

**LANGUAGE PREFERENCES AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS LOCAL
LANGUAGES: A CASE STUDY OF MAKONGENI ESTATE IN THIKA TOWN**

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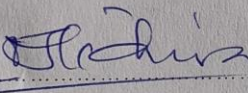
DECLARATION

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

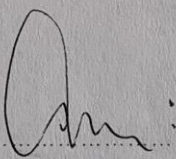
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Dr Ayub Mukhwana

DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to my late father Mr Livingstone Irungu Muciri popularly known by his friends and acquaintances as Wa Ben (may his soul rest in eternal peace). He loved education and was a great inspiration for my studies. I know he would be happy to see his son graduate with a second degree. I thank him and miss the encouragement he would offer were he alive today.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I wish to thank God for enabling me to get where I am today and seeing me through the challenges that I have faced while working on this research.

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My heartfelt gratitude to the department staff who went out of their way to accommodate me despite my shortcomings. May God bless them abundantly.

To Maryann Karanja, I say thank you for your assistance and all my former classmates.

ABSTRACT

This research work was aimed at establishing language preferences and attitudes towards local languages in a multilingual setting with particular reference to Makongeni Estate in Thika Town. The objectives of the study were to examine attitudes that people of Makongeni Estate in Thika Town have towards local languages, to find out the language(s) of preference for the people of Makongeni Estate in Thika Town in different contexts, to find out if the residents of Makongeni Estate in Thika Town were loyal to their mother tongues and to find out if diversity of language was a source of conflict (social or political) within Makongeni Estate. The theory used to analyse the data collected was the motivation theory as developed by Gardner and Lambert (1972). The study found out that there was a strong positive attitude towards local languages and Kiswahili, and that the respondents preferred to use either Kiswahili or their mother tongues in most of their interactions. It also found out that residents of Makongeni Estate in Thika Town were loyal to their mother tongues and that they did not consider their diversity of language to be a source of conflict, whether social or political. Arising from the findings, the study has suggested that further research be carried out on language attitudes towards local languages in Kenya, ways on how to revitalise languages in danger of dying and how to involve the youthful generation in this, studies on attitudes towards mother tongue languages be encouraged so that where they are negative, ways and means of changing the negative attitudes can be sought in order to prevent the death of our mother tongues and since Thika Town may not be representative of the whole country, further studies be carried out in other towns in Kenya in order to compare and contrast the results of this study.

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CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Introduction

There are three occurrences that necessitated this study. One incident occurred on a *matatu* where two people, a passenger of Somali origin residing within Makongeni Estate conversed fluently with the conductor of the *matatu* who was from the Kamba community in a language that was neither Swahili, English or either of their mother tongues.

The second incident was that of a family of two parents who were both from the same community and fluent speakers of their mother tongue, but made a lot of effort to prevent their children from speaking their own mother tongue. The children who were taken to an international school for their studies could not speak in the mother tongue of their own parents despite their parents and grandparents having a common language for their mother tongue.

The third occurrence was that of two children who were brought up in Murang'a Town which has a more homogenous society than Thika Town but could not speak their mother's language. The children were used to speaking more of Kiswahili and *Sheng* than *Gikuyu* which was their parents' and grandparents' language. This was a bit peculiar considering that Murang'a Town is smaller in size than Thika Town, has fewer industries and job opportunities that would attract people from far and wide and, therefore, would not be expected to host a large population of people from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

The fact that Thika Town and Makongeni Estate in particular hosts a very diverse population provided an interesting situation for the study considering that some people who were born and brought up in the estate could actually use their parents' language or mother tongue fluently. These were children or youths who had gone to schools that admitted

learners from different ethnic backgrounds, yet they had somehow been able to learn how to use their native languages.

After encountering with residents of the expansive Makongeni Estate, who seemed to have a bias towards using their mother tongues, I got interested in finding out how residents felt about the use of their various mother tongues, Kiswahili and other languages in use within the estate. I felt a desire to find out, for example, which language(s) they were more inclined to use during various interactions and in different situations in life. I also wanted to find out if the young residents could speak in their mother tongues and if so, how they had learnt these languages.

Bearing in mind that Makongeni is a cosmopolitan estate, I also wanted to find out if any of the residents of the estate could speak in a language or languages that were the mother tongues of other ethnic communities. For instance, could a person from the Kikuyu ethnic group speak another language such as Dholuo, Kamba or Luhya? If they could, how did they learn to use these languages and why?

Makongeni Estate is found in Thika Town, Kiambu County. The estate, with an area of 47.8 square kilometres, is inhabited by people from different ethnic backgrounds. The estate has a population of approximately 50,000 inhabitants (Kenya Bureau of Statistics, 2009). Thika being an industrial town attracts people from many parts of the country who go to the town in search of jobs in the industries, or in the pineapple plantations. Thus, the estate is home to many of these categories of workers. Considering that the estate is largely occupied by people in the working – class, it would be highly likely that the youth in this urban set – up would be more inclined to use *Sheng* as their preferred language in many of their social interactions. For this research, I felt there was a need to find out how this important segment of the society used language in terms of the language they chose to use

and how they had learnt the language(s) they used. The study therefore, also aimed at establishing the prevalence of *Sheng* within the estate.

The desire to carry out this study on attitudes toward local languages was motivated by the fact that a study of attitudes is a scientific study which falls under behavioural sciences (Agheyisi and Fishman, 1970). According to these scholars, the relevance of attitude studies to such sociolinguistic topics as language choice in multilingual societies, differential allocation of codes, dialect differences and mutual intelligibility is obvious (ibid). This study set out to establish the kind of attitudes that the residents of Makongeni Estate in Thika Town have towards languages other than their own in this multilingual setting.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

It has been argued that the use of mother tongues in a multi-ethnic community could cause conflict. For instance, Dan Branch, a professor of history in the UK, in a commentary in the *Daily Nation* of 8th March, 2014 argued that in Kenya ‘... diversity has produced conflict, but much more commonly, it has demanded cooperation as citizens get on with their ordinary lives. Like so much else to do with identity in modern Kenya, language has been adapted and changed to fit the multi-ethnic realities of everyday life.’ Such arguments as this one by Branch may be seen to discourage people in a multi-ethnic community from speaking their mother tongues. However, the situation in Makongeni Estate would make us ask ourselves if it is true to argue that the use of mother tongues could cause conflict. This argument would actually be aiding to kill indigenous languages and help the big languages to replace them because man needs a language always.

It was the aim of this study to establish the truthfulness of arguments of such scholars as Branch that our diversity and use of our mother tongues contributed to or were the cause of conflict. The findings of the study could therefore be applied to the larger society and multi-

ethnic situation, not only in Thika Town but to the whole of Kenya as a country. Thus, the linguistic situation in Makongeni Estate could be representative of the situation within Kiambu County and the country at large.

1.3 Research Objectives

The research study was guided by the following research objectives:

- (i) To examine attitudes that people of Makongeni Estate in Thika have towards local languages.
- (ii) To find out the language(s) of preference for the people of Makongeni Estate in Thika Town in different contexts.
- (iii) To find out if the residents of Makongeni Estate in Thika Town are still using their mother tongues.

1.4 Research Questions

The research sought to answer the following questions.

- (i) Do the people of Makongeni Estate in Thika Town have a positive or negative attitude towards local languages?
- (ii) Which language(s) do the people of Makongeni Estate in Thika Town prefer to use in different contexts?
- (iii) Are the residents of Makongeni Estate still using their mother tongues?

1.5 Justification of the Study

This study on attitudes towards mother tongues with a focus on the language situation in Makongeni Estate in Thika Town was necessitated by the recent debate on the use of the language of the catchment area in lower primary schools. Language experts and non-experts

have commented on the subject extensively and the debate has been inconclusive. Educationists and non-educationists, linguists and non-linguists have disagreed in an attempt to seek the best position for the education of our children and better policies. Commentaries by Professor Branch motivated me to think about and research on this situation. Dan Branch, a Professor of History at the Warwick University, UK, in an article which appeared in the *Saturday Nation* of 8th March, 2014, the scholar said the following regarding Kenya's Education Cabinet Secretary's argument for 'local languages', "... the insistence that the very youngest children will learn best in their mother tongue languages seems, at first glance, sensible. And as he argued, evidence from other developing countries is that this strategy delivers results. Moreover, education in local languages is one way of protecting culture, literature and history that may otherwise be lost. Ngugi wa Thiong'o has long demonstrated the fertility of the soil of Kenya's vernaculars" (Branch, 2014).

Even though Branch seems to support the notion that using the 'local languages' as the medium of instruction in lower primary is the way to go, the truth is that the scholar is critical of this notion. He cites the challenges posed by the diversity of the language situation in Kenya as an impediment to the application of such a policy. He argues that the situation has caused conflict in the past arguing that "... language has been adapted and changed to fit the multi-ethnic realities of everyday life". (Branch, *ibid*) He also argues that application of such a policy would make the minority feel discriminated against since the language that would be used is the language of the majority. He also wonders what would happen with teachers who would find themselves in a situation where they were expected to handle a lower primary class in schools away from their home areas. I wouldn't like to go into the details of the concerns that Branch raises here, but the aim of this study was to find out if it was true, like he argues, that the diversity in the language situation actually produces conflict

in Kenya. It is important to understand people's attitudes towards languages 'local' or 'foreign' and how these attitudes shape their language patterns.

1.6 Scope and Limitations

The area identified for the purpose of this study was Makongeni Estate in Thika Town, specifically phases 4, 5, 8, 11 and 12 which are close and within an area of about 4 square kilometres. The whole estate comprises about fifteen sections with a population of almost 50,000 people (Kenya Bureau of Statistics, 2009). This population lives in the expansive estate measuring about 47.8 square kilometres and is made up of Kenyans from different ethnic communities. Although the Gikuyu may be the dominant group, due to their proximity to Thika Town, people from other ethnic groups in the country also live in the estate.

Although there are people from many of the ethnic groups found in Kenya, residing within Makongeni Estate, including the Maasai, Luo, Luhya, Kisii, Kamba, Somali, Kikuyu, Ameru, Aembu, and Samburu, the study concentrated on a few of these groups as a way of delimiting the scope of the study. For the purposes of this study, the data that was taken into consideration was from the Kamba, Luo, Luhya, Kisii, Somali, Meru and Kikuyu. These groups seemed to comprise a higher population of the residents in this estate than the others. For instance Phase 12 of Makongeni Estate was dominated by members of the Somali community, with some flats of up to four storeys being predominantly occupied by families comprising members of this community. However, this could not be said of the other ethnic communities whose members were spread in almost all the sections of the estate. This may also have something to say about members of the Somali community; they are a close-knit society. However, this study was not concerned with this aspect of behaviour, though it could have had a bearing on the preference and attitude towards the use of mother tongue languages in Makongeni Estate.

Makongeni Estate is largely inhabited by members of the lower to middle class of the society working in one sector of the economy or the other. There are those working with the government in the public service, including the devolved government, and those working in the private sector, mostly in the many industries that Thika is known for. There are also those in self -employment especially those in business. Makongeni Estate is the home of the largest open-air market within Thika and its environs with merchants coming to buy their merchandise and stock from as far as Ol'Donyo Sabuk in Machakos County, from this market. It is normal to hear these people in the market place conversing in a variety of languages. Although Kiswahili would be the most suitable language for this environment, it does not seem to enjoy the dominant status it would be expected to. This study attempted to find out the underlying factors that could explain this situation by collecting data from this expansive area comprising people of diverse ethnic backgrounds.

Some of the challenges that the study anticipated included lack of cooperation from those selected for the study. Sampling by itself was a challenge because the researcher would be expected to sample an equal number of respondents from each of the languages. The other challenge would be collecting the questionnaires from the respondents and ensuring that all of them returned the forms. Translating the questionnaires to Kiswahili, since not everyone would be able to respond to the questions in English, was another challenge, because translation is a difficult activity. Cost implications were another challenge as the researcher was sponsoring the study.

1.7 Operational Definitions

For purposes of this study, the terms defined below were used as per the definitions given here below. It is, therefore, important that the reader understands or takes the meaning of the terms, whenever they are encountered in this study, as defined in this sub – section.

1.7.1 Language Attitude

According to Crystal, (1997), language attitudes are the feelings people have about their own language or the languages of others.

Richards et al. (1992), argue that language attitudes are the attitudes which speakers of different languages or language varieties have towards each other's languages or to their own language. Expressions of positive or negative feelings towards a language may reflect impressions of linguistic difficulty or simplicity, ease or difficulty of learning, degree of importance, elegance, social status, etc. Attitudes towards a language may also show what people feel about the speakers of that language.

From the foregoing arguments, for the purposes of this study, language attitudes was taken to mean the notion or feelings that speakers have in their minds towards a language informed by the feelings that they have towards the speakers of the language. The attitude could be positive or negative depending on how they feel towards the speakers of the language.

1.7.2 Mother Tongue

Hornby, (2000), defines mother tongue as the language that one first learns to speak when one is a child. This means the first language that a child comes into contact with and uses as their first language. For the purposes of this study, this definition was adopted with a little modification. Therefore, for this study the term mother tongue was taken to mean the first language that any person speaks as their first language, which they naturally acquire from the environment they grow up in and which they have a high level of competence in. It is important to note that it has little to do with the mother in many instances. For example, in a situation where a person is born in a family where the parents are from two different linguistic backgrounds, the offspring most likely adopts the language of the father if the

family lives in a rural setting where the dominant language is that of the father. This, despite being the language of the father, is assumed to be the mother tongue of the offspring.

1.7.3 Working Class

Class is a group of people conscious of certain common traits and of certain common ways of behaviours which distinguish them from members of other social groups with other traits and other behaviours (Mukhwana, 2008). According to Gakuru (1992), although the concept of class can be assigned varied operational meanings depending on the objectives of a specific study, there is consistency in looking at classes as unequal groupings which are principally but not exclusively determined by their place in the economic system. Mukhwana (ibid) further argues that the concept of class refers to a group of people in society who live under similar economic and social conditions and which separate their mode of life from those of others, so that class is defined on the basis of socio-economic status variables of income, occupation, education and some selected material possessions.

For the purposes of this study, the definition of working class provided by Mukhwana was adopted as it captured key components of what a social class should comprise, namely; economic status, kind of occupation, material possessions and to some extent level of education.

The residents of Makongeni Estate are generally people working in the many industries within the town and others working in government offices, schools, hospitals and other health facilities (both public and private) as well as in the business premises within the town and its environs. They rely largely on their earnings from their employment and live in rented accommodation. Their children go to either public primary and secondary schools or private schools that charge low fees. Most of the residents do not own cars but commute by public means to their places of work and back while some are provided with transport by their employers in form of buses that pick and drop them at points close to their residences.

1.7.4 Language Preference

The pattern of language use in a multilingual society is a complex interplay of socio – linguistic, discursive and pragmatic factors. Sometimes speakers have a preference for a particular language for certain conversational and discourse settings... (Rudra, K., 2016). This argument helps us to understand what language preference is. In certain situations, for example, linguistic research on multilingual societies has indicated that there is usually a preferred language for expression of emotion and sentiment (Ibid). For instance, some people may feel that in a situation such as an altercation, one language gives the speaker more force than another. An example of such a situation is where two people engage in a war of words. The speakers may use a mother tongue, especially if they come from the same ethnic group, because the words they throw at each other may seem to have more weight if they are in their mother tongue than in English or Kiswahili. A good example of language preference may be a political meeting where certain speakers decide to use the language of the local community so that the message they have for them may be understood better than if it were delivered in any other language despite many of the members of their audience being conversant with other languages.

1.7.5 *Sheng*

Abdulaziz and Osinde (1997) define *Sheng* as a mixture resulting from the code switching between English, Kiswahili and the mother tongues of the Kenyan ethnic groups. Over time, this code – switching or mixed codes developed into a systematic pattern which became known as *Sheng*.

Fink (2005) defines *Sheng* as the language of the youth in Nairobi while Samper (2002), defines *Sheng* as a hybrid linguistic code which is spoken by the youth in Nairobi and other urban areas in Kenya. Githiora (2002) calls it the urban dialect of Kenyan Swahili arguing that it is based on Swahili, with Abdulaziz and Osinde (1997) and Kiama (1990)

arguing that English and Swahili are the prominent lexical donors in Sheng. However Githiora (2002), Ogechi (2005), and Githinji (2006), also argue that *Sheng* has borrowed heavily from other Kenyan languages such as *Dholuo*, *Gikuyu*, *Luhya* and *Kamba* among other languages.

For this study, the term Sheng was used to represent that language spoken by most young people in the urban settings and mostly associated with the lower class as well as those of the working class background. The origins of Sheng, as supported by Samper (2002) and Mbugua (2003), are the poor residential areas of Nairobi but with time, the language has spread not only to other parts of Nairobi but also to other urban areas in Kenya.

1.7.6 Local Languages

According to Abdulaziz, (1982) Kenya has over 40 languages spoken by people who are assumed to be ethno – culturally separate communities. For the purposes of this study the term local languages was used to refer to the native languages spoken by these separate communities, largely living in the rural areas of Kenya. The languages are the mother tongues of the communities who are indigenous residents of the various rural areas of the Kenyan countryside. However, due to urbanisation and industrialisation among other factors these people have moved from their rural homes to the urban centres such as Thika Town. The mother tongues which are their native languages are the ones referred to as local languages in this study.

1.8 Theoretical Framework

The research adopted the motivation theory for data discussion and analysis. This approach is associated with such scholars as Clark Hull (1943), Kurt Lewin (1935 & 1936), Julian Rotter (1954) and Graham, S & Weiner, B (1996). Rotter (1954) uses the “social learning” principle to argue that the behaviour of an individual is a choice that the individual makes when confronted with a number of possible alternatives. This principle applies to this

study as the language that one uses in a social setting is a matter of choice. Although language is a communal tool used by individuals for social purposes, the main one being communication, the language that one uses depends on the speaker's choice and the social environment prevailing.

Mukhwana (2008) argues that attitudes towards a particular language are taken as attitudes towards the speakers of that language. It is therefore important to analyse the data collected in this research with this notion in mind. Lambert (1963) maintains that the motivation to learn a language is determined by one's attitude towards the language and the orientation toward learning the language. He further argues that it is a choice that an individual makes along certain dimensions.

According to Hull (1943), it is a physiological deficit or need that drives an organism to undertake behaviours that result in the offset of the need. He posits that for prior associations to be displayed there have to be some unsatisfied need that in turn produces a drive to action. This therefore means that for the speaker to display one form of behaviour or another there is an unsatisfied social need that in turn produces the behaviour displayed.

Hull (1943) uses the 'anxiety and learning' principle to explain the drive concept by relating anxiety level to learning. This is supported by Spence (1958) who posits that scores on an anxiety scale could be used to infer drive level. The drive to learn a language and the attitude towards a language are conversely related. Hence the application of the drive concept in this study of attitudes to local languages is appropriate.

Gardner and Lambert (1972) consider the motivation to learn the language of the other community to be a primary force responsible for enhancing or hindering intercultural communication and affiliation. In the current study the attitude of the residents of Makongeni Estate towards other local languages, and the fact that some of them demonstrated the ability to use the mother tongues of other ethnic groups, could be a clear indication of some kind of

motivation. Gardner's (1985) approach offered a macro perspective that allowed researchers to characterise and compare the motivational pattern of whole learning communities and then to draw inferences about intercultural communication and affiliation.

1.9 Literature Review

Several scholars have explored on the subject of attitude towards languages with most of them studying the attitudes people have towards languages that are not their own. According to Githinji (2008), language attitudes seem to be associated with the perceptions that people have towards languages spoken by other people due to the cultural stereotypes they hold about the speakers of the language(s). Githinji quotes Cargile and Bradac (2001:348) to sustain this argument by stating that language attitudes are invoked every time interlocutors encounter a variety of speech they have heard (or heard of) before. Further, the scholar quotes Preston (2002:40) as supporting this line of thought by saying that attitudes towards languages and their varieties seem to be tied to attitudes towards groups of people. This argument, though true, does not wholly define language attitude. The scope of this definition is narrow in that it only looks outward explaining what a person or a group of people may hold as true or feel about other people's language(s) and not their own.

Eastman (1983:30) as quoted by Su-Hie Ting in the study of the language attitudes of the Malaysian state of Sarawak, defines language attitudes as what arises when one social group comes in contact with a second social group possessing a different language [and] each group then develops ideas about the other group's language vis-à-vis its own (Ting, 2003). This argument also views language attitudes as being the ideas that people form about other people's languages in comparison to their own, but excludes the fact that people could also have notions, ideas and feelings, either positive or negative, about their own language(s). However, one strong point from this definition is the fact that two or more languages are

involved when language attitudes are the concern of a study. For this reason, therefore, it can be concluded that language attitudes apply to bilingual and multilingual situations. This is because the languages involved in such situations can be perceived as being in competition.

Borbely (2011), in a study of the language situation in four bilingual minority communities in Hungary