukuma language, have not focused on nouns and noun phrases within the context of sentences. Consequently, there is limited research on nouns, particularly in terms of their syntactic roles within the Sukuma language. This article aimed to fill the existed gap by describing noun phrases (syntactic arguments) within Sukuma simple sentences, focusing on two specific objectives: argument structures and A-movement. To address the first objective, Predication Theory, a sub-theory associated with the Government-Binding Model (GB), was utilised. To address the second objective, Case Theory, which is also subsumed in GB, was used to assign nominative, accusative and/or oblique Case to argument(s) depending on their syntactic position.

2 Review of literature

Sukuma is routinely spoken in the Western part of Tanzania (Welch, 1974). Sukuma or Kisukuma is a member of the Niger-Congo family, falling under the F.21 Sukuma group within the F.20 Sukuma-Nyamwezi classification (cf. Maho, 2009; Nurse & Philippson, 2014). According to Mradi wa Lugha za Tanzania (2009, p. 2), Sukuma has the highest number of native speakers among ethnic community languages in Tanzania. Josiah (2019) asserts that the cardinal points of the world govern the naming of the Sukuma dialects. That is, the code spoken in the Northern Sukuma land is called Sukuma; in the South, it is called Dakama; in the East, it is called Kiiya; and in the West, it is called

Ng'weeli. Maho (2009), following Guthrie (1948; 1967-71), classifies Sukuma as F21, with its dialects enumerated as follows: North (Kimunasukuma), F21A; West (Kimunang'weeli), F21B; East (Kimunakiiya), F21C; and South (Kimunadakama), F21D. The study is confined to Kimunasukuma – the standard dialect of the language in question. Sukuma embodies many characteristics typical of Bantu languages. Phonologically, it features a seven-vowel system, closely resembling the Proto-Bantu system, and is classified as a tonal language (cf. Nurse & Philippson, 2014). Morphologically, Sukuma adheres to the agglutinative nature of Bantu languages, with nouns structured as Pref – Base, comprising 18 noun classes arranged in singular-plural pairs. The verbal structure follows the Bantu template SM-TAM-OM-VR-VE-FV (cf. Matondo, 2003; Mchombo, 2004; Jerro, 2016; Alqarni, 2017; Luhende, 2018). Syntactically, the word order of Sukuma, as in most Bantu, is typically S (Aux) VO (Adjunct) (cf. Jackson 2013; Nurse & Philippson, 2014).

The reviewed literature on Sukuma syntax has not adequately covered the aspects of arguments. That is, the analyses of sentence constructions are based on elements other than nouns/noun phrases. For instance, Jackson (2013) analysed Sukuma spatial prepositions using Image Schema Theory, employing sentences to elucidate the meanings of various Sukuma prepositions. His analysis included several word categories, including nouns (syntactic arguments). However, his work was limited to spatial prepositions, creating a gap in noun phrases (syntactic arguments), which play a crucial role within sentences − a gap that this article aims to address. Additionally, Simon and Masanja (2025) described conjunctions using sentences to provide meanings within Sukuma constructions. The results have openly indicated the roles of both coordinate and subordinate conjunctions in Sukuma sentences. The analysed sentences contained noun phrases, but the study was limited to conjunctions, thereby creating a gap that was addressed in this study.

On the other hand, researchers who have conducted studies on Sukuma nouns and/or noun phrases have primarily focused on tone and semantic orientations attributed to nouns. For example, Matondo (2006) focused on tonal transfer in Sukuma, specifically the reduplication of nominals with mobile H tone. He noted that in two-syllable nominal stems, the mobile H tone is actualised on the initial syllable of the second stem during reduplication, as exemplified in Data 1:

1. a) kèèndà   'nine'   (keenda + kéé)nda   'nine by nine'
    b) ma-sààngù   'cooked corn'   (ma-(saangu + sáá)ngu   'like cooked corn'

The results indicate the predictable nature of tonal analysis in the Sukuma language. From this finding, we conclude that nominals can also be studied from a syntactic perspective, as they serve as the subjects and objects of sentences based on their grammatical functions. Moreover, nominals may be repositioned within the syntactic structure to comply with the Case filter, a gap that the present study intended to fill.

