

HARMONIZING THE ORTHOGRAPHIES OF BANTU LANGUAGES: THE CASE OF GĪKŪYŪ AND EKEGUSII IN KENYA

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ABSTRACT

Despite the multiplicity of African languages, available literature on the development of these languages points to the need to have their orthographies harmonized and standardised. This is because properly designed orthographies can play a monumental role in promoting their use in all spheres of life, and hence contribute to Africa's socioeconomic development. Such harmonisation is practical, especially among languages such as Gĩkũyũ and Ekegusii, two distinct Kenyan Bantu languages that are mutually intelligible. This paper examines how similar or dissimilar their phonologies and orthographies are, with a view to proposing how they can be harmonized. The paper concludes that there are benefits that can accrue from such harmonisation efforts, especially because there will be greater availability of literacy materials accessible to the speakers of the two languages.