

**LINGUISTIC VERSUS GEOGRAPHICAL BOUNDARIES: A LEXICAL SEMANTIC  
ASSESSMENT OF LUHYA DIALECTS.**

**BY  
LUBANGAH LUTTA JOHN**

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## DECLARATION

This project work is my original work and has not been presented for the award of a degree in any other university.

Signature: .....

Date.....

**LUBANGAH LUTTA JOHN**

**C50/80433/2015**

This project work has been submitted for examination with our approval as university supervisors.

Signature .....

Date .....

**MR. LUKAKA, J.N.**

Signature .....

Date .....

**DR. MUKHWANA, A**

## **DEDICATION**

To my uncle – Wangatia Francis (Headmaster); this is a product of your push, support and inspiration. For taking care of all my needs; coming in as a parent when I got orphaned, supporting me morally and materially through my academic journey, I salute you. My wife – Rodah (Reina), son – Israel – and my Form 1 East Class 2018 – Kimuri High School; you had to go through hardships in my absence. You give me the reason to strive for excellence.

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study provides a mutual intelligibility assessment of Luhya dialects focusing on Lumarama, Luwanga, Lushisa and Lubukusu. This is through a lexical semantic approach using Johannes Schmidt's Wave Theory. The main objective of this study was to describe the dialect continua across Luhya dialects using the four sampled here and determine the impact of these dialect continua. The study revealed a high level of mutual intelligibility across these Luhya dialects studied here which is the key feature of dialect continua. This mutual intelligibility, it was established, is motivated by various social, cultural, technological and religious factors that bring the speakers of these dialects together. The phenomenon is strongly seen around dialect boundaries and has both positive and negative ramifications. Positively, the mutual intelligibility enhances interactions in various sectors such as schools, religious places, economic set ups like markets or social gatherings like in weddings, funerals and sports. Negatively, there arises cases of linguistic discrimination especially to the speakers whose dialect is not clear as it results from the contacts. Finally, the study makes recommendations key of them being: carrying out a study to fully account for and describe the picture across the dialects involving the other linguistic areas of interest (phonological, morphological and even pragmatic). This will be helpful in determining and linguistically fully describing this dialect continua picture among Luhya dialects even as the same is academically documented for future reference.

## **ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

<b>ACK</b>	Anglican Church of Kenya
<b>L1</b>	First language
<b>MoI</b>	Medium of Instruction
<b>NACOSTI</b>	National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation
<b>NGP</b>	Natural Generative Phonology
<b>SA</b>	Salvation Army Church
<b>SDA</b>	Seventh Day Adventist Church
<b>SPSS</b>	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
<b>TSC</b>	Teachers Service Commission

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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background to the Study

Luhya language falls under the Bantu languages of the Benue-Congo sub-group of the Niger-Congo language family in Central Africa. In Kenya, the language does not just exist as a language as such but rather in dialects which are: Lubukusu, Luwanga, Lumarama, Lushisa (Kisa), Lunyole, Lulogoli, Lutiriki, Luitakho, Olwisukha, Lutsotso, Lunyala Iwa Mayero, Lukabras, Lunyala Iwa buongo, Lusamia, Lukhayo, Lumarachi, Lutachoni, and Lutura, (Osogo, 1966 and Marlo, 2007).

**Figure 1.1: Map of Abaluhya Dialects Location**



**Source:** *Eworld Cat. Org (2000 – 2012) as cited by Gimode, (2015).*

In a narrowed down look at the phenomenon brought out by the Luhya dialects is an in depth focus on Lumarama, Luwanga, Lushisa and Lubukusu dialects whose speakers are Abamarama, Abawanga, Abashisa and Ababukusu respectively. These are dialects of the larger

conglomeration of Luhya dialects, which make up the Luhya language (Angogo, 1983, Itabete 1974 and Were, 1967).

This study deliberately picked on the four dialects due to the fact that the four appear “linear” on the Luhya dialects map which makes it clearer to make this assessment stretching from Lushisa to Lumarama to Luwanga and finally to Lubukusu. This was in an attempt to clearly bring out the concept of mutual intelligibility a key feature for dialect continuum across Luhya dialects.

A dialect continuum is a sequence of geographically bordering dialects, say 1-2-3-4-5-6-7., each mutually intelligible with its neighbours (Petyt 1980 and Barasa, 2014). In this case, dialect 1 which is immediately adjacent to 2 has greater mutual intelligibility with the dialect 2, 2 has greater mutual intelligibility with dialect 3 which is adjacent to it, and so on, but dialect 1 and dialect 7 may have very low mutual intelligibility even if they are in the same succession of dialects of the same language. This is due to the fact that the two are not right in contact or adjacent. Petyt (1980) as cited in Barasa (2014) further notes that while each dialect can be understood by speakers of adjacent dialects, say 4 by 3 and 5 and perhaps by 2 and 6 too, the extremes (1 and 7 say) are not mutually intelligible. This implies that it is possible to have dialects that belong to the same language group yet they are not mutually intelligible. It therefore qualifies the pick on these four dialects for the present study since they are closer to each other, a factor enhancing mutual intelligibility.

What is obvious about Petyt’s definition of dialect continuum is that dialects close together in the dialect continuum chain have higher mutual intelligibility than those dialects that are further apart. If the distance setting apart the dialects is a paramount factor to consider in as far as mutual intelligibility of dialects is concerned, then this can explain why Lubukusu and Lushisa have very low mutual intelligibility. The argument here is that since the speakers of the two dialects are further apart and hence have limited or no interactions, their mutual intelligibility or the percentage of the terms they share is low. At the same time, since Lubukusu and the Luwanga people live in a close geographical area and are in constant interaction, the mutual intelligibility between the speakers of these two dialects is high, (Barasa, 2014).

Firstly then is a look at each of these dialects and their respective speakers as used in the present study. The four dialects are a representation of what is happening across the Luhya dialects. The Abamarama who are the Lumarama speakers live in Butere sub-county of Kakamega County Kenya. Their major town is Butere, which is a significant trading centre in Kakamega County. Close to them in their major town, Mumias, are the Abawanga of Luwanga dialect. The Abamarama are, therefore, a kin to the Abawanga. Abamarama and Abawanga whose dialects are Lumarama and Luwanga respectively formed one of the major continua focused on in this study.

The dialect speakers geographically border one another as seen on the map upfront (Figure 1.1) and exhibit a high level of mutual intelligibility especially at these border points (in such areas as Shikalame, Shinamwenyuli, Emukowa and Mulambo). However, this intelligibility is lost over distance as one draws off the border to a point it is possible to distinguish these two varieties on the basis of their phonological, lexical or semantic distinctions.

This phenomenon is in agreement with what Trudgill (1991) observes and notes that dialects refer to variations between kinds of a language which are reflected in their lexicon, syntactical and phonological. The outstanding linguistic differences may develop as a result of the geographical or social separation of the speakers. In this case, Butere and Mumias sub-counties happen to border each other. Due to their contact at the geographical border, there arises some sort of non-clarity in the distinguishing features of these two dialects. One may not clearly point out whether they are addressing or listening to a Lumarama or Luwanga speaker. Such speakers occupy what this study work is describing as a “grey region” which in sociolinguistics is termed as a dialect continuum, (Wardhaugh, 2006).

The picture brought out by the two dialects is synonymous with what is depicted at the Lumarama-Lushisa and Luwanga-Lubukusu borders. For the case of Lushisa, the major town is Khwisero and the speakers are in contact with the Lumarama speakers of Butere. At their border points like Bukura which was used in this study, it is also not easy to specify to which dialect a speaker belongs as from their manner of speaking or choice of lexemes. Linguistically and specific to this study, lexically or semantically, there is an overlap that brings out a chain kind of

phenomena at the contact points of these two dialects. A focus on the Lubukusu and Luwanga dialects also yields such a scenario. While the Lubukusu speakers are said to be of Bungoma County, their contact with the Luwanga speakers of Mumias at Kabula is similarly yielding a dialect continuum which this study work has assessed.

In an attempt to answer the question: “Of what dialect are these speakers at the contact points of these dialects, and largely Luhya dialects judging by their communication?” the research here justifies the existence of dialect continua around the border of the Luhya dialects in contact. It is therefore a phenomenon of dialect continua across the formally Western province which is the home of the Luhya dialect speakers.

This research also extends into focusing on the implications of these continua especially on the people of such speech. The positive side of these implications has been fostered while the negative side of it is suppressed or discouraged through the awareness created herein.

## **1.2 Statement of the Research Problem**

From early researches on Luhya dialects, (Osogo 1966, Angogo 1983) it appears at first glance that Luhya dialects are region specific. This is also in line with the existing geographical boundaries in Kakamega County which place the Luhya dialect speakers in particular sub counties as seen from the map upfront. Ideally speaking from the perspectives of these researches and the geographical placement, there is a clear cut distinction of these dialect speakers regardless of their position of settlement in the sub counties.

Such perceptions, however, fail to take into account the concept of mutual intelligibility, a key feature of dialect continuum. This, notion of there being such a clear cut distinction upon these dialect speakers as per their geographical placement is just but an assumption. Even the earlier researches have some missing link and if researches on Luhya dialects continue to believe in such a line, we shall never understand why the Luhya speaking community has been termed a unity in diversity, (Angogo, 1983) for in actual sense, when people staying close to the borders of these sub counties (where any two of the dialects border or come into geographical border) speak, it is quite unclear to establish to which of the two dialects they belong.

As it is, there is a discrepancy in the geographical versus actual linguistic identifications of these speakers while other linguistic studies in the past have also affirmed such geographical distinctions which are erroneous. While for example geographically a speaker X at the border of Butere and Mumias will be identified as a Lumarama speaker, there will be no difference from another, say Y, being termed as a Luwanga speaker at this same border point. This same phenomenon is what this study work established to be the case at the other border points, hence cutting across Luhya dialects. Posed with such a question as of what dialect a given speaker is, particularly one staying at the border and considering this speaker's lexical choices in particular, it would be challenging to answer this. The lexical semantic precinct which is used here gives a general outlook of this phenomenon from a general wordlist that is used in bringing out this picture.

**Table 1.1: The overlap of terms across Luhya dialects**

TERM IN ENG.	STD. DIALECT A TERM	TERM AROUND BORDER ON A	TERM AROUND BORDER ON B	STD. DIALECT B TERM
T	X	<i>Y</i>	Y	Y
River	Omuchera	<i>Omwalo</i>	Omwalo	Omwalo
Husband	Omwami	<i>Omusatsa</i>	Omusatsa	Omusatsa
R	V	V	V	W
Seat	Eshifumbi	Eshifumbi	<i>Eshifumbi</i>	Eshisala
Sheep	Likondi	Likondi	<i>Likondi</i>	Lichese

As seen above, there is an overlap of terms across borders in the Luhya dialects which is creating “grey regions” between the dialects, a phenomenon termed as dialect continuum which is the center of focus to this study. Unless we change this perception of having Luhya dialects in geographic specific regions, we shall continue to have trouble with understanding the entire question of language continuum especially across Luhya dialects which can only be solved by analyzing isoglosses. Once we understand that an isogloss like an isosame and isolex can draw boundaries beyond geographical regions, we shall begin to see the answer to the problem of Luhya dialects.



### **1.3. Research Questions**

The questions this study sought to address were:

- i) Are there terms shared or used across the select Luhya dialects and to what extent off the geographical borders are they?
- ii) What are the platforms bringing into contact the Luhya dialect speakers at their border points?
- iii) What is the impact of one dialect coming into contact with another at geographical border points and around it?

### **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

The study conducted a lexical semantic assessment of the Luhya dialect continua with the following objectives:

- i) To make an assessment of Luhya dialects with regard to the mutual intelligibility of the Luhya dialect speakers.
- ii) To establish the platforms facilitating or enhancing the contact of Luhya dialects especially at their border points.
- iii) To examine the impact of Luhya dialects coming into contact, especially around their respective geographical border points.

### **1.5 Justification of the Study**

This study work has both a scientific and practical relevance. It makes an addition to such works as of Altenberg and Aijmer (1996) who take a look into the verb syntax in South-Western British English closely similar to what Muriithi (2016) does under Dholuo though this is a study into the phonological and lexical variations within the Kisumu-South Nyanza Dialect. The two, though related to this study, have not brought in the concept of contact dialects or dialects that border one another. They depart at the point in which they only focus on the variance within one dialect. What can be said to be similar to this, though still not, is what Kitavi (1992) does presenting a comparative study of the Kitui North and the Machakos dialects of Kikamba and closest is Barasa (2014) who does a study on the inter-dialect maintenance and shift but here focusing on Lubukusu and Lutachoni. He looks at the impact of these two dialects being in contact slightly

mentioning and bringing in the concept of dialect continuum though it is not given the center stage as the main subject of focus.

To the best of my knowledge, therefore, whereas such elaborate studies have been conducted basing on such dialects and languages, no study has been done having the approach used here and more so taking the lexical semantic approach and in the Wave Theory perspective. This is therefore filling this gap by undertaking a comprehensive sociolinguistic assessment of such dialect continua. It goes a great way into explaining why speakers, in what is being described here as the grey region, speak as they do and the implications thereof.

The practical relevance can be found in the fact that whereas a resident at these border points may confidently claim they are Lumarama, Luwanga or any other dialect speaker of Luhya dialects, he or she may be dismissed as being neither basing on their accent or terms they use. In response to such a state of lack of clarity in determining a speaker's dialect, this research sets out to investigate the possible avenues contributing to this state of affairs (dialect continuum phenomenon) and further considering the ramifications of this.

By virtue of Linguistics having parted from the prescriptive approach which aims at prescribing and in this case redefining such speakers, the project work is not out to check on the possibility of harmonising or putting in line the geographical versus linguistic distinctions or descriptions but rather descriptively, simply, explaining or describing the existing discrepancy in an attempt to justify the state of affairs (validate the continua across Luhya dialects) and assess the implications of such dialect continua. The study also adds to the Linguistics body of knowledge since it is presenting through scholarly documentation that indeed there exists such dialect continua across Luhya dialects, something that justifies the argument of Luhya region being a linguistically unified speech community.

### **1.6 Scope and Limitations of the Study**

Linguistic versus geographical knowledge stand out as of paramount importance to this research project. The study only focused on Luhya dialects, key of these being Lumarama vs. Luwanga, Luwanga vs. Lubukusu and Lumarama vs. Lushisa as independent dialects of Luhya language.

As stated upfront, this study deliberately picked on the four dialects as these Luhya dialects appear “linear” and in succession on the Luhya dialects map which makes it clearer in making a continuum assessment starting from Lushisa to Lumarama to Luwanga and finally to Lubukusu. These are the dialects that have been used as a sample picture on the concept of dialect continuum across Luhya dialects.

A dialect continuum as defined by (Petyt 1980) through (Barasa, 2014) is a sequential occurrence of geographically bordering dialects, sort of 1-2-3-4-5-6-7, each mutually intelligible with its neighbours. In this case, dialect 1 has greater mutual intelligibility with dialect 2, 2 has greater mutual intelligibility with dialect 3, and so on, but dialect 1 and dialect 7 may have very low mutual intelligibility even if they are in the same dialect continuum. In this case, the stretch will be from LUSHISA-LUMARAMA-LUWANGA-LUBUKUSU. Petyt (1980) as cited in Barasa (2014) adds that while each dialect can be understood by speakers of adjacent dialects, say 4 by 3 and 5 and perhaps by 2 and 6 too, the extremes (1 and 7) are not mutually intelligible.

This implies that it is possible to have dialects that belong to the same language group yet they are not mutually intelligible. It therefore qualifies the pick on the four dialects since they are close to each other, a factor enhancing mutual intelligibility. It has also been structured in a paired form so as to look at the dialects and their respective continua in bits of pairs since what is obvious about Petyt’s definition is that dialects close together in the dialect continuum have higher mutual intelligibility than those dialects that are further apart.

Barasa (2014) further argues that if distance separating dialects determines mutual intelligibility, then this can explain why Lulogoli and Lubukusu have very low mutual intelligibility. It follows that since the speakers of the two dialects are quite some distance apart and hence have limited or no interaction, the mutual intelligibility is low. At the same time, since Lubukusu and the Lutachoni people live in the close geographical area and are in constant interaction, the mutual intelligibility between the two dialects is high. Lushisa, Lumarama, Luwanga and Lubukusu score to this argument since the speakers of these dialects are in constant close interactions and in all these interactions they engage one another in their respective dialects.

The research project is also limited to the border points of the dialects as per the geographical precincts. This in mind is in a bid to establish the unaddressed dialect continua existing between the Luhya dialects even as geographically the speakers are set in various regions whose names have become synonymous of their linguistic identifications.

The project has also been conducted within the strict precincts of Schmidt's Wave Theory while the linguistic data has been collected on the lexical and semantic scales. This is how the dialect continua were established and analysed.

### **1.7 Operational Definitions of Terms and Concepts**

In this study, some terms have been used operationally for the purpose of research. The following are such terms that have been used in this study work and in the senses herein:

- i) **Dialect:** A variety/class/section of a language that is distinguished from other varieties of the same language by features of phonology, grammar, and vocabulary and by its use by a group of speakers who are set off from others geographically or socially, (Muriithi 2016). This research project uses the term dialect from the geographical perspective and not the social one.
- ii) **Standard Dialect:** A dialect clearly different from another of the same language. Such a dialect variety is the one selected and promoted by authorities. It has no variation in pronunciation as a result of being in contact with another. It is the genesis to the lexemes used in that particular language and the feeder to the written material in this language.
- iii) **Dialect Maintenance:** A consistent use of the standard dialect in various forums. Reference here is be made to the unconscious or deliberate and consistent use the Lumarama, Lushisa, Luwanga and Lubukusu dialects.
- iv) **Contact Dialects:** Dialects bordering one another geographically. Speakers of such dialects interact in various social, political or economic functions across their geographical borders.

- v) **Speech Community:** A group of people who speak a common language or dialect (Wanjala, 2009). Also called language group. Each dialect under this study has been treated as a speech community. That is, Marama, Wanga, Kisa and Bukusu speech communities.
- vi) **Intelligibility:** The status of being able to understand one another. The degree of understanding here has been established on dialect paired basis. That is, how strongly the Lumarama speakers understand Lushisa, Lumarama and Luwanga speakers or the Luwanga and Lubukusu speakers.
- vii) **Dialect Continuum:** A speech community not distinctly clear of its dialect under a given language (**plural – dialect continua**). Such speakers from the geographical sides of given dialects are mutually intelligible though this mutual intelligibility fades as one draws off the geographical border becoming distinctly clear of what dialect a speaker is.
- viii) **Grey Region:** The region of a dialect continuum. That is “the neither nor region” in the sense that you cannot draw a clear cut distinction and say that this is where dialect A begins and ends and this is where B begins. In this region, one cannot specifically state to which dialect a speaker belongs (the dialect continuum region).

## 1.8 Literature Review

This section makes an analysis of some study works done bordering the present study. The literature review done here is thematic majorly interested with the material of relevance and of close relation to the study here. This has further been clustered into the concept of dialect continuum, a focus on each of the paired dialects eliciting dialect continua studied here, a look at the phenomena of dialects coming into contact and last but not least, a focus on the theoretical framework applied in this project.

### 1.8.1 The Concept of Dialect and Dialect Continuum

In bringing the Luhya dialect continua into clear perspective, it is of paramount importance to first take a look into the general knowledge of the two terms – dialect and dialect continuum.

Chambers & Trudgill, (1980) define a dialect as a variety of a language that is a characteristic of a particular group of the language's speakers. Under this definition, the dialects or varieties of a particular language are closely related and, despite their differences, are most often largely mutually intelligible, especially if close to one another. This is the phenomena seen between Luhya dialects – exhibiting great mutual intelligibility by virtue of neighbouring one another. This intelligibility, however, fades over distance into what one can clearly tell the differences between dialects ending up with distinct dialects. The difference does not just however happen in a very sudden or clear cut way but rather it happens in some sort of spectrum/chain/gradient here termed as Dialect Continuum, as captured from what appears as a colour spectrum as below:



**Figure 1.2: Colour Spectrum: Illustration of Language/Dialect Intelligibility.**

From this, we cannot quite tell where orange becomes yellow or the yellow green, green blue while blue becomes purple. These colours indeed appear in the spectrum distinctly, but little can be said about where they begin or end. It is the same with dialects of a language. One cannot just point out as it has been stipulated geographically that a given dialect begins at point A and ends at B as such; it is a smooth transition hardly noticeable as one traverses areas with the speakers of such dialects as he or she listens to them.

To establish any difference from one dialect to another, therefore, the distinction has to be based on such a linguistic variable as phonological or lexical variance rather than the established geographical boundaries. Even still, this change or demarcation of one dialect to another will also not just be clear. It happens in a spectrum sort of transition as shown above in the colour spectrum image creating what is fluid or overlapping and causing the intersecting of the isoglosses. The area between the intersected isoglosses is the one displaying a dialect continuum and it is in such a region as this that there is very high mutual intelligibility between speakers of two different dialects. An in-depth and specific focus on this concept can further be done with

due consideration to the dialects of study here. This is being used as reflection to what is depicted by the Luhya dialects at large.

### **1.8.2 Lumarama-Luwanga Dialect Continuum**

Whereas geographical and prior studies have placed Lumarama dialect speakers exclusively in Butere sub county while Luwanga in Mumias sub-county, all of Kakamega county this is just but the ideal scenario which is not true in entirety or practically. As Kanyoro, (1983) puts it, the term Luhya which in this case is the language having the two dialects, Lumarama and Luwanga, may also be used to mean ‘those who live in Western Province’, ‘those who speak the same language’. This straight away points to the notion of mutual intelligibility at the border points.

As captured in the study background, the Lumarama and Luwanga dialect speakers geographically border one another and exhibit a high level of mutual intelligibility especially at their border points. However, this intelligibility is lost over distance as one draws off the border to a point it is possible to distinguish these two varieties on the basis of their phonological or lexical outlook. It is therefore impossible straight jacketing that within the geographical boundaries of Butere, for example, the residents here are purely, Lumarama speakers, ipso facto, Mumias with Luwanga speakers. There is a sort of overlap, a notion which indeed is captured by Trudgill (1991) and Muriithi (2016), in their argument that dialects refer to varieties of a language(s) with differences which are reflected in their lexicon, syntax and phonology.

These linguistic differences may develop as a result of the social and geographical separation of the speakers. The difference becomes pronounced over social or geographical distance. From this, we can confidently note that even though one will refer to a resident at the Lumarama-Luwanga border as a Lumarama speaker, there is quite little or nothing at all linguistically to support such a claim apart from the geographical distinctions. Butere and Mumias sub-counties happen to border each other. Due to their contact at the geographical border, there arises some sort of non-clarity in the distinguishing features of these two dialects. One may not clearly point out whether they are listening to a Lumarama or Luwanga speaker. Socio linguistically, such a scenario is what Wardhaugh, (2006) terms as a dialect continuum. Such speakers occupy what this study work is describing as a “grey region”. The phenomenon seen here with this case of

Lumarama and Luwanga dialects is just but a tip of what cuts across the Luhya dialects and this is what this study work has brought to picture.

### **1.8.3 Lumarama-Lushisa Dialect Continuum**

This section takes a brief review on the Lumarama – Lushisa contact. Lumarama and the speakers have however been discussed in the prior section and so this will simply reaffirm this earlier knowledge then relate to Lushisa. The Lushisa speakers have their major town as Khwisero, (Angogo, 1983) and the speakers are in contact with the Lumarama speakers of Butere. At their border points, it is also not easy to specify which dialect a speaker belongs to as from their manner of speaking. Linguistically, and specific to this study – lexically or semantically – there is an overlap that brings out a chain kind of phenomena at the contact points of these two dialects. This overlap points to the high mutual intelligibility at these border points for these two dialects.

### **1.8.4 Luwanga-Lubukusu Dialect Continuum**

A focus on the Lubukusu and Luwanga dialects also yields a scenario of dialect continuum. The dialect speakers are also in contact as Mumias and Matungu which are the regions for the Luwanga speakers border Bungoma having the Lubukusu speakers. While the Lubukusu speakers are of Bungoma County, their contact with the Luwanga speakers of Mumias is similarly yielding a dialects continuum which this study work has taken a focus to.

### **1.8.5 Languages in Contact**

The notion of dialect and dialect continuum can further be developed on basis of languages or dialects coming into contact.

A language or even a dialect is not just used as an end in itself terminology but it will be noted that a language or a dialect will be used in a given set up, a key approach in sociolinguistics. The settings here therefore facilitate the infiltration and overlap as noted in the prior section on Lumarama-Luwanga dialect continuum. A similar notion is captured by Winford (2003) as cited by Barasa, (2014) that language shift can be the result of extensive language contact. This study



has identified dialect contact situations and discussed them with the dialects under study in the focus.

However, even as there arises a case of infiltration and overlap of dialects in such a way that we have what this research work is terming as the grey phenomena, there are still cases where strictly the distinct dialects are in use. Giles et al., (1977) point to this fact highlighting some of the societal institutions that promote the maintenance of a language, and in this case, a dialect. Such include education, religion and the mass media. We have in this study borrowed from Giles et al and applied the same to the study.

According to McMahon (1994), Meillet (1905) proposed three causes of semantic shift namely: linguistic causes, historical causes, and social causes. Later on, Ullmann (1962) included the psychological causes of semantic shift. In his work, McMahon (1994) notes that given a word in a language, it usually inclines towards acquiring a new meaning due to its use by a particular social group or a word is used in a specific sense by some group which comes into common currency with an extended meaning” (McMahon, 1994). The present study has adapted the three causes of semantic shift as well as the psychological causes of semantic shift.

Since humans conceptualize the world, physical entities and the totality of their experiences in terms of categories, the same conceptualization and categorization processes must be relevant to language. Language may be considered to be conceptually-based, whereas its structure depends on the sets of interrelated categories encompassing the typical members of a given category, rooted in human experience and perception of the world, (Langacker, 1995). This study notes this especially as regards to the change seen in some terms as one moves from one dialect to another. While in one dialect, a certain term is conceived and categorized as general, in another, the same term is perceived and categorized as private or obscene.

Fishman (1977) notes that the use of a language in education institutions can promote maintenance when children learn reading and comprehension in that particular language. Studies by Giles et al (1977) and Fishman (1977) are of paramount support to this study work as a projection that was made has been ascertained that such cases among others are promoting the

use of the pure Luhya dialects in this region of study hence dialect maintenance which points to and actually confirms the existence of standard dialects in the region despite the presence of dialect continua.

Akida (2000) in his study on Luwanga Morphophonemics using the Natural Generative Phonology (NGP) Approach, makes a remark in his recommendations that the inhabitants of Mumias town where Luwanga is predominantly spoken have a long history of contact with other non-natives and by and large, the Luwanga spoken currently is heavily influenced by other Luhya dialects or other languages. He states that such an analysis was not particularly within the scope of his study (was beyond the scope of his study) suggesting that the study could form a basis for further analysis on the influence of other dialects and languages on Luwanga. This is what this study work therefore delves into giving it a wider approach, not only to Luwanga but also to Lushisa, Lumarama and Lubukusu which gives a picture of the entire Luhya speech community.

Languages or dialects in contact impact in two different ways as noted in this project work. There is the impact on the languages or dialects themselves, then from this arises an impact on the people using such languages or dialects. The two approaches are what this research project has addressed. On the languages or dialects themselves, there is the concept of widening and narrowing in meaning, a similar impact addressed by Khachula (2013). Thus the present study has heavily relied on Khachula for it finds this work being of great interest to the present research.

### **1.9 Theoretical Framework**

The descriptive tool for this research project is the Wave Theory, founded by Johannes Schmidt (1872) and further expounded on by Malcolm et al. (2002-2007).

Chambers & Trudgill (1980) provide a detailed description of history and features of dialectology as a framework in the study of dialects. They described it as dialect geography whose main methodology is the questionnaire which can both be direct or indirect, and use of

linguistic maps. They further point out that for the researcher to achieve reliability in data collection, the selection of informants should consist of non- mobile, older and rural residents.

Tagliamonte (2012) posits that differences noted across dialects within linguistic communities and socio geographical distributions are rule-governed. That is, language variation is not just a haphazard phenomenon, but happens rather in a systematic manner. This also plays a great part in this explanation of the variations since they happen in such a systematic manner as of a wave. As used here, the Wave theory accounts for the concept of dialects and dialect continuum in the view of mutual intelligibility. It was basically intended as a substitute to the Tree Model which less accounts for the concept of continua. This model or theory is relevant here as it appropriately accounts for the distribution of innovations in intersected patterns as is the typical case with dialect continua.

The Luhya dialects speakers border one another at various sub-county boundaries. This sets the center stage for the discussion here as the phenomenon of languages or dialects being in contact forms the genesis of a language or dialect continuum respectively. And indeed though the dialects are distinct, their contact at these border points elicits a scenario of great intelligibility described as dialect continuum which is of interest here.

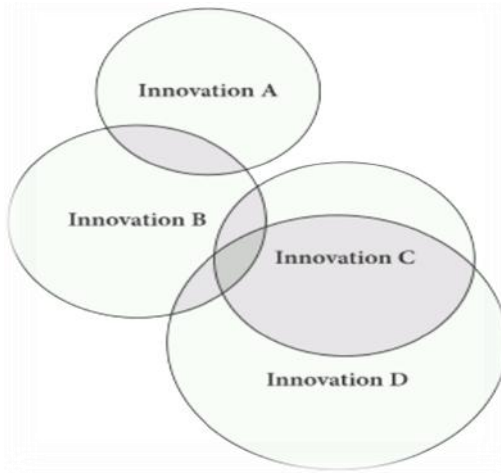
The dialect continuum is as a result of such factors as shared social functions, activities and amenities. This has its advantages and disadvantages as this study work has set out and established. Even with the fluidity and the general picture of dialect continua created, there still exist cases of standard or pure dialect use.

Key in the Wave Theory is the tenet positing that changes in a language are said to originate from a central point as waves in a pool do when a stone is dropped into it. With this, the ripple waves from such a center will intersect with those from another center where another stone is dropped. The same fact applies to the scenario where there are several centers. That is, each instance of language change arises somewhere within the network, and from there diffuses to adjacent speaker groups. The propagation of the change can thus be compared to a wave which

expands away from its centre as the new feature is adopted across a broader territory. These waves are independent of each other, and are not necessarily nested, (Alexandre, 2014).

As Bloomfield (1933: 317) puts it, “[d]ifferent linguistic changes may spread, like waves, over a speech-area, and each change may be carried out over a part of the area that does not coincide with the part covered by an earlier change.” Likewise, an innovation targeting a small cluster of dialects can be followed by a later one targeting a larger group.

This argument points to the concept of isoglosses and why they intersect, a concept presented diagrammatically as below:



**Figure 1.3: Diagrammatic Illustration of the Wave Theory**

The same can be illustrated on a colour spectrum as below:



From the colour spectrum, just as we cannot quite pinpoint where colour X begins and ends, we cannot quite show where certain Luhya dialects begin and end using linguistic parameters. As one travels from Lushisa end to Lubukusu end, he or she will not be able to establish the linguistic boundaries of the dialects encountered here. The existing are just but geographical demarcations which are not in tandem with the linguistic assessment one will establish. The change is so smooth and hardly noticeable, though it actually happens to state one can distinctly point out the difference between dialect A and B.

Hugo Schuchardt stands out among the advocates of the Wave Theory while lately (2002-2007), Malcolm Ross and his colleagues, theorized that best way in which the Oceanic languages can be understood is through this theory, the Wave Theory.

The theory can however not be said to be self-sufficient in the study of dialects. Though considered the best, the researcher here notes that it has some weakness. For one it fails the accountability threshold. That is, given the literal spread of a wave, it will spread depending on the force of an object in that given pool or pond.

The higher the force, the wider the area the wave will spread. This, however, with language, or in this case, dialect, cannot be accounted for under this theory. It simply presents the manner in which the innovations or changes in a language or dialect spread but does not explain why, for example, a given word spreads past a given geographical border while another one from the same language or dialect does not cross the same border. This is the major weakness noted that the Wave Theory proponents do not address at all.

### **1.10 Research Hypothesis**

The study set out with the following hypotheses:

- i) There exist regions around the Luhya dialect borders where it is not quite distinct which dialect the speakers here use.
- ii) The lack of distinctness in the dialect of some Luhya dialect speakers is as a result of any two dialect speakers bordering and interacting across the borders in various social activities.
- iii) The lack of clarity in dialect for the speakers around or at the border points of Luhya dialects impacts both positively and negatively on the speakers and dialects themselves.

### **1.11 Methodology**

This section provides a descriptive account of the procedure employed in gathering and processing of empirical data pertinent to this assessment and project at large. It adopts both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The anchor here is basically qualitative as derived from

the research questionnaires, interview schedules and wordlists. Data from these is then converted into quantitative for purpose of analysis.

The main sections discussed include: the geographical location of the study, target population, sample size and sampling techniques, research instruments, validity and reliability of the instruments, data collection procedures ethical concerns and data analysis techniques.

### **1.11.1 Geographical Location of Study**

The research area stretched from Khwisero through Butere, Mumias to Bungoma. The region provided the expected speakers of the dialects of study. Khwisero was a resourceful area having the Lushisa speakers, Butere having the Lumarama, Mumias having the Luwanga while Bungoma carries the Lubukusu speakers. The contact points considered were Bukura, Shinamwenyuli and Kabula for Lushisa-Lumarama, Lumarama-Luwanga and Luwanga-Lubukusu contacts respectively. As a researcher, I was also interested in traversing this linguistically rich region that is perceived to have specific dialect speakers in specific regions and experience the so perceived clear cut distinction of the speakers or instead the language spectrum.

The region was also chosen because of its accessibility and cost factors. In support, Best and Kahn (1993) as cited by Barasa (2014) note that research requires careful thought about a number of factors; accessibility and cost factors become legitimate considerations. For purposes of this study, the region of study was selected based on research location findings that promote accessibility, familiarity, economy and immediate rapport with the respondents. Finally, the region was also chosen to control on some extraneous factors that could have arisen because of a researcher's unfamiliarity with the region of study and challenges of language barrier. To this region and dialects, the researcher here was well versed.

### **1.11.2 Target Population**

The target population for this research was the Lumarama, Luwanga, Lushisa and Lubukusu speech communities. The four speech communities belong to Luhya language group found majorly in Western Province of Kenya.

The minimum age of the respondents was forty years and those who had been residents in these regions for at least forty years. This age and period of residence was purposely chosen by conviction that it has a relatively systematic acquisition form of the dialects which would in turn enable the researcher to assess any linguistic variances (Muriithi 2016). Speakers of this age and duration of stay here were therefore those who had mastered the dialects and could not also be said to have been affected by virtue of contact for staying in any other region by dialect or language speakers of such places.

This is also in line with what Chambers and Trudgill (1980) describe as dialect geography whose main methodology is the questionnaire that can both be direct or indirect, and use of linguistic maps. They further point out that for the researcher to achieve reliability in data collection, the selection of informants should consist of non- mobile, older and rural residents.

Provision of the translation slightly compromised the age factor as the translator had to be well acquainted with English. However, still, they are individuals who are equally well acquainted with both languages (English and the respective dialects each provided the translation in). The translations that were provided were also cross-checked from people meeting the threshold above (at least forty years of age and of at least forty years as residents in the areas of study).

### **1.11.3 Sample Size and Sampling Procedure**

A sample is a smaller portion of a population selected with due consideration to represent all the main features of the whole population, (Borg and Gall, 1989). This means that the characteristics of the target population have to be represented in the sample selected.

In sociolinguistics, Sebba (1974) defines a sample as a quantity used for description depending on the issue being described and that the researcher decides what sample size to aim from; a subsample of a sample frame that is much smaller than the sample frame, but large enough that you can have confidence in it. This is because of the homogenous language behavior that is unlike other kinds of behaviour and so allows for smaller samples, (Barasa, 2014). Labov (1966) recommends 25 subjects for every 100,000 speakers.

With these considerations at hand, a purposive sampling was used to select the respondents based on their ethnicity, age and length of stay in the areas of study. The researcher selected fifty native speaker respondents, ten from both sides of dialects bordering one another (those not within the dialect continua) comparing their data against twenty from either side of the dialect continua regions. The target population therefore comprised those who live close and away from the borders of neighbouring speech communities.

The respondents were selected through purposeful sampling within such research areas as Lunza, Mumias, Khwisero and Bungoma, granting the typical dialect data for Lumarama, Luwanga, Lushisa and Lubukusu respectively while areas of Bukura, Shinamwenyuli and Kabula provided the data for the infiltrated or grey regions as contact points of speakers in such places. Bukura represented the mix of Lumarama and Lushisa dialects, Shinamwenyuli the mix for Luwanga and Kabula the mix between Luwanga and Lubukusu.

#### **1.11.4 Validity and Reliability of Instruments**

This research project used the following research instruments: questionnaire, interview schedules and word lists.

Validity ensures that the test items capture and reflect the content that the test is out to assess (Borg and Gall, 1989). It ensures that the instruments cover all if not most of the areas that concern the focus of the study as identified in the objectives. In this case, information on the four dialects and how they overlap in their lexical and semantic aspects was gathered. Two supervisors from the department of Linguistics and Languages scrutinized the instruments and made necessary observations that guided the study so that the instruments elicit adequate data. Translations on the word lists was done by well acquainted speakers of both the source and target languages – some of whom work as translators, are language teachers or seasoned speakers of both languages here.

Reliability is an indicator of the level to which an instrument measures the same feature or gives close to similar results from a series of tests. It is the exactness of the measuring instrument. A reliable instrument measures the same reading on different occasions provided that the attribute



being measured does not vary in value (Vernon, 1974). Prior studies close to this have employed the use of questionnaires, wordlists and interview schedules and proved reliable. Close to this is what Barasa, (2014) does on the Lubukusu and Lutachoni dialects using these instruments which proves quite efficient and reliable even to this study work.

#### **1.11.5 Procedure**

Kombo and Tromp (2006) note that data collection procedure involves the researcher seeking permit before embarking on the study and then administering research instruments. The researcher was approved by the Department of Linguistics and Languages of the University of Nairobi then sought permission from the Ministry of Education's National Commission for Science Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) before embarking on the research in Kakamega and Bungoma Counties. In addition, the researcher informed the local leaders in the region of the research.

#### **1.11.6 Data Collection**

Data collection entails gathering of information to serve or prove some facts, (Kombo and Tromp, 2006). It is done to enhance a researcher's conceptualization and comprehension of a puzzling issue and make clear the facts by collecting views, perceptions, observations, practices and habits for analysis, (Kombo and Tromp, 2006). The researcher must have a clear mastery and understanding of the instruments to be used, the respondents and the study region, (Barasa, 2014).

Data was collected using questionnaires, word lists, and interview schedule instruments. Questionnaires were preferred for this study because they enabled the researcher to reach a large sample within limited time, ensured confidentiality and gathering of more candid and objective replies from respondents, (Wambiri and Muthee, 2010). These are captured in the appendices. Both close and open ended questions were used in data collection in this research project.

Word lists here were used to determine the words used for specific aspect or things by the residents close to the borders and to the interior regions of the dialects of focus here. This was in a bid to establish the typical dialect terms against the dialect continua terms, the difference being as a result of the dialects coming into contact at border points.

Interview schedules were issued mainly to residents of regions perceived to be having the expected dialect continua of Bukura, Shinamwenyuli and Kabula. They were in a bid to establish how such speakers identify themselves and do a comparison of their response to the data they have provided in the wordlist against typical or pure dialect speakers' data. They also granted the response to objectives two and three of this study which are:

- i) To establish the platforms facilitating or enhancing the contact of Luhya dialects especially at their border points.
- ii) To examine the impact of Luhya dialects coming into contact, especially around their respective geographical border points.

#### **1.11.7 Ethical Considerations**

The researcher first introduced himself to the respondents and assured them of confidentiality of the information being collected. The researcher gave respondents an opportunity to ask questions for clarification where they had any doubts. The researcher also briefed and debriefed the respondents on the nature of the research by giving full explanations on the research to gain informed consent, and also explained the importance of the results.

#### **1.11.8 Data Analysis Techniques & Presentation**

Kombo (2006) notes that data analysis is the examination of what has been collected in a survey or experiment with a view of making deductions and inferences. Data collected from the questionnaires, wordlists and interview schedules was basically qualitative. This was therefore coded for analysis by the use of descriptive statistic (frequencies and percentage) using the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (S.P.S.S). The descriptive analysis was appropriate for this study because it involved the describing, analyzing and interpreting dialect contact circumstances that are prevailing at the time of the study.

An inventory of the data collected was made. This was then categorized according to their sources or regions within the dialect speaking regions as Lunza, Shinamwenyuli, Shikalame, Mumias, Kabula, Bungoma, Khwisero and Bukura. Lunza in this case was a representation data for typical Lumarama use. Shinamwenyuli is a location in the Lumarama region bordering Luwanga speakers and it was therefore the focal point for the speakers of the mix between Lumarama and Luwanga. Shikalame on the other hand brought out the picture of the speakers of the Luwanga-Lumarama mix in the Luwanga region while Mumias yielded data from the typical Luwanga speakers. Kabula data gathered in this research project shows a mix of Lubukusu and Luwanga dialects just as Bukura for Lushisa and Lumarama while Khwisero reflects the typical Lushisa.

The word lists brought out a phenomenon showing an overlap in some lexical terms used on either side of borders. Such was pivotal in the justification of the existence of dialect continua. This was through the classifications based on lexical variants and an analysis into how such variants impact the communication in various set ups such as in sports, politics, religion and education.

Finally, a description and analysis of the data was carried out within the framework of the Johannes Schmidt's Wave Theory. The findings were also presented using tables, sketch maps and charts.

Proceeding on, therefore, is an analysis on the data collected, this slated in chapters two and three. Each of these chapters is out to address an objective of this study. Chapter two offers and therefore affirms the existence of dialect continua across Luhya dialects as represented by the four dialects studied here (Lushisa, Lumarama, Luwanga and Lubukusu). Three takes a look at the platforms facilitating or enhancing the occurrence of dialects continua across these dialects, that is, how the speakers of these dialects get into contact and then the impact of such continua as seen from the mutual intelligibility of the speakers.

## CHAPTER TWO

### SAMPLE LUHYA DIALECT LEXICAL SEMANTIC FEATURES

#### 2.1 Introduction

The purpose of the present study was to conduct a lexical semantic assessment of selected Luhya dialects – Lushisa, Lumarama, Luwanga and Lubukusu – in a bid to ascertain the existence of dialect continua between them and largely among Luhya dialects. In this chapter, therefore, a focus is given on the analysis and discussion of research findings of the study. The findings are discussed under the following objectives of the study:

- i) To ascertain the existence and possibly determine the stretch or extent of dialect continua through the select Luhya dialects.
- ii) To establish the platforms facilitating or enhancing the contact of Luhya dialects especially at their border points.
- iii) To examine the impact of Luhya dialects coming into contact, especially around their respective geographical border points.

With these in mind, the data which had been earlier on collected was analyzed. This was done using the Wave Theory as the selected theory for the study. During the data collection, the researcher was not only interested in the words which were found overlapping across geographical boundaries of the dialects of study but also those that were striking out the differences among the dialects (Lumarama, Lushisa, Luwanga and Lubukusu).

The data used included words in English whose translations were given in the four dialects of study. The process of data collection involved consultations with informants who were competent speakers of Lumarama, Lushisa, Luwanga and Lubukusu dialects. The main reason for carrying out the interviews was to determine the platforms bringing the dialects into contact and the impacts thereof. The collected data would also be important in presenting the views of the speakers in the dialect continua region towards the entire dialect continuum phenomenon. The oral interviews were conducted on different days during the month of August, 2018.

## **2.2 Instrument Return Rate**

The sample size of the respondents was 30 from each dialect making a total of 120 for the four dialects considered. Of these, 103 returned the questionnaires. The response rate was 85.83 percent. The sample size of pure or typical dialect speakers was 10 and with the 4 dialects studied this had a total target of 40 respondents. 33 of these returned the questionnaires, a response rate of 82.5 percent. At the border points, 20 respondents were targeted from each side of the border representing the dialects. This makes a total of 80. 75 of these returned the questionnaires, a return rate of 93.75 percent.

## **2.3 Demographic Information in Lexical-Semantic Analyses**

Demographic information of the respondents was sought. They were requested to indicate their personal information which was categorized into dialect, point of residence in the region of study, age and duration of stay in the respective areas of study. Age and duration of stay in the region were of importance here as the elderly and at the same time those who have been in the area longer are perceived to have a good mastery of the dialects of study. All this was established prior to the issuance of questionnaires, wordlists and interview schedules.

Proceeding on, therefore, this chapter provides a highlight of the various lexical semantic features of a sample of Luhya dialects as studied here (Lushisa, Lumarama, Luwanga and Lubukusu). It makes an in depth focus on the differences and resemblances of these four dialects in a paired approach, paired as per their proximity. In this sense, therefore, we have Lushisa – Lumarama, Lumarama – Luwanga and last but not least Luwanga – Lubukusu.

Also, a dialect continuum is a chain of dialects which geographically border one another, say P-Q-R-S-T-U-V, each being mutually intelligible with its adjacent dialect (Petyt, 1980) as cited in Barasa (2014). In this case, dialect P has greater mutual intelligibility with dialect Q, Q has greater mutual intelligibility with dialect R, and so on, but dialect P and dialect V may have very low mutual intelligibility even if they are in the same chain of dialects of the same language by virtue of them not being adjacent. Petyt (1980) as cited in Barasa (2014) further observes that while each dialect can be understood by speakers of adjacent dialects, say S by T and U and perhaps by R and V too, the extremes (P and V say) are not mutually intelligible. This implies

that it is possible to have dialects that belong to the same language group yet they are not mutually intelligible. It therefore qualifies the pick on these four dialects and the pairing done here since they are closer to each other, a factor enhancing mutual intelligibility.

The paramount argument to be adopted from Petyt's definition is that the dialects close together in the dialect continuum have a higher mutual intelligibility than those dialects that are further apart. If the distance between dialects affects the ability of speakers of varied dialects to understand one another, then this can explain why Lulogoli and Lubukusu have very low mutual intelligibility. The speakers of the two dialects are further apart and hence have limited or no interaction, the mutual intelligibility is low. As for this study, since Lubukusu and the Luwanga people live in a close geographical area and are in constant interaction, the mutual intelligibility between the two dialects is high, (Barasa, 2014) but a comparison of Lushisa and Lubukusu is bound to bring out several differences not only lexical-semantically but also considering other linguistic levels of language study.

This chapter is also addressing the lexical semantic differences and resemblances even as it presents the geographical locations of these dialects. The geographical locations of these dialects is therefore of concern here as means of drawing the relation between the distance between the dialects and any resemblances or differences.

#### **2.4 Geographical Areas of Lushisa – Lumarama Dialect Continuum**

The two dialects (Lushisa and Lumarama) have their speakers as Kisa and Marama respectively. They remain in very close contact. Geographically, the Lumarama speakers (Abamarama) occupy Butere constituency or district. The Kisa, speaking Olushisa, on the other hand occupy Khwisero District.

Key here however is where the two dialects get in touch. Standing out in this case are two main trading centers, Bukura and Khwisero. The two are key as they are serving speakers of both dialects at their geographical borders. What this study could not establish is the stretch off the border that loan or borrowed terms from either sides were being used. But as seen from the word lists compiled herein, there is a clear show of overlap of words to or from these two dialects.

This study focused on Bukura which apart from trade has other facilities serving residents of both dialects. Such amenities include the Bukura Institute of Agriculture where students, teachers and parents alike from these dialects freely use their dialects without any restriction of language in their various interactions. With such, dealing with an individual at this border point or at this trading center, is quite a task establishing to which dialect they belong as the natives here speak in more or less the same way to a linguist even as reflected in the word list gathered here. They will however claim to be Lushisa or Lumarama speakers, an argument that is merely geographical (based on the existing geographical borders) but not linguistic.

## 2.5 Lexical and Semantic Resemblances and Differences of Lushisa and Lumarama

The two dialects, Lumarama and Lushisa, bring out a very close relation with more of resemblances than differences. The wordlist below has a sample of the words used in establishing these differences or resemblances. The words highlighted in italics show those that to some extent display the determined lexical semantic differences between Lushisa and Lumarama dialects. A common wordlist was used in the study and the data collected sampled and classified in relation to the sources.

**Table 2.1: A sample list lexical semantic resemblances and differences in Lushisa and Lumarama.**

<u>English</u>	<u>Lushisa</u>	<u>Lumarama</u>
Divide	Okhukabula	<i>Okhukaba</i>
Disease	Obulwale	Obulwale
Drag	Okhukhwesa	<i>Okhung'wesa</i>
Defeat	Okhuyomba	Okhuyomba / Okhushira
Enemy	Omusuku	Omusuku
Exceed	Okhuyoomba	<i>Okhubira</i>
Examine	Okhurangala	<i>Okhunoneresia</i>
Friend	Omulina/Omusiepi	<i>Omwitsa</i>
Fur	Obwoya	<i>Obukuya</i>
Feathers	Amabaha	Amabaa

Farm	Omukunda	<i>Indalo</i>
Fool	Omuyingwa	Eshiyingwa
Hunger	Inzala	Inzala
Happy	Yanza	Yanza
Horn	Olwika	Olwika
Hole	Obuko/Omulu	<i>Obwina</i>
Mother	Mama	Mama
Shake	Techesia/Renjia	<i>Resia</i>
Wonder	Okhuchenya	Okhuchenya
Poverty	Obutakha	<i>Obumanani</i>

This wordlist is however not objective as such because the researcher has purposefully tried to strike a balance between the lexical semantic resemblances and differences picking ten words for each case (resemblances and differences). The research as noted upfront established that the two dialects have very narrow cases of lexical-semantic differences such as:

- i) Poverty termed as “Obutakha” in Lushisa but “Obumanani” in Lumarama.
- ii) Shake – “Techesia/Renjia” in Lushisa but “Resia” in Lumarama
- iii) Hole– “Obuko” in Lushisa but “Obwina” in Lumarama.

Such were very clear distinctions lexical semantically. However, for other words, a different linguistic approach had to be used to strike out the differences. In this case, the researcher was forced to employ the morphological knowledge, though this was not to be the case for this research for it was out of the study scope. Such cases include words such as:

- i) Divide being “Okhukabula” in Lushisa and “Okhukaba” in Lumarama
- ii) Drag being “Okhukhwesa” in Lushisa and “Okhung’wesa” in Lumarama
- iii) Feathers “Amabaha” in Lushisa and “Amabaa” in Lumarama.

As seen here, the difference is simply morphological with a section of the words changing but not the entire word. Lexical semantic resemblances dominated this sample list as follows:



- |             |          |
|-------------|----------|
| i) Disease  | Obulwale |
| ii) Enemy   | Omusuku  |
| iii) Hunger | Inzala   |
| iv) Happy   | Yanza    |
| v) Horn     | Olwika   |

The two dialects were noted to use the same terms as seen above. Again, in this case, another linguistic parameter can be used to draw out further differences. One can approach the terms phonologically to establish if there exists any difference since the researcher actually detected there is. However, lexical semantically, these were the resemblances established.

Having focused on the lexical semantic resemblances and differences in Lumarama and Lushisa dialects, we, in the next sub-section, focus on the semantic or lexical similarities and differences in Lumarama and Luwanga. This has also been done with regard to the geographical location of this dialect continuum.

## **2.6 Geographical Areas of Lumarama – Luwanga Dialect Continuum**

In a bid to establish the geographical areas of this section of continuum, what stood out was the formerly Butere-Mumias District. In fact, to a non-native but someone who has been in Kenya, Butere-Mumias appears one and the same place as a mention of Butere usually elicits or brings to surface Mumias and the other way round. This is key to this study, as indeed the speakers of Lumarama and Luwanga reside in these two places (Butere and Mumias) respectively and having been in the same district at some point, there is already a hint on some possible linguistic relatedness here. Currently, however, it is no longer Butere-Mumias District but Butere and Mumias sub-counties of Kakamega County. This has however not changed much of the interactions in as far as the contact of the speakers from the two dialects is concerned.

Lumarama speakers' occupancy has been discussed upfront and here therefore, the focus will only be given to where and how these two dialects here (Lumarama and Lubukusu) come into contact hence forming a dialect continuum. To this study, the researcher took a focus on the border point stretching from Mulambo shopping center to Imanga junction. This in separation of

the speakers from the two dialects is just but a road. Dotted along this road are churches, schools, administrative offices and trade centers. Lumarama speakers here are in close touch with the Luwanga speakers of Mumias West in the places such as Shihaka, Shikalame and Imanga. Mumias town also, though not on the border of the two dialects was noted as a key instrumental center enhancing this continuum. A part from trade, the town is a potent hub for education having educational institutions, health facilities and recreational sites that serve people from either dialects and beyond.

## 2.7 Lexical and Semantic Resemblances and Differences of Lumarama and Luwanga

From the study here, the following is just but a sample of the terms captured here which were found to display the lexical semantic resemblances and differences.

**Table 2.2: A sample lexical semantic resemblances and differences in Lumarama and Luwanga.**

<u>English</u>	<u>Lumarama</u>	<u>Luwanga</u>
Axe	Imbatsi	<i>Iyaywa</i>
Backyard	Emukungo	Olukoongo
Bathe	Okhwisinga	Okhwisinga
Blood	Amatsaai	<i>Amalasile</i>
Examine	Okhunoneresia	<i>Rangaala</i>
Eucalyptus	Omutarakwa	<i>Imbeko</i>
Friend	Omwitsa	Omwitsa
Fur	Obukuya	<i>Obwoya</i>
Feathers	Amabaa	Amabaa
Happy	Yanza	<i>Sangaala</i>
Horn	Olwika	Olwika
Hole	Obwina	<i>Liitikho</i>
Knife	Omubano	<i>Imbalo</i>
Sick	Omulwale	Omulwale

Suffer	Nyakhana	Nyakhana
Sugarcane	Omukhonye	Omung'onye
Swamp	Olutende	Oluteende
Speak	Boola	<i>Lomaloma</i>
Youth	Omubuukha	<i>Omuraka</i>
Medicine	Omusala	Omusaala

Also, highlighted here, are the terms reflecting the lexical semantic differences.

<i>English</i>	<i>Lumarama</i>	<i>Luwanga</i>
Axe	Imbatsi	Iyaywa
Blood	Amatsaai	Amalasila
Eucalyptus	Omutarakwa	Imbeko
Fur	Obukuya	Obwoya
Knife	Omubano	Imbalo

This is a sample outlook of the actual picture in as far as Luwanga and Lumarama refer to the terms used here. What was of interest to this study here also was the actual image at the border. The guiding question here was: “Do the individuals at the border points reflect the distinctions as seen above?” and from the study done at Shinamwenyuli which is at the Lumarama-Luwanga border, residents here were given the same terms without being asked to provide Lumarama or Luwanga terms. This was a focus on the residents from the geographically Lumarama and Luwanga sides. Theirs was a slightly different outlook as below:

<i>English</i>	<i>Lumarama-Luwanga Border Term</i>
Axe	Imbatsi
Blood	Amatsaai
Eucalyptus	Omutarakwe
Fur	Obukuya
Knife	Omubano

The residents here were found to be using these terms as such, regardless of whether they claim to be Lumarama or Luwanga speakers. This is a typical dialect continuum outlook.

A resemblance focus on the two dialects was also done and below is a sample of some words that were found bearing the same term in both Lumarama and Luwanga:

Bathe	Okhwisinga
Friend	Omwitsa
Feathers	Amabaa
Horn	Olwika
Medicine	Omusala
Swamp	Olutende

These terms can be taken as a flection that much as the two are treated as distinct dialects, they still bear resemblances, a further pointer towards the dialect continuum existing between the Lumarama and Luwanga. To further on this discussion is yet another pair of dialects considered here (Luwanga and Lubukusu). This has also been discussed first with a look at geographical areas of this dialect continuum.

## **2.8 Geographical Areas of Luwanga – Lubukusu Dialect Continuum**

Luwanga speakers occupy Mumias Sub-County and Matungu Sub-County of Kakamega County. Both Mumias and Matungu are in touch with Bungoma County which is the home for the Lubukusu speakers. Bungoma County is one of the forty-seven counties created under the new constitution of Kenya 2010. It is located in the formerly Western Province of Kenya along the border with Uganda. Bungoma County covers an area of three thousand and thirty two square kilometers (3,032km<sup>2</sup>). As per the 2009 Kenya Population and Housing Census Report (Republic of Kenya, 2009), about 53% of inhabitants are Lubukusu speakers (759,389).

Of prominence to this study is the contact point between the Lubukusu and Luwanga speakers. This in particular is Kabula which is a shopping center at the border of the two dialects, Lubukusu and Luwanga. The study concentrated here in a bid to establish how the two dialects have impacted upon one another for in this shopping center, the speakers from the two dialects of study mingle in different ways using their respective dialects.

## 2.9 Lexical and Semantic Resemblances and Differences of Luwanga and Lubukusu

Similar to the prior studies touching the Lushisa-Lumarama and Lumarama-Luwanga, the researcher here also sought to point out any existing lexical semantic resemblances and differences focusing on Luwanga and Lubukusu. Below is a wordlist extracted from the comprehensive wordlist used during data-collection:

**Table 2.3: A sample list of lexical semantic resemblances and differences in Luwanga and Lubukusu.**

<u>English</u>	<u>Luwanga</u>	<u>Lubukusu</u>
Axe	Iyaywa	Eaywa
Day	Inyanga	<i>Kumusi</i>
Bathe	Okhwisinga	Khukhwisinga
Blood	Amalasile	<i>Kamafuki</i>
Fool	Omusilu	Omusilu
Mother	Mama	<i>Mai</i>
Friend	Omwitsa	<i>Omusale</i>
Hole	Litikho	<i>Liloo</i>
Feathers	Amabaa	<i>Kamafumbo</i>
Knife	Imbalu	Embalu
Sugarcane	Omung'onye	<i>Kumwiba</i>
Hole	Obwina	<i>Liitikho</i>
Wife	Omukhasi	Omukhasi
Youth	Omuraka	Omuraka
Mystery	Amangalimwa	<i>Kamaya</i>
Maize	Amatumwa	Katumwa
Name	Elira	<i>Lisina</i>
Night	Eshilo	Musilo
Poverty	Obutambi	Butambi
River	Omwalo	<i>Luluchi</i>

From this, the highlighted words mark out the cases which have the differences in Luwanga and Lubukusu dialects. Be it noted here also that this difference is just in the terms in Luwanga and Lubukusu but just as seen in the other dialects, the different terms in these dialects are both referring to the same word in English. A sample of these differences is singled out as follows:

<i>English</i>	<i>Luwanga</i>	<i>Lubukusu</i>
Blood	Amalasila	Kamafuki
Feathers	Amabaa	Kamafumbo
Sugarcane	Omung'onye	Kumwiba
Mystery	Amangalimwa	Kamaya
River	Omwalo	Luluchi

A sample for the similarities or resemblances they have been summed up as follows:

Fool	Omusilu
Wife	Omukhasi
Youth	Omuraka

Lubukusu displayed quite a great show of differences and few resemblances not only with those dialects away from it but also even with those it is in touch with. From the word list used here, it can be seen that even those terms that appear almost similar, they have some morphological differences. Even the ones pointed above can still have a phonological variance.

## **2.10 Wordlist Data Analyses**

A total of 50 terms were considered across the dialects. These terms were presented in English and their translation given in the dialects of study here. A comparison was done in the pairs of Lushisa and Lumarama, Lumarama and Luwanga and Luwanga and Lubukusu. The pairing done with respect to proximity as per the geographical border points – Lushisa speakers bordering Lumarama, Lumarama bordering Luwanga while Luwanga speakers geographically bordering Lubukusu speakers. From these 30 Lushisa words were found to match those in Lumarama, 20 Lumarama matched the Luwanga while 8 Luwanga terms marched those in Lubukusu. The percentages of these are as follows:

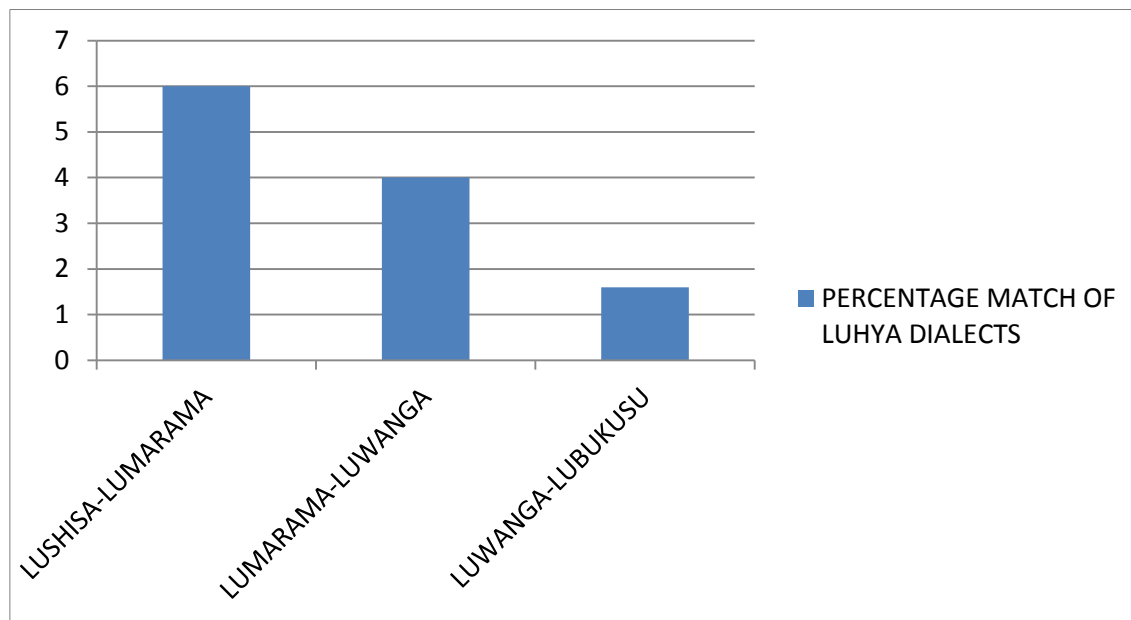
Lushisa-Lumarama	60%	Luwanga-Lubukusu	16%
Lumarama-Luwanga	40%		

This was tabulated as below:

Contact Dialect	Matching Terms (x/50)	%Match
Lushisa-Lumarama	30	60
Lumarama-Luwanga	20	40
Luwanga-Lubukusu	8	16

Graphically this observation is as represented below:

**Figure 2.1 Percentage match of Luhya dialects (×10%)**



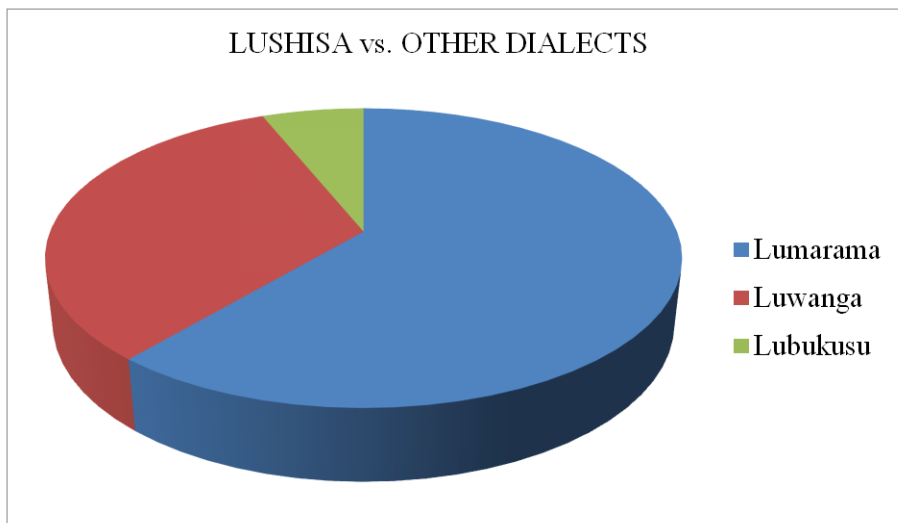
Lushisa and Lumarama dialects were found to be sharing more terms than was the case between Lumarama and Luwanga. From this it can be said there exist a stronger mutual intelligibility between Lushisa and Lumarama than there is between Lumarama and Luwanga. This can make us conclude that there must be a greater interaction of the Lushisa and Lumarama speakers than there is between the Lumarama and Luwanga since such interactions as seen upfront are the ones behind such intelligibility and the entire phenomenon of dialect continuum.

This same argument fits for the comparison of the Lumarama-Luwanga and Luwanga-Lubukusu. Whereas Lumarama and Luwanga were noted to have a 40% mutual intelligibility, a comparison of Luwanga and Lubukusu yielded a 16% mutual intelligibility something that brings us to the conclusion that Lubukusu is distanced from the other three dialects in such a way that if all these dialects were to be presented linearly, Lubukusu could be seen inclined or having stronger mutual intelligibility to the dialects on its right than to those on its left; while all the other dialects would be seen inclined stronger to their left as seen below:



This phenomenon can be seen from the following comparison of these dialects basing on the geographical closeness of the speakers. Here, a comparison of the terms in English as translated to the respective dialects was done. The terms in Lushisa, the dialect of the speakers on one end of the area of study, were compared with those of the other dialects (Lumarama, Luwanga and Lubukusu). Between Lushisa and Lumarama dialects the intelligibility is as established above which yielded a 60% relatedness or mutual intelligibility. Lushisa against Luwanga had 16 out of 50 terms in common which represented a 32% mutual intelligibility and between Lushisa and Lubukusu there were 3 terms (6%). On a pie chart, this is as follows:

**Figure 2.2: Lushisa vs. Other Dialects (Mutual intelligibility of Lushisa vs. other dialects)**





## **2.11 Conclusion**

In a nutshell, it is clear that Luhya dialects as they stand out are indeed existent as seen from the differences they elicit in their terminologies. If a dialect can use a given term which is not in another then the two dialects are indeed distinct.

Differences seen here should however not be taken as an indication that these are different languages since the dialects studied here still showed that the speakers still understand one another though from different dialects. This is mutual intelligibility; an aspect seen from the lexical semantic resemblances. Still, the in-depth study done at the Lumarama-Luwanga border with some similar terms being used across the borders here also points to stronger mutual intelligibility here, all these being a reflection of dialect continua.

This chapter has focused mainly on the lexical semantic similarities and differences of the dialects under study and the areas where these dialects (Lushisa, Lumarama Luwanga and Lubukusu) form dialect continua. The next chapter looks at how the four dialects under study come into contact and the effects thereof.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **LUHYA DIALECTS IN CONTACT**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter highlights the platforms enhancing dialect continua across the Luhya dialects as brought out by the four dialects studied here which are the dialects in contact this is derived from the data of the study, findings, analysis and interpretation as stated in the objectives of this research project. Different factors bring the speakers of the Luhya dialects together hence serving as the trigger factors towards dialect continua across the Luhya dialects as discussed in this chapter. Such factors as discussed here include socio-cultural forces, economic setup, political domain, religion, education and technological. These are seen to cause new meanings to be attached to the already existing lexical items the dialects studied.

The phenomena brought out in this project is largely what happens in the case of semantic shift, borrowing and maintenance. These concepts have played an instrumental role in an attempt to place a finger on exactly what is causing the continua across Luhya dialects. Meillet (1905) contributes majorly on what causes semantic shifts in a language suggesting linguistic causes, historical causes and social causes. Contributions of writers like McMahan (1994) and Langacker (1995) are acknowledged in this chapter.

#### **3.2 Factors Bringing Varied Dialect Speakers into Contact.**

The study on dialect continuum, as mentioned upfront is a concept noted to be touching on innovations in a language hence involving such concepts as language shift, borrowing and maintenance. According to McMahan (1994) and Meillet (1905) there are proposed three causes of semantic shift namely: linguistic causes, historical causes, and social causes. Ullmann (1962) includes the psychological causes of semantic shift. In his work, McMahan (1994) notes that given a word it will tend to acquire a new meaning due to its use by a particular social group or a word is used in a specific sense by some group which comes into common currency with an extended meaning.

Since humans conceptualize the world, physical entities and the totality of their experiences in terms of categories, the same conceptualization and categorization processes must be relevant to language. Language may be considered to be conceptually-based, whereas its structure depends on the sets of interrelated categories encompassing the typical members of a given category, rooted in human experience and perception of the world, (Langacker, 1995). This guides this study in as far as the semantic shifts are concerned.

Although the subdivision into linguistic (or language-internal) and extra linguistic (or language external) causes of semantic change was formulated as early as the turn of the 20th century (Meillet, 1905), it is believed that apart from the extra linguistic motivations for semantic change which have been traditionally perceived as such, it is worth pointing to another group of language-external motivations, which result not as much from the surrounding extra linguistic reality, as from language-external mechanisms of human perception and cognition. This chapter tries to incorporate these linguistic and extra-linguistic linguistic causes as it looks at the issues of dialect contact as studied in this project work.

Regarding traditional extra linguistic motivation, the following aspects may be listed: sociocultural causes (including legal systems and social taboos); technological and civilization progress and religion. There are psychological factors (including taboo, euphemism, hyperbole) also largely dependent on the culture-specific and idiosyncratic context. These areas, regardless of how specific their classification might be, are the most obvious candidates to be analyzed for an extra linguistic potential to motivate semantic developments of words, as they seem prone to continual change over time (Khachula, 2013). The present study has adopted these factors also. Discussed below are some of the factors noted to bring the speakers of the dialects studied into contact and these are what the scenario of dialect continua across Luhya dialects can be linked or attributed to.

### **3.2.1 Socio-cultural Causes**

The socio-cultural reality is a very ample source of extra linguistic motivations for diachronic semantic change, as the contexts sometimes vary dramatically in the course of time. Thus, new meanings may be “officially” attached to the already existing lexical items, the full

comprehension of which is totally dependent on an adequate amount of knowledge on a particular language-external context (Khachula, 2013:40). Such socio-cultural aspects include such events that bring people together socially like weddings, funerals, child-birth celebration or initiation ceremonies.

These events enhance inter-dialect interactions, an argument supported by Barasa (2014:68) in a focus on Lubukusu and Lutachanoni through which notes that cultural similarities in terms of circumcision ceremonies, naming ceremonies and funerals have enhanced the interaction of the two speech groups. Circumcision rituals, names and naming activities and funeral practices have a lot of similarity in the Bukusu and the Tachoni of this region. He gives the example of circumcision where the age sets that are in the Bukusu are the same ones that are in the Tachoni namely, “Kolongolo”, “Kikwamet” “Kinyikeu”, “Nyange”, “Maina”, “Juma” and “Sawa”. This, in the dialects studied here, has been the case as seen in chapter two which enlisted some of the lexical semantic similarities. For example between Lushisa and Lumarama was:

- |            |            |
|------------|------------|
| i) Disease | Obulwale   |
| ii) Defeat | Okhuyomba  |
| iii) Enemy | Omusuku    |
| iv) Horn   | Olwika     |
| v) Wonder  | Okhuchenya |
| vi) Thief  | Omwifi     |

The questionnaires to the residents at border points such as at Shinamwenyuli showed that the residents here join one another in funerals, wedding ceremonies, newborn celebrations and fund drives. In all such gatherings, language is used. There was an example of the Oparanya Cup, a football tournament organized by the current governor, Kakamega County, which brings together teams with players and fans from across the Luhya dialects. It initially began when the current governor was the MP Butere constituency and this would bring together the Lushisa and Lumarama speakers. Currently, this has spread to Luwanga speakers. Even Lubukusu speaking fans join in this and with the interactions, some linguistic terms from one dialect definitely find their way into another dialect region bringing out the dialect continuum phenomenon.

Examples of such terms here are:

- i) Defeat                      Okhuyomba
- ii) Enemy                      Omusuku
- iii) Happy                      Yanza
- iv) Horn                        Olwika
- v) Wonder                      Okhuchenya

When a team defeats another, either side fans can simply be heard talking of “Okhuyomba”, for the excitement of winning they say they are happy (bayanzire), some fans were seated under the eucalyptus (Omutarakwa) blowing the horn (Olwika) and wondered (Bachenya) when the weaker side beat them. Such a discourse is an example of conversations which fans from Lushisa and Lumarama speaking dialects can sustain comfortably without knowledge they are loaning or borrowing terms across the two dialects.

Just as with games and sports, elections are another social aspect that brings the dialect speakers and therefore the dialects into contact. Residents at Shikalame which is one of the areas studied here submitted that being Luwanga speakers at the border point, get to interact with their Lumarama speakers of Imanga. Some even vote for the MP in Butere constituency instead of their expected one in Mumias West constituency. They claim they are closer to the constituency headquarters in Butere than Mumias and even get better services in Butere. These residents of Luwanga dialect have remained in touch with the Lumarama speakers and in constant communication in such a way that even their language has changed in some way. This change is not just one way but it affects both sides at the border showing the actual picture of dialect continuum. The terms noted as having been borrowed across the Lumarama and Lushisa dialects through sports still qualify to this argument.

Khachula (2013) gives an example of the word “olusi” in Lumarama which initially referred to ‘a string’ that ended up gaining a new meaning in addition to the initial meaning it had due to social aspects. He explains this from the perspective that just as a string can stretch from one point to another, it is this feature that led to the transfer of meaning from ‘string’ to ‘news’. People normally pass information from one point or person to another just as with the stretch of a

string. Presently in Lumarama, the word “olusi” refers to either ‘a string’ or ‘news’ depending on the context. For instance:

- i) Tsia okule olusi – Go buy a string.
- ii) Mbekho olusi okhurula ingo – Give me news from home.

From the examples given, the word “olusi” has been used in two varied contexts to bring out the distinct meanings attached to it, that is, the original meaning (string) and the shifted meaning (news). This does not just end within Lumarama speaking region but with the continued contact with speakers from other dialects, such extension of meaning has also spread across the dialectical borders. All this semantic shift and expansion can be attributed to various causes but key of these being socio-cultural.

The word “inzu” was also pointed out as one that has had a shift in Lumarama which has had other meanings attached to it due to their socio-cultural belief in the importance of the institution of marriage. The word initially simply meant ‘a house’. However with the recognition of the essence of a shelter to a people led to the new meaning of the lexical “inzu” to be ‘a family’. The belief that every respected man or woman must be in a marriage, again resulted in the third meaning of the same word as ‘a marriage’. The same word therefore has ended up acquiring two more meanings in addition to the original meaning. The new meanings have not affected the original meanings in any way.

All the three meanings are used but their meaning can be generated from their use in varied contexts. This can be summarized as below:

- i) Inzu yanje ne ya’mabati – House mine is of iron sheets. ‘My house is made of iron sheets.’
- ii) Inzu yiye ne yobusolo – House his is of quarrels. ‘His family has quarrels.’
- iii) Yanyola inzu Emukowa – She got a house Emukowa. ‘She got married in Emukowa.’

Of significance to this study is how such meaning tend to spread even to other dialects other than just Lumarama. As pointed out, such gatherings as sports, voting, weddings, or funerals have been of great contribution to the lexical semantic shifts and expansions. During such gatherings, communication is paramount and it happens through and across the respective dialects meeting in such setups. It is no wonder such meanings have spread over to Lushisa and Luwanga which

are the dialects in contact with Lumarama. This spread to Lumarama was captured from the word list used in this research project from which it can be seen that these are among the typical Lumarama dialect terms neither meanings.

Khachula (2013) further posits that the culture of the Lumarama speakers has contributed to the shift in meaning of some words. Culturally the Luhya people used to sit around the fire (omuliro) in the evenings. They also used the fire as a mode of communication especially if one was lost, he could wait for evenings so as to see where there was a fire and that meant that people were present. When the Lumarama speakers saw a gun being used to shoot, they felt that it was attracting people's attention just like the fire. They also noted that when the gun was used, it produced smoke just like the fire. In this case they decided to relate the gun to the fire and that is how the meaning of the word "omuliro" shifted to mean 'a gun' in addition to 'the fire'. For example:

Okang'a abukule omuliro. – 'Okang'a has taken a gun'. It is not only with the 'gun', the word "omuliro" in Lumarama has other meanings which the speakers can easily tell according to the pragmatic analysis. The hearers make use of the contextual assumptions to interpret the speaker's meaning in situations where the word omuliro has been used.

The examples below show the varied meanings of the word "omuliro", which have shifted from the original meaning 'fire':

- i) Ngenu ahambiye omuliro. 'Ngenu has lit the fire.'
- ii) Emikhonye chihambire omuliro. Sugarcane caught fire. 'The sugarcane were burnt.'
- iii) Panju yahanga omuliro. Panju is flickering fire. 'Panju is very thrilled.'
- iv) Lulu alimumuliro. Lulu is in fire. 'Lulu is in trouble'.

The shift noted here was seen to penetrate other dialects especially those in contact with Lumarama speakers. Those at border or close to the border freely interact with their neighbour dialect speakers and such meaning was found in Lushisa region as well as in Luwanga. This can only be accounted for as being the result of the socio-cultural interactions across the dialects. In this case, it has to be noted that it is the Lumarama dialect that has influenced others because from the interview schedules conducted, the Lumarama speakers and respondents confirmed that

these are indeed their own terminologies and nothing like they have been borrowed from any other dialect or language.

From the word lists, it can be seen that the term for “fur” in Luwanga is “obwoya” while Lumarama has “obukuya”. Luwanga speakers close to the Lumarama speakers do not however use their original term. An overlap has happened with the Lumarama term “obukuya” now being used even with the Luwanga speakers as seen at Shinamwenyuli border point. Again, all this can only be linked to the socio-cultural relations here. Similar to this is what we can also see with the word for “exceed” in Lumarama and Lushisa. Lumarama has the word “Okhubira” while Lushisa has the word “Okhuyomba” for the same term. At their contact point, however, the term used is “Okhuyomba”. This is used on both sides of the border of Lushisa and Lumarama speakers meaning the Lushisa term has crossed over to the Lumarama region. This is a typical dialect continuum phenomenon which can be attributed to the socio-cultural interactions of the varied dialect speakers in this region.

For the first example in particular, the term “obwoya” in Lumarama was found to be used only with reference to the hair found at the reproductive organs. The Lumarama speakers therefore do not just use it anyhow as it is treated with some sense of obscenity. As the Lumarama speakers at the border avoid it for this reason, the Luwanga counterparts also join in this and in the long run shift from their typical term for a feeling of not wanting to sound vulgar as they interact with the Lumarama neighbours at the border.

### **3.2.2 Technological and Civilization Progress**

With the accelerated development of human civilization and technological advancements, there appears a growing number of referents, especially as regards newly developed or discovered human artifacts, which are frequently associated with already existing lexical items, especially if their previous referents are no longer present, and the former meanings of such words become obsolete, (Khachula 2013:43). As Traugot and Dasher (2002:3) put it, the nature of the lexicon is far from immune to reference and it is subject to the changes in the life-styles and the artifacts we are surrounded by.



The technological advancements seen in communication by use of radio, mobile phones, letters and television can also be said to be a contributing factor to the continua phenomena seen across the Luhya dialects. Communication in a given dialect is no longer a “secret or confined” issue. From the questionnaires and even from the one-on-one interactions with the respondents, advanced technology was noted to be aiding by and large to the dialect continua in the Luhya dialects. With such a state of affairs, who knows, maybe at one point the dialectical distinctions of the Luhya will just be a theoretical thing. Assessed practically or linguistically, all the people in this region will probably be having a common language and not dialects as at the moment.

Radio stations such as West FM, Mulembe FM, Chetambe FM, Ingo FM and Sulwe FM have played a role of enhancing the dialect continua among Luhya dialects. As a researcher, the terms as collected are claimed by the dialect speakers as their original terms in the dialect, but who knows, these could be terms they have heard used in the mass media. These radio stations do not broadcast to and in a given dialect alone. Mulembe FM, for example, is designed to reach all the dialects in Luhya which goes infiltrating terms across all dialects indiscriminately. Even those that claim to be for specific dialects, like West FM which was basically set up for Lubukusu speakers can still be tuned in by any other Luhya dialect speaker in the region. It therefore spreads the Lubukusu terms to speakers of other dialects who eventually pick up such terms with time as their dialect terminologies.

The use of mobile phones as a technological creation also comes in handy at this point. A number of respondents interviewed acknowledged that mobile phones have made communication easy regardless of who are involved. That one can now call a person across dialect on phone or even send a text message in their local dialect now is not a strange thing. Telephones are in themselves technological and so terms associated with them like battery, charger, earpiece, mouthpiece, are quickly being adopted by Luhya dialects.

### **3.2.3 Religion**

Worship is one practice that brings people to together. Individuals will come together with the sole aim of strengthening one another’s faith and in so doing, language is used. Any innovation or change happening in a language will therefore easily spread through the individuals who have

come together in worship. Khachula (2013) gives such a scenario of change in Lumarama by virtue of the introduction of the White man's religion which he says has had some influence on the already existing words in Lumarama. Before the new religion was introduced, the Luhya speakers had their own way of worshipping God Were and had certain words which were specifically used during the moment of worship.

This scenario is not just of effect among the Lumarama speakers; it was noted to have had a similar impact on other dialects studied here. The linguistic impact of the current ACK denomination from Maseno since the time of missionaries can be felt as far as Harambe in Mumias and even Bungoma. People want to read the Bible with the Lumarama accent for believe that this is the way the Bible MUST be read. The long-term result is a transformation to these dialects.

Dotted along the geographical boundaries of the dialects studied here are churches and mosques which serve the speakers regardless of their dialect. Such is the Shinamwenyuli ACK parish church at the border on the Marama side. There is also the same denomination church but on the Wanga side at Shikalame and a mosque at Mulambo market in the Wanga region. These worship centers bring together congregants from either side of the Wanga and Marama boundary. These are majorly the Luwanga and Lumarama speakers. In their worship, there is no restriction on which dialect to stick to. Anyone addressing the congregation does so in a dialect they are well-versed in. the effect of this is a gradual but sure transformation of the dialects even as the congregants religiously follow almost everything their leader does including the way they speak.

Even to the interiors off the geographical boundaries considered here, it was noted that there are still other places of worship which serve as the headquarters to other places of worship. Such are the St. Luke's Cathedral in Butere which serves here as the cathedral for the ACK churches in Butere Sub-county. This draws worshippers from as far as Kisa. It follows therefore that such places are bringing into contact varied dialect speakers and as they interact, they are bound to affect the lexical choices in their respective dialects. St. Peter's Catholic Church in Mumias was also noted to have such an impact, this mainly bringing together and affecting the Luwanga, Lumarama and even Lubukusu dialect.

This has also been captured by Barasa (2014) who notes that foreign based religious organizations like the Anglican Church, the Catholic, SDA, SA, have well prepared church manuals, prayer books and hymn books that are used during church services. In addition, some of these churches like the SA, SDA and Catholic, have their pastors, priests or captains send from other regions and ethnic communities to administrate and manage affairs of the churches where their mother tongues or L1 is not Lubukusu or Lutachoni. In this case they use non Lubukusu or Lutachoni in some of the activities of worship". This was the scenario seen in the areas of the present study where such leaders from other dialects could be seen practicing in regions or among dialects that are not theirs. There are even cases of groups of missionaries involved in such activities. This is a way in which these varied dialects come into contact.

#### **3.2.4 Education**

Education is another avenue that brings varied dialects in touch. We can have teachers, students, subordinate staff, parents or even education inspectors or education officers coming in contact all these from whichever speech community. Instructional materials can also be purposely made to suit a given dialect or dialects. This is what Bodomo (1996) as cited in Barasa (2014) puts out through his research in Ghana says of the important role education plays in the maintenance of a language in Ghana. To Bodomo, there is need to educate the society and policy makers on the advantages of using local languages as Medium of Instruction (MoI) for this would go a long way in promoting the use of Ghanaian indigenous languages in their respective countries including Kenya. In education as a social institution, a speaker of one dialect can therefore interact with another through the available teaching/learning materials in the dialect promoted. A Lushisa, speaker for example, can interact with Lumarama teaching/learning material which is an indirect way of bringing the speakers of these two dialects together.

The available teachers can also play a role in dialect in contact. In the region of study, it was noted that teachers from varied dialects were deployed in different regions, not necessarily their home regions. This brings them into contact with colleagues and learners from other dialects. This was noted from the delocalization policy of the Teachers' Service Commission (TSC). In this, the TSC was posting teachers even to other counties. An example here was from two of the respondents providing the translation of the terms in the comprehensive wordlist. One was found

serving in Luwanga region as deputy principal of Musanda secondary yet she is a Lushisa speaker. The other was a Lumarama speaker serving in Bungoma which is a Lubukusu speaking region.

On the dialect of instruction at lower primary, most of the Bukusu and Lumarama respondents agreed that they received instruction in Lubukusu and Lumarama respectively. This was done regardless to their native dialects. This points to the scenario of other dialects coming into contact with varied ones in these regions through education.

Books written in mother tongue were mentioned as some of the teaching/learning materials that were used for teaching. Titles like TKK (Tujifunze Kikwetu) were cited. Other materials included wood and clay sculptures imitating images of human beings, animals and birds. Such, when used by teachers or learners from other dialects, indirectly expose them to the speakers of these dialects and directly to the dialects.

### **3.2.5 Economic Interactions**

The business domain, also referred to as the trade domain (Myers–Scotton 2000, Whiteley 1974) covered a wide range of exchanges involving buying and selling in different environments. Whiteley (1974) notes: “I use the term trade to cover a wide range of exchanges: from buying and selling in the market, through buying, selling and working in ‘dukas’, to buying stamps at the post office or ordering a dress from the local tailor. The term also covers a wide range of informal exchanges which are characteristic of daily life in the rural areas.”

Activities of business that were considered in this study included transport, shops, kiosks and trade on market days. The respondents were asked how they engage in such activities in their attempt to earn a living. From observation and one-on-one interactions with the speakers of the dialects of study here, it was noted that they engage in varied activities that earn them a living. Key among these as established through this study work was trade.

The communities in the study location have been involved in barter trade historically before it later transformed to currency trade. In either cases, the speakers from these dialects interact freely bargaining, inquiring, explaining aspects or in any other general conversations. During

such conversations, they often use their dialects and in some cases, some tend to borrow or loan words across the geographical boundaries existing here. In trade, there is the Kabula market which serves both the Luwanga and Lubukusu speakers. On the part of the Luwanga and Lumarama, there is Mumias town. Though not on the border, this is a prominent town in the region bringing together the Luwanga and Lumarama speakers. Right on the border of the two dialects, which this study work used as an example, was Mulambo market. This was noted as a hub of not only trade but also linguistic interactions.

Some Lumarama dialect respondents interviewed said they travelled from Marama to Entenje and Mumias especially on market days to get a better bargain of the goods they needed or those that they were selling. The same case was for the Luwanga speakers who travelled from as far as Imanga to Butere in Lumarama region on Mondays for trade as this is the market day here. When they got into these business domains, they interacted across dialects and this in itself made dialect continuum possible because of dialect contact.

### **3.2.6 Political Circles**

This section presents a description of how individuals from the dialects of the study come into contact majorly through the political domain or government services. A focus here was given to the dialect that local or village-leaders use in their meetings with the people or when they have village meetings and when the locals visit them in their offices to report different incidents. The respondents were asked to state the dialects used in such set ups. Mwaka (2012) notes that it is not strange to find in a chief's or in a sub-chief's office individuals freely conversing in their indigenous languages. In addition, at the local level, Mwaka notes further that local languages facilitate administrative work which is carried out by local leaders such as the village headmen, the sub chief and the chief. With this he makes a conclusion that without Kenya's indigenous languages official policies would not be implemented.

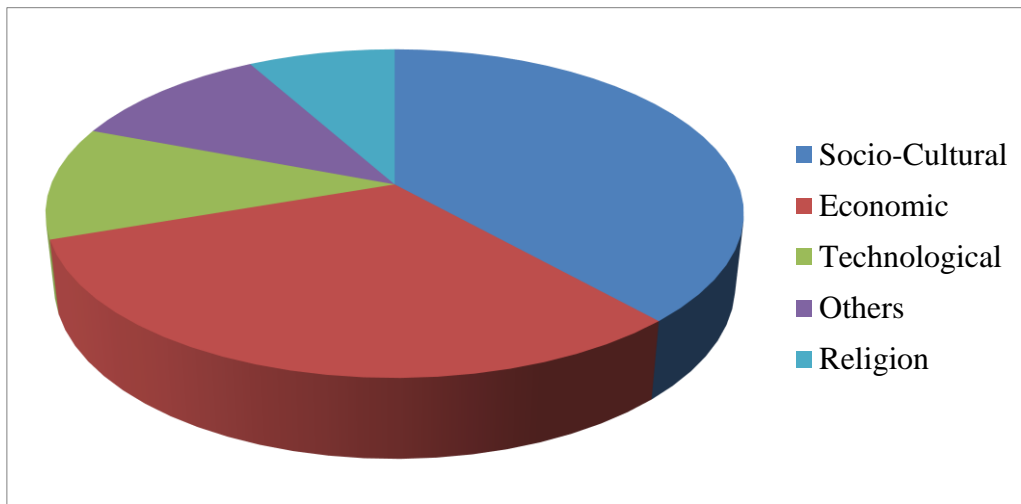
Political leaders in campaigns, thus resort to their dialects when addressing any rally in this region which is considered a more convincing way of address to the electorate. In such gatherings, no one is bared from attending and the result of this is the contact of varied dialect speakers. The governor of Kakamega County (Ambetsa Oparanya) was a case of example here

who has to campaign in his Lumarama dialect all over the county and goes ahead serving speakers of varied dialects in the county. Being a political leader, he influences some of them with Lumarama dialect terms and this is extensive on border areas – hence dialect continuum.

### 3.2.7 Causal Factors Analysis

An analysis was taken further to the contributor factors that bring varied dialect speakers into contact. As seen upfront there were such factors as Socio-cultural Causes, Technological and Civilization Progress, Religion, Education, Economic Interactions and Political Circles. The information here was captured from the interview scheduled used within the presumed dialect continua regions at border points of Lushisa-Lumarama, Lumarama-Luwanga and Luwanga-Lubukusu. A total of 120 interview schedules had been prepared, 40 at each point of focus which turned out that 78 were returned (65%). Of these, 30 (38%) pointed the contact of the dialect speakers to socio-cultural, 9 (11%) pointed to technology, 24 (31%) talked of economic while religion had 6 (8%). The rest (9 – 11%) were for others as seen below:

**Figure 2.3: Causal Factors**



### 3.3 Impact of Dialects Getting Into Contact

This section takes a focus on the result of varied dialects coming into contact. This is directly through the speakers of these dialects themselves coming into contact as seen above and communicate using these dialects. It can also be indirectly when the speakers interact with

materials or media in such varied dialects. The research has taken a focus not only on the dialects studied here but also on the speakers of these dialects.

To the dialects, there are such ramifications as borrowing and loaning of terms, narrowing and widening of meaning and dialect shifts and maintenance. To the speakers, it was noted that there arises such cases as of dialectical accommodation and dialectical discrimination as described herein.

### **3.3.1 Impact on the Dialects**

The focus in this section is given to the dialect. That is, what is the resultant image of a dialect once it gets in touch with another dialect. Two major outcomes were noted in this study standing out. These are:

#### **i) Widening and Narrowing of Meaning**

The meaning of a word becomes more general or more inclusive than its historically earlier meaning as a result of dialects being in touch. This is in line with Trask (1994) as cited by Khachula, (2013) who has the similar definition of broadening as the process in which the meaning of a word becomes more general or more inclusive than its historically earlier form. The quantity of the word is therefore raised whenever the meaning is widened. This is so because in a given dialect a given term could be of one meaning while in another, the same term has a different meaning. When these two dialects get in touch, the other meaning can be added to the original meaning held by this dialect. For example:

The meaning of the term “kona” in Lumarama has taken more than its original meaning through widening. The word originally simply meant ‘to sleep’ but with time, the term has taken other meanings including ‘ignorance’ and presently, the word can also be used to mean ‘uncivilized’. This is as a result of inter-dialect socio-cultural interactions. The word which originally had only one meaning now has three meanings.

‘Lia’ is another word in this bracket. Its meaning has widened to mean more than what it meant initially. At first the word simply had the meaning of ‘eat’, that is, consuming something. Concepts related to the consumption of something were given the same name hence widening the meaning of the word “lia”. It can be used to mean ‘to obtain something in a crafty way’ as well as ‘to plunder.’

Also in the broadening of the meaning is in the word “ibaala”. The word initially meant ‘to explain or guide’ but now it also refers to ‘show.’ From the word we have “omwibaali” which refers to either ‘one who directs through explanations or ‘a teacher.’

“Amang’ondo” in Lumarama originally referred to the ten cents coins. Today, the same word is used to refer generally to money irrespective of the form, be it notes or coins.

“Saaba” is a word which initially meant ‘wash hands.’ It has with time acquired a new meaning when used metaphorically to replace the taboo word ‘urinate.’ Such variations can be linked to the Lumarama dialect speakers being in contact with the speakers of the other dialects studied here (Lushisa and Luwanga even Lubukusu).

On the other hand, narrowing of meaning occurs when there is loss in the quantity of a word. The meaning of a word becomes less general or less inclusive than its historically earlier meaning. Bloomfield (1933) as cited by Khachula (2013) defines lexical narrowing as a process through which the meaning of a word changes from a super ordinate level to a subordinate level. Here the meaning of a word becomes less general or less inclusive than its historically earlier meaning.

For example in Luwanga the word “omukati” at first meant ‘anything made from wheat flour’ but now the meaning has been reduced to refer to only one item; ‘bread’. This shows that the meaning has narrowed down to mean less than the original meanings.

When the word “samula” was first used by the Lushisa speakers, it had three varied meanings; it meant ‘leave for an unknown destination’, ‘travel’ or ‘go to work.’ With time, these meanings have been completely forgotten and the word is today used in reference to ‘travel.’



The term “bakala” originally referred to two ideas in relation to openness. The first meaning was ‘to dry in the sun.’ The same word was used to mean ‘say the truth.’ The two meanings were used in the past depending on the context. Today when the word “bakala” is used, the meaning that comes to the mind of the hearer is ‘to dry in the sun.’

“Obukusi” is a word that was initially used during barter trade. The word however, had two meanings when used in the same context. It could be used to mean ‘the price of something’ or ‘the value of a commodity’ to be exchanged during the trade. With the introduction of money, Marama speakers have narrowed down the two meanings to one, which refers to the price of an item.

## **ii) Loaning and Borrowing of terms**

With loaning of terms, a given dialect serves as a donor of some terms that do not originally belong to it while borrowing the dialect adopts such terms from another dialect. This could be because the concepts being referred to are not in the receiver dialect. In either case, there stands out an overlap of terms across dialect boundaries.

From the comprehensive word list established here, it can be noted that there are cases where the dialects in question are having the same word for a given terminology. In such, it is possible that one of the dialects must have borrowed or loan such a term and that this is not just by mere coincidence. Such examples between Lushisa and Lumarama include:

- i) Disease            Obulwale
- ii) Defeat            Okhuyomba
- iii) Enemy            Omusuku

Between Lumarama and Luwanga there is:

- i) Bathe            Okhwisinga
- ii) Friend            Omwitsa
- iii) Feathers            Amabaa

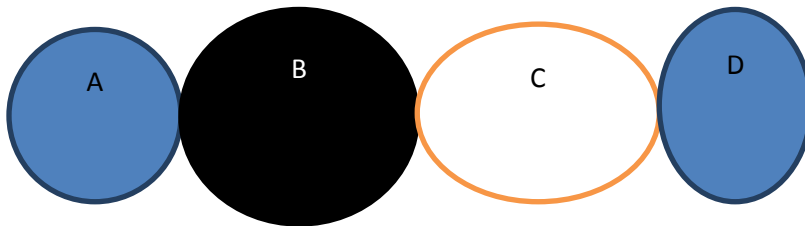
While between the Luwanga and Lubukusu there are such terms as:

- i) Fool            Omusilu

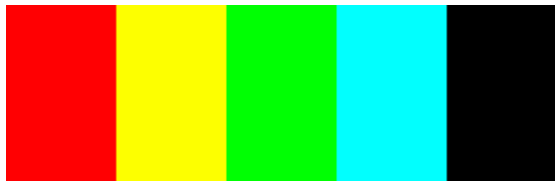
- ii) Wife                      Omukhasi
- iii) Youth                     Omuraka

The overall result of all this on the dialects here is the scenario of mutual intelligibility created by the variations above. There arises a state where one cannot distinctly mark out where they are addressing a speaker of a given dialect. If the dialects can share terms as seen above, then the difference in the dialects is merely geographical and nothing to do with the linguistic analysis. Even in cases where such differences arise, it happens in such a smooth transition and not as definite as the geographical boundaries suggest. The lexical semantic overlap seen here brings out a dialect spectrum as this study work is out to ascertain across the Luhya dialects. This is a show of dialect continuum across the dialects studied here which now leads us to the assessment of the impact of this to the speakers in such regions or in those with distinct dialects.

Ideally, the geographical dialect boundaries studied suggest such a phenomenon as the one diagrammatically shown below using circles A, B, C and D.



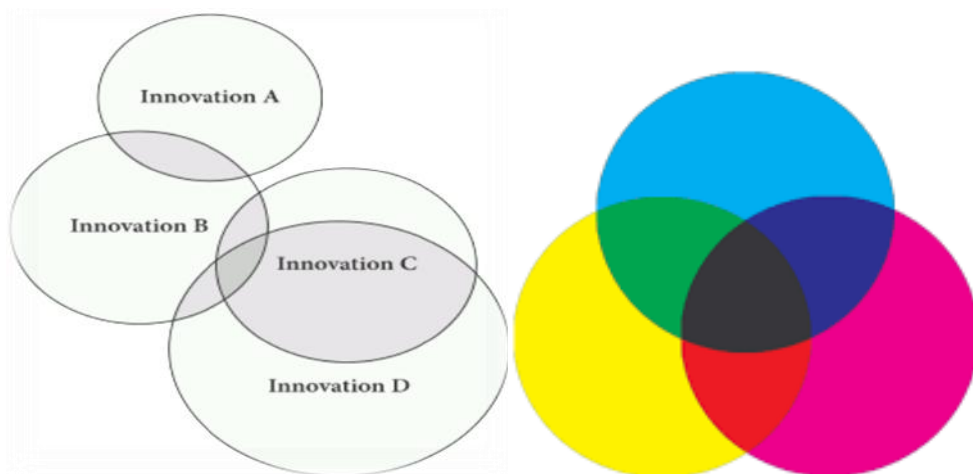
Or by such a colour column:



**Figure 2.4: Illustrations of Ideal / Geographical Appearance of Languages/Dialects**

In this illustration, we can take A, B, C and D to represents the dialects of study here in that there is a clear-cut distinction of the dialects. However, as seen from the study, we realise an overlap in terms hence a case of mutual intelligibility that Schmidt’s Wave Theory represents as below in the following colour spectra and circles:





**Figure 2.5: Realistic/Linguistic Appearance of Languages/Dialects**

The interlocking of the circles is typical to what we have among the dialects studied here and it is the phenomenon speculated of across Luhya dialects.

It is once the impact has happened on the dialects (how the people speak has changed) that there follows an impact on the people. This research project approached the impact on the speakers from how they are treated when they speak in the manner that they do.

### **3.3.2 Impact of Dialect Contact on the Speakers:**

On the speakers of the dialects coming into contact two ramifications were identified from the respondents. These are linguistic accommodation and linguistic discrimination.

#### **i) Linguistic Accommodation**

With this, the questionnaires to the respondents in the perceived dialect continua region showed that it is to their advantage. If one cannot speak as a typical Lumarama or Luwanga speaker at the border, the individuals here identify such as one of their own and they can therefore transact various issues together easily. Business, religion, education and even marriage were noted to be flourishing in such region by virtue of the way people in these dialect continua regions understand one another easily.

Even when one from the affected regions of contact moves to the typical dialect speakers within their geographical region and identifies himself or herself as part of the unaffected group, such an individual is still accepted since there is the understanding of the impact of these dialects coming into contact at border points. This is a positive approach on the dialect continuum scenario.

## **ii) Linguistic Discrimination**

Some respondents however claimed that there are times when they are discriminated by virtue of how they speak. A quick address of someone at the Luwanga-Lumarama border can rule out someone from a certain political post. It was established that there are those voters who claim a leader must be from a given dialect, and whether this aspirant's identification card shows they are from a given dialect or geographical region, such an aspirant is voted out by virtue of how they speak.

A particular case was a parliamentary aspirant, in Mumias West who has vied for the seat severally without success by virtue of his accent. Mumias West has the Luwanga speakers but they happen to have largely counter-affected one another by the Lumarama speakers who are their neighbours. This aspirant was all along discriminated on this basis until Mumias East which boasts of having the typical Luwanga speakers was split from Mumias West. Once Mumias West stood out as an independent constituency, the aspirant clinched the seat. Such discrimination based on language is a negative face of a dialect continuum that should not be fostered.

## **3.4 Conclusion**

This chapter has highlighted the driving factors of varied Luhya dialect speakers coming into contact and effects of such contact through the various examples given. The contact of here has been given as from socio-cultural, economic, political, technological, religious, and education perspectives.

The new things that enter our live through science and technology are bound to lead or to bring varied dialect speakers into contact. Religion has also contributed to varied dialect speakers

coming into contact through worship while teachers, politicians, traders, students and administrative leaders also bring people of varied dialect backgrounds into contact.

Whenever such happens, there is bound to be an impact on the dialects in question, profoundly creating mutual intelligibility, a key element of a dialect continuum and this also impacts both positively and negatively to the speakers in such dialect continua regions. Most important is the realization that we have such speakers and they should therefore not be linguistically discriminated.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

The aim of carrying out the present study was to ascertain the existence of dialect continua across Luhya dialects, assess how these continua come about and the impact thereof. Data analysis here was therefore done in line with the three objectives in section 1.3 that is: determining the stretch or extent of dialect continua through the select Luhya dialects, establishing the platforms facilitating or enhancing the contact of Luhya dialects especially at their border points and finally examining the impact of Luhya dialects coming into contact, especially around their respective geographical border points.

Quantitative data in the questionnaire was analyzed using SPSS programme version 20 while qualitative data was analyzed by content analysis. The questionnaires were in two fold; those targeting the typical dialect speakers and those targeting the speakers from contact points at border points both with two parts to generate both qualitative and quantitative data.

Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) note that data obtained from the field in raw form is difficult to interpret, until it is cleaned, coded, and key punched into a computer and then analysed. In the same vein, collected data was systematically organized into a manner that facilitates analysis so that the researcher can make sense out of it and describe. Analyzed data was presented in word lists.

During the study, The Wave Theory was used in the analysis of the data. The theory was used in order to justify that its various posits are responsible for the dialect continua existing across the Luhya speech community as exemplified by the four dialects; Lushisa, Lumarama, Luwanga and Lubukusu.

The data which was used in the study was collected and discussed using The Wave Theory which proved to be very adequate in the analysis of the data.

## 4.2 Findings

There exist dialect continua across Luhya dialects as seen from the study on these four dialects (Lushisa, Lumarama, Luwanga and Lubukusu) where some Lumarama terms are now used by the Lushisa dialect speakers while the Lushisa terms have also overlapped into the Lumarama region and are under use here. The same picture is replicated between the Lumarama and Luwanga and between Luwanga and Lubukusu. The overlap experienced here is as a result of the dialect speakers being in free contact facilitating, or rather adding up to the overall dialect continua in the Luhya dialects.

From the study, the following observations were made:

- i) A travel across the region of study listening to resident speakers brings out a language spectrum outlook. Though the native speakers in these regions may claim to be of a given dialect, this is not reflected in their speech, especially their choice of terms to use over certain aspects as was noted in this study. Their claims are more or less based on the geographical demarcations of where they stay but nothing to do with their actual speech.
- ii) Even basing on the way the individuals interviewed speak, it still remains unclear to place a linguistic boundary especially in marking out that one dialect gets to a specific point while another picks from that particular point. There is overlap or fluidity from either sides of the dialects leaving some regions between dialects which this study work set out describing as grey regions but linguistically termed as dialect continua.
- iii) The dialect continua studied, just like any other aspect, have both the positive and negative implications. For instance, some individuals especially of the dialect continua are discriminated linguistically for their lack of dialect clarity, while the very group enjoys in other cases when their linguistic identity has to remain a secret like when they are conversing with someone who is not keen on dialect. They have also been able to conduct various activities together harmoniously without any aspect of dialect barrier due to the fluidity of terms used by such individuals.

The study was based on three hypotheses, namely:

- i) There exists a region around the Luhya dialect borders where it is not quite distinct which dialect the speakers here use.
- ii) The lack of distinctness in the dialect of some Luhya dialect speakers is as a result of the dialect speakers bordering and interacting across the borders in various social activities.
- iii) The lack of clarity in dialect for the speakers around or at the border points of Luhya dialects impacts both positively and negatively on the speakers.

From the hypotheses, it was found that:

- i) There are grey regions at the contact points of Luhya dialects where one cannot clearly establish which dialect speakers here are using. This is the typical dialect continuum outlook. This was established through the lexical semantic study on the dialects here but it can also be verified linguistically through a phonological, morphological or even pragmatic study. Lexical semantically here, some words were found to overlap the geographical borders established here and that there is no clear cut distinctions of the dialect speakers as the geographical boundaries here suggest.

A linguist moving from Khwisero, the Lushisa region, to Bungoma, the Lubukusu region, will not be able to clearly point out that they are now in Lumarama or Luwanga region just by virtue of the fore established geographical borders of the dialects.

- ii) The lack of distinctness in the dialect of some Luhya dialect speakers is not only as a result of the dialect speakers bordering and interacting across the borders socially but also economically, technologically, religiously and psychologically. The speakers of varied dialects in the region of study and largely Luhya speech community share shopping centers, markets, churches, mosques, political gatherings, and even intermarry. Such are ample setups in which they communicate, affecting one another linguistically. The mass media that remains indiscriminate in the region has also aided in the outlook of dialect continua in the region.



iii) The lack of clarity of dialect for the speakers around or at the border points of Luhya dialects impacts both positively and negatively on the speakers. Some are linguistically discriminated while in some cases, these residents gain mileage for one not really knowing which dialect they actually belong to. The positive side of this phenomenon which should be fostered is that the current state of affairs showing the dialect continua across Luhya dialects is that individuals in these regions have been able to interact without dialect barrier, fostering such sectors as commerce, cross-dialect family ties, education and even political stability.

### **4.3 Recommendations**

When the speakers of a given language or dialect come into contact through various interactions, there is bound to be an impact on the respective languages or dialects involved over time. The languages or dialects in question may be affected at different linguistic levels: phonologically, morphologically, semantically, syntactically or even pragmatically. This study work only took the lexical semantic approach and in actual sense, it was noted that there is more that can be done in the same area, with the approach of the other linguistic concerns.

For instance, some resemblances captured in the terms in the word list are just at face value. Analysed in depth, we note that there is difference noted at phonological level. An example is the stressed syllable in the word “Inzala” (hunger). It appears as the same word in both Lumarama and Luwanga though Lumarama speakers stress the first syllable hence, **’I**.nzala while the Luwanga speakers stress the second syllable for the same word. That is: I.**’NZ**Ala.

Also, majority of Luwanga words, though they may appear similar to Lumarama words are said with long vowel sounds. Still considering Luwanga and Lumarama, such examples qualify on such terms as “Omusala” (medicine) and “Omusatsa” (man).

A focus on differences elicits a similar picture though in slightly different dimension. What has been seen here as differences in most Luwanga and Lubukusu terms is just but lexical as this study analysed. At the morphological level, words such as “Imbalo” in Luwanga and “Embalu” have the same thing in common {**-MBAL-**}. The same applies to the term used with reference to

a horn in the two dialects, Luwanga and Lubukusu (Olwika/Lulwika). What is common as morphologically seen is {-LWIKA}.

Such distinctions can only be brought out clearly from a proper approach encompassing all the linguistic levels of study. A study should therefore be carried out to fully account for and describe the picture across the dialects involving the other linguistic areas of interest. This will be helpful in determining and linguistically fully describing this picture even as the same is academically documented for further reference.

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

The Wave Theory as an approach used in this study is suitable to analyse the cases of dialect continua across dialects of a given language. The study shows that indeed there are dialect continua across Luhya dialects, a phenomenon showing that indeed Luhya is a unified linguistic nation.

The linguistic knowledge of the hearer should be used in establishing which dialect, or largely language, a given speaker belongs to. Although there exist the geographical borders these should not be used in defining the residents in this region linguistically, for these are just but administrative boundaries, serving administrative interests but not linguistic purpose.

Having been established that we have both the positive and negative sides of the dialect continuum phenomenon studied in the Luhya dialects, there is need to encourage continued interactions in this region and even beyond since such interactions are the ones that bring about the dialect and eventually language continua across territories. The positive side of this state by far outweighs the negative. If we need a not only linguistically unified region but also socially, economically, politically or culturally, the fostering of dialect continua is the way to go.

If we can have residents in a given region whose linguistic distinctions are not such pronounced, the better. This is a pointer to mutual intelligibility, an attribute in language that fosters communication across dialects and even languages. Such would be a walk back to the power behind the tower of Babel.

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**APPENDICES**  
**APPENDIX I: LETTER OF INTRODUCTION**

University of Nairobi,  
Department of Linguistics and Languages,  
P.O. BOX 30197,  
00100 – GPO,  
NAIROBI.

Dear Sir/Madam,

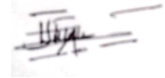
**RE: REQUEST TO COLLECT DATA FOR RESEARCH PURPOSE.**

I am a post graduate student from the University of Nairobi pursuing a Master's Degree in Linguistics. I would like you to permit me to collect data in your area. My research topic is: **LINGUISTIC VERSUS GEOGRAPHICAL BOUNDARIES: A Lexical Semantic Assessment of Luhya Dialects.** This is to cover the Luhya dialect regions formerly, Western Province.

Kindly allow me to conduct the survey. The data will only be used for this study and the respondents' identities will not be disclosed.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours faithfully,



Lubangah Lutta John.







**APPENDIX IV: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR SPEAKERS FROM DIALECT  
CONTINUA REGIONS**

You are kindly requested to respond to the following interview. Any information given will be used for the purpose of this study and your identity will not be disclosed.

1. How would you identify yourselves in terms of your dialect?
2. What makes you settle to the response in (1) above?
3. Presented with a speaker from the furthest point of this dialect, say (pick a town somewhere off to the Lushisa, Lumarama, Luwanga or Lubukusu border side), would your utterances be similar? Why?
4. Do you notice any difference from the speakers of the other side but not away from the border i.e. in terms of how you speak? If not, what do you have in common? If yes, how, why?
5. What do you think has contributed to the state above i.e. the lack of difference between you and the speakers on the other side but close to this border / what brings you together? State any 5 reasons that bring you together/separate you.
6. Name 5 advantages and disadvantages to the state in (5) above?

**Thank you for your cooperation.**

**APPENDIX V: COMPREHENSIVE WORD LIST**

<u>English</u>	<u>Lushisa</u>	<u>Lumarama</u>	<u>Luwanga</u>	<u>Lubukusu</u>
Alcohol	Amalwa	Amalwa	Amalwa	Kamalwa
Axe	Imbatsi	Imbatsi	Iyaywa	Eaywa
Backyard	Indangu	Emukungo	Olukoongo	Enyuma
Bathe	Okhwisinga	Okhwisinga	Okhwisinga	Khukhwisinga
Blood	Amatsaai	Amatsaai	Amalasile	Kamafuki
Destroy	Okhusasia/Okhwonoonia	Okhusasia/Okhwononia	Sasia/nyasia	Yonaka
Day	Inyanga	Inyanga	Inyanga	Kumusi
Divide	Okhukabula	Okhukaba	Kabula	Kabula
Disease	Obulwale	Obulwale	Obulwale/olumbe	Bulwale/Lulumbe
Drag	Okhukhwesa	Okhung'wesa	Okhukhwesa	Khukhwikhoyola
Defeat	Okhuyomba	Okhuyomba/Okhushira	Ula	Khukhila
Enemy	Omusuku	Omusuku	Omusuku	Omusiku
Exceed	Okhuyoomba	Okhubira	Bira eshichelo	Khubishi
Examine	Okhurangala	Okhunoneresia	Rangaala	Khumenielesa
Friend	Omulina/omusiepi	Omwitsa	Omwitsa	Omusale
Fur	Obwoya	Obukuya	Obwoya	Bubwoya
Feathers	Amabaha	Amabaa	Amabaa	Kamafumbo
Farm	Omukunda	Indalo	Omukunda	Kumukunda
Fool	Omuyingwa	Eshiyingwa	Omusilu	Omusilu
Guard	Omulindi	Omulindi	Omulindi	Omulindi
Husband	Omusatsa	Omusatsa	Omusatsa	Omusecha
Hunger	Inzala	Inzala	Inzala	Enjala
Happy	Yanza	Yanza	Sangaala	Sangala
Horn	Olwika	Olwika	Olwika	Lulwika
Hole	Obwina/Obuko/Omulu	Obwina	Liitikho	Liloo
Knife	Omubano	Omubano	Imbalo	Kumubano
Sick	Omulwale	Omulwale	Omulwale	Omulwale

Suffer	Nyakhana	Nyakhana	Nyakhana	Khuumia
Sugarcane	Omukhoonye	Omukhonye	Omung'onye	Kumwiba
Swamp	Olutende	Olutende	Oluteende	Ekewa
Speak	Boola	Boola	Lomaloma	Lomaloma/Khulosia
Shake	Okhutechesia/Okhurenjia	Resia	Reesia	Sisikha/sakasia
Wonder	Okhuchenyanya	Okhuchenyanya	Okhuuka	Khuuka
Work	Emilimo	Emilimo	Emilimo	Kimilimo
Wife	Omukhasi	Omukhasi	Omukhasi	Omukhasi
Youth	Omubuukha	Omubuukha	Omuraka	Omuraka
Medicine	Omusaala/Indesi	Omusala	Omusaala	Kamalesi/Kamanyasi
Mystery	Eshiokhuchenyanya	Eshiokhuchenyanya	Amangalimwa	Kamaya
Mother	Mama	Mama	Mama	Mai
Maize	Amatuuma	Amatuma	Amatumwa	Kamaindi
Much	Amaanji	Amanji	Amaanji	Bikali
Name	Eliira	Eliira	Eliira	Lisina
Night	Eshiro	Eshiro	Eshilo	Musilo
Outside	Elwanyi	Erwanyi	Elwanyi	Enje
Poverty	Obutakha	Obumanani	Obutambi	Butambi
Quarrel	Okhusoolana	Okhusoolana	Okhusoolana	Bulomani
River	Omuchela	Omwalo	Omwalo	Luluchi