Shigini (2020) examined the significance of names bestowed by Sukuma parents on their children, demonstrating the meaningfulness of African names. His research revealed that many names assigned to Sukuma children encapsulate the experiences of their parents, drawn from events prior to or during pregnancy, and even at the moment of birth. Some examples of Sukuma names indicating life experiences are presented in Data 2:

	Names	Semantic Content	Situation at birth
2. a)	Bugumba	'bareness'	Prolonged childlessness moment

| b) | Njile | 'disappear' or die' | Preceded by the death of other children |
| c) | Mayanga | 'problems' or 'sufferings' | Disaster/death |

In Shigini's work, nouns are analysed primarily from a semantic perspective, yet these nouns can also fulfil different syntactic roles in sentences. To address this gap, this article aims to enrich our understanding of noun phrases (syntactic arguments) within Sukuma syntax.

3 Theory of the study

This article employs Predication and Case sub-theories of the Government-Binding Model, a successor to the Extended Standard Model. Government-Binding Model (GB) as a theory of universal applicability, abandoned the rule-based approach and adopted the principles and parameters approach, which was considered more general and applicable to every human language. As we pointed out earlier, Predication Theory covers the first objective, as it posits that a predicate necessitates a subject. As argued by Crystal (2008), a predicate is classified based on the number of NPs it combines with to form an atomic proposition, categorised as one, two, or three places based on the number of arguments in a sentence construction. Apart from Predication Theory, this article also employed Case Theory. As contended by Chomsky (1988), Case Theory requires every NP in a sentence to be assigned to a Case. He further provides the fundamental properties of Case-assignment as follows:

i)   NP is nominative if governed by AGR.
ii) NP is objective if governed by V with the sub-categorisation feature: - NP (i.e., transitive).
iii) NP is oblique if governed by P.

The theta role and Case assignment in GB is done as indicated in Figure 1:
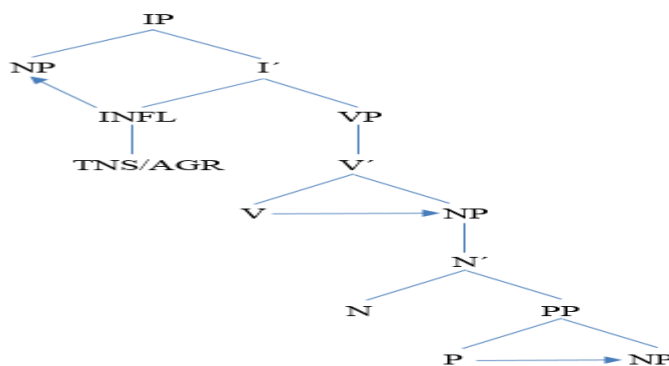
Figure 1: Case assignment in GB
Source: Adapted from Van Valin (2004)

Case filter, as the main principle of Case Theory, requires every NP to be assigned Case (Chomsky, 1988; Van Valin, 2004; Carnie, 2006). The Case assigner must govern the NP to which Case is assigned. INFL governs the external argument, and it is assumed to have both the tense and agreement morpheme that assigns nominative Case to the external argument. The transitive verb

governs the NP (object) and assigns the accusative Case. Preposition assigns oblique Case to the internal argument it governs (Van Valin, 2004). GB is a constraint satisfaction model. The Projection Principle, X-bar Schema, Case Filter, and Structural Preservation Principle are specific examples of principles that must be fulfilled in GB (see, e.g., Chomsky, 1988; Cowper, 1992; Haegeman, 1994; Van Valin, 2004; Carnie, 2006). The following requirements must be fulfilled in the aforesaid principles:

3.1 The Projection Principle

It requires that the syntactic environment in which a verb or other head occurs matches its sub-categorisation frame. Van Valin (2004) argues that the principle demands that if a verb, e.g. kill, takes an internal argument in its sub-categorisation frame, then it must have an internal argument at D-structure, S-structure and Logical Form. The Extended Projection Principle subsumes the Projection Principle and adds the requirement that all predicates must have subjects; in structural terms, it means that all VPs must be associated with an external argument (Van Valin, 2004).

3.2 The X-bar Schema

The concept of X-bar appeared first in Chomsky in 1970 and was clearly expounded in Ray Jackendoff published in 1977 (Carnie, 2006). X-bar theory focuses on the head as the only obligatory element of the phrase, while the other elements associated with the head are considered optional (Haegeman, 1994; Carnie, 2006). The Theory of X-bar has three main levels of projections, i.e. XP or X″ stands for maximal (phrasal) projection, X′ stands for intermediate projection, and X stands for minimal (head) projection. The letter X represents any word category, i.e. N, V, Adj, Adv, Det, etc. There are two general X-bar schemas, one for phrases and the other for clause/sentence structures. Figure 2 offers the general X-bar structure for clauses/sentences.
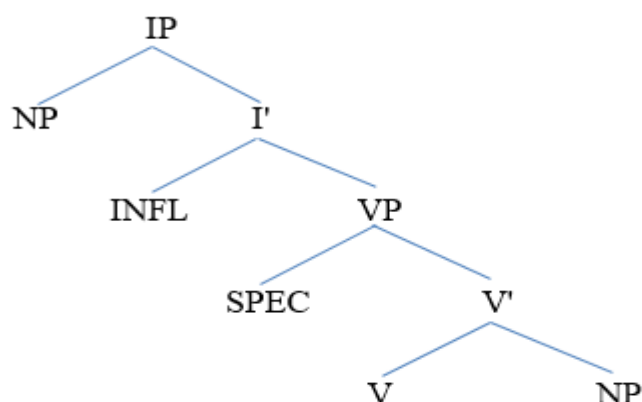
Figure 2: General X-bar configuration for simple sentences
Source: Adapted from Van Valin (2004)

As shown in Figure 2, INFL (Inflexion) serves as the home of tense and agreement morphemes. The complement of INFL is the VP, and its maximal projection is IP (inflexion phrase), which corresponds to the sentence.

3.3 The Structural Preserving Principle

According to Van Valin (2004), the structure-preservation principle requires that if the NP in internal argument position moves to external argument position, the structural position from which it moved should leave a trace that is co-indexed with the moved element. Following the requirements of the aforementioned principles of the GB model, the analysis of sentence construction provided in this article has evidently satisfied the requirements of each principle.

4 Methodology

This study was conducted at Misungwi District, Mwanza Region, Tanzania. The study area was carefully chosen because its inhabitants are predominantly native speakers of the Sukuma language. The study involved a deliberate selection of four native Sukuma speakers based on their language proficiency, which was associated with their long-term residence and upbringing in the study area. Data were collected through interview and documentary review, and the results were recorded through handwritten notes. Qualitative approach was adopted, employing a case study design that sought an in-depth investigation to realise rich descriptions of the data. According to Creswell (2012), a case can include one or multiple individuals. This study used Kimunasukuma as a case example, representing the broader spectrum of Sukuma dialects. The case study design facilitates the generation of generalizable results from a limited area. To enhance the credibility and dependability of the findings, triangulation of multiple data sources, review of related literature, and member checking were employed. Data analysis implemented syntactic trees reflecting the three levels of projections outlined in the X-bar framework.

5 Results and discussion

The findings of this study are grounded in the two aspects of syntactic arguments: predicates and the quantity of syntactic arguments permissible in Sukuma sentences, alongside A-movement. Data analysis was conducted using Predication and Case theories, both components of Government and Binding Theory (GB). Each aspect is analysed through syntactic trees that encapsulate the X-bar schema. We initiate our discussion with the first objective of the study:

5.1 Argument structures in Sukuma

The number of syntactic arguments within a sentence is determined by the type of verb employed. Certain verbs in Sukuma accommodate a single syntactic argument, while others permit two to three arguments. The following syntactic argument structures are recognised:

5.1.1 One-place predicates

Verbs classified as one-place predicates allow for only one syntactic argument, which positions them as intransitive verbs. For instance, consider the following sentence in (3):

3.   Aβanhʊ βaane βalɪlɪla
        A-βa-nhʊ βa-ane βa-lɪ-lɪl-a
        Aug-2-person NCP-POSS AGR-PRES-cry-FV
        'My people are crying.'

The sentence in 3 can be represented in a syntactic tree given in Figure 3 as follows:
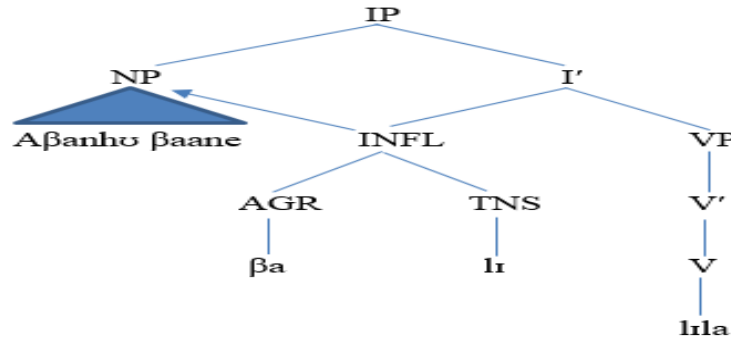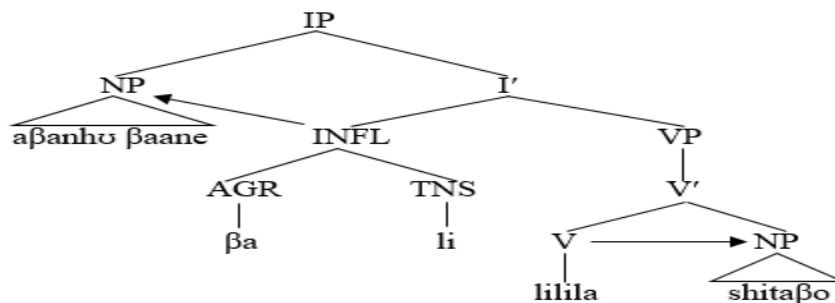

Figure 3: Case assignment in GB
Source: Adapted from Van Valin (2004)

The tree depicted in Figure 3 contains only one NP (argument). The verb "*lila*" (cry) in (3) is categorised as [V′——], indicating that the verb accommodates a single syntactic argument located in the subject position. Additionally, it is observed that the external argument *aβanhʊ βaane* 'my people' is assigned nominative Case by INFL to satisfy the Case filter.

Bantu languages, including Sukuma, are characterised by diverse derivative morphemes known as verb extensions, which may be appended to the verb stem. Adding these extensions modifies the verb's associated syntactic frame (cf. Mchombo, 2004; Nurse & Philippson, 2014). In Bantu languages, verbal extensions adjust the valency of the verb by either increasing or decreasing the number of arguments. Causative, benefactive, dative, instrumental, and locative are valency-increasing, while passive, reciprocal, and stative morphemes are valency-decreasing (cf. Lusekelo 2012). In Sukuma, for instance, an intransitive verb can expand the number of arguments through verbal extension, as illustrated in (4):

4.   aβanhʊ βaane βalililila shitaβo.
       a-βa-nhʊ βa-ane βa-li-lil-il-a shi-taβo
       Aug-2-person NCP-POSS AGR-PRES-cry-CAUS-FV 8-book
       'My people are crying for books.'

The sentence in 4 can be represented in a syntactic tree given in Figure 4 as follows:

Figure 4: Case assignment in GB
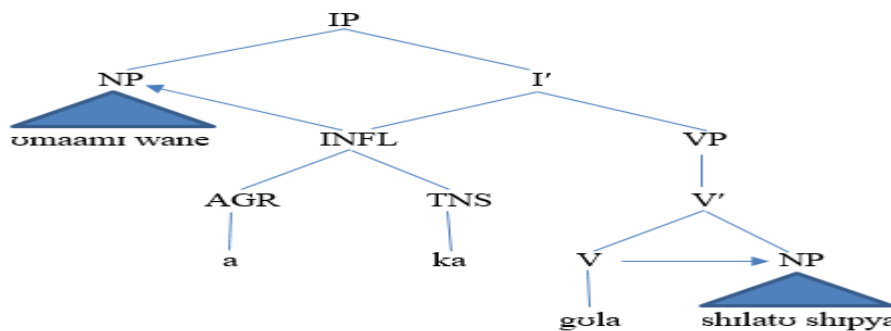**Source:** Adapted from Van Valin (2004)

The syntactic tree in Figure 4 encompasses two NPs (arguments). The verb's sub-categorisation frame would be represented as [V′—— NP]. The NP in the subject position receives a nominative Case from INFL, as indicated by an arrow. Meanwhile, the second NP results from verbal extension; in this case, the causative morpheme *-il-* triggers the addition of an internal argument that receives an accusative Case from the verb. Similar findings were obtained by Lusekelo (2012). His findings indicate that the one-argument verb permits the causative suffix to add another argument to form a two-place predicate. Thus, the causative extension in Sukuma, as is the case in Kinyakyusa, is very productive as it increases the number of arguments to the verb.

5.1.2 Two-place predicates

Verbs classified as two-place predicates necessitate two obligatory syntactic arguments, represented in their sub-categorisation frame as [V′——NP]. Thus, one argument appears in the subject position, while the other occupies the object position. Monotransitive verbs exemplify this category. For instance, consider the sentence in (5):

5.   ʊmaamɪ wane akagʊla shɪlatʊ shɪpya
      ʊ-maamɪ ʊ-ane a-ka-gʊl-a shɪ-latʊ shɪ-pya
      Aug-1-uncle NCP-POSS AGR-PAST-buy-FV 8-shoes NCP-new
      'My uncle bought new shoes.'

The representation of this sentence in a syntactic tree is illustrated in Figure 5:

Figure 5: Case assignment in GB
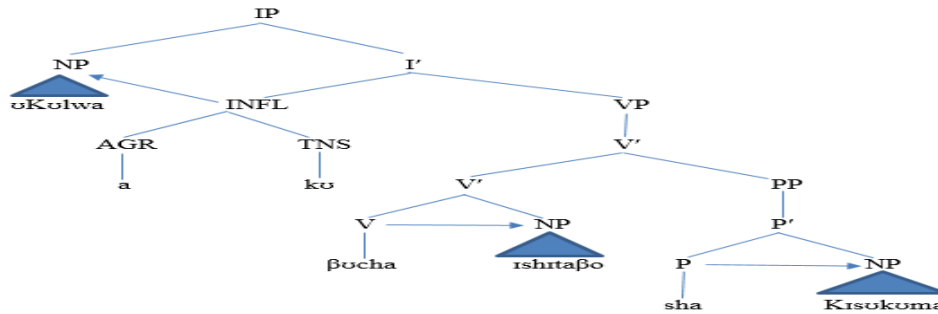**Source:** Adapted from Van Valin (2004

The tree depicted in Figure 5 includes two NPs, confirming that the verb "gula" (buy) accommodates two syntactic arguments characteristic of two-place predicates. INFL assigns nominative Case to the external argument "ʊmaamɪ wane" (my uncle), while the verb "gula" assigns accusative Case to the internal argument "shɪlatʊ shɪpya" (new shoes).

5.1.3 Three-place predicates

Verbs classified as three-place predicates allow for three syntactic arguments. Their sub-categorisation frame is characterised as [V′—— NP, PP], meaning that the first syntactic argument appears in the subject position, followed by the remaining arguments in object positions. Consider the sentence in (6):

6.   ʊKʊlwa akʊβʊcha ɪshɪtaβo sha Kɪsʊkʊma
        ʊ-Kʊlwa a-kʊ-βʊch-a ɪ-shɪ-taβo sha Kɪsʊkʊma
        Aug-1-Kulwa AGR-FUT-carry-FV Aug-7-book Prep Sukuma
        'Kulwa will carry a book of Sukuma.'

The representation of this sentence in a syntactic tree is depicted in Figure 6:

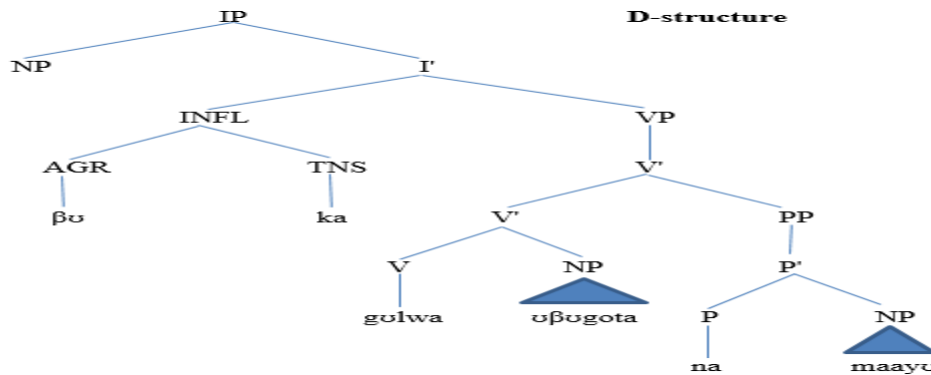**Figure 6: Case assignment in GB**
Source: Adapted from Van Valin (2004

As shown in Figure 6, INFL assigns nominative Case to the external argument "Kulwa"; the verb "βʊcha" (carry) assigns accusative Case to the internal argument "ɪshɪtaβo" (a book), while the preposition "sha" (of) assigns oblique Case to the NP argument "Kɪsʊkʊma".

5.2 A-movement in Sukuma

Syntactic arguments can be repositioned from one syntactic position to another vacant NP position within a sentence. The Case filter mandates that every NP must receive Case. This requirement can be illustrated using two levels of syntactic representation: D-structure and S-structure. D-structure is transformed into S-structure by the rule move alpha, which licenses the movement of any category to arbitrary positions (Van Valin, 2004). Consider the following passive structure presented in Data (7):

7.   βʊkagʊlwa [ʊβʊgota] na maayu
        βʊ-ka-gʊl-w-a ʊ-βʊgota na maayu
        AGR-PAST-buy-PASS-FV Aug-14-medicine Prep 1-mother
        'Were bought [medicine] by mother'

The D-structure for this sentence can be represented in Figure 7:

Figure 7: Case assignment in GB
Source: Adapted from Van Valin (2004

Figure 7 illustrates an NP "ʊβʊgota" (medicine) preceded by the passive verb "gulwa" (bought). Notably, passive verbs are unable to assign Case (Haegeman, 1994), necessitating those syntactic arguments preceding a passive verb to be relocated to a Case-receiving position. This is depicted in Data (8) and illustrated in Figure 8:

8.   ʊβʊgota βʊkagʊlwa na maayʊ
        ʊ-βʊgota βʊ-ka-gʊl-w-a na maayʊ
        Aug-14-medicine AGR-PAST-buy-PASS-FV Prep 1-mother
        'Medicines were bought by mother.'

The syntactic representation of this sentence is displayed in Figure 8:
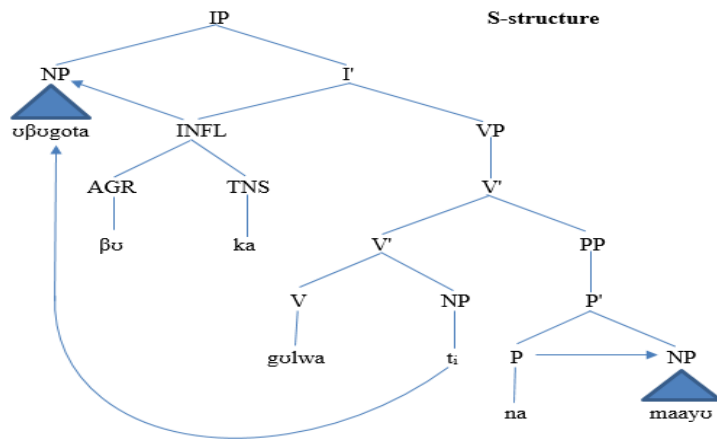
Figure 8: Case assignment in GB
Source: Adapted from Van Valin (2004

In Figure 8, the NP "ʊβʊgota" (medicine) is relocated from a non-Case-receiving position to a Case-receiving position, where it is assigned a nominative Case by INFL. The NP "maayʊ" (mother) receives an oblique Case from the preposition "na" (by), as signified by arrows. The NP in Figure 8 has moved from the object position to the subject position to comply with the Case Filter and the

Extended Projection Principle. Additionally, the moved NP is co-indexed with the vacated position to satisfy the structural preservation principle, which necessitates that moved elements leave a trace. Correspondingly, Kaburo (2022) presented findings on raising structures in Kĩmũthambĩ. His findings indicate that NP movement is motivated by Case assignments.

5.2.1 Movement of arguments to empty NP slots

A-movement moves an NP from the object position to an empty NP subject position. That is, NP-movement is possible by virtue of the availability of a vacant NP position. The NP element is moved to the empty NP position, not elsewhere. The researcher agrees with Cowper (1992), who asserts that the D-structure of a passive sentence has an empty subject position which allows an NP to move from the object position and fill the empty subject position. That is, the empty subject position at D-structure is where the internal argument, preceded by a passive verb, has to be moved to fill the empty position.

5.2.2 Movement of arguments upward

The internal argument appears at the bottom node in the tree diagram. When an active sentence is passivised, the internal argument preceded by the passive verb at D-structure, as in Figure 7, has to be moved to fill the vacant NP position at S-structure, as is indicated in Figure 8. The internal argument is moved from the bottom node to fill the NP position, which was empty at D-structure. As it is observed in a tree, the internal argument *υβυgota* 'medicines' is moved from the lower node to an empty upper node and not vice versa. Similarly, results on Kĩmũthambĩ indicate relocation of NPs from the bottom to the top node in syntactic trees (cf. Kaburo 2022).

5.2.3 Movement of arguments to a Case-receiving position

A-movement moves an NP from the object position where it cannot receive Case to a Case-receiving position. NPs preceded by passive verbs lack the ability to be assigned a Case. Such NPs have to be moved to empty NPs for them to be Case-marked by INFL to the subject positions (Radford, 1988; Haegeman, 1994). That is, the internal argument *υβυgota* 'medicines' is moved from a non-Case position (a position after a passive verb) to a Case receiving position. The moved element leaves a trace, and it is co-indexed to form a chain $< υβυgota_i, t_i >$.

6 Conclusion and recommendations

This study has clarified the syntactic properties of argument structures and A-movement phenomena in Sukuma using the Government and Binding Framework. The findings demonstrate that Sukuma adheres to universal syntactic principles, notably that argument movement is primarily driven by the requirement to satisfy Case licensing constraints. Noun phrase arguments originate in non-Case positions and are subsequently moved to Case-licensing positions, leaving behind co-indexed traces that preserve structural integrity. Furthermore, the investigation confirms that transitivity significantly influences the number and syntactic realisation of arguments, with intransitive, transitive, and ditransitive predicates exhibiting distinct argument structures. The study also highlights the role of INFL in assigning nominative Case to external arguments, while verbs and prepositions assign Cases to internal arguments. For further research, we recommend investigating the following areas: verb-movement and its interaction with argument movement, the syntactic behaviour of arguments in complex and embedded sentences, dialectal differences and their

syntactic implications, and cross-linguistic comparisons with other Bantu languages to distinguish common and unique syntactic argument properties.

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Notes

[1] The term 'Case' is usually capitalised as a technical term in syntactic theory. It is used when referring to abstract Cases (e.g., nominative Case, accusative Case, Case checking, and Case assignment). Carnie (2006, p. 295) affirms that "Abstract Case normally has a capital C to distinguish it from morphological case." In this article, the term Case with a capital C has been used as a norm of referring to abstract Case within the Government and Binding (GB) framework

[2] The language names are generally set without prefixes. The use of a prefix is grammatically obligatory in any specific Bantu language (cf. Welch, 1974; Maho, 2009). Therefore, the terms "Sukuma" and "Kisukuma" refer to the same language and may be used interchangeably. Kisukuma is commonly used in Mwanza, Geita, Shinyanga and Simiyu regions in the southeast of Lake Victoria. It is also used in some areas of the Tabora, Singida, Rukwa, and Kigoma regions of the United Republic of Tanzania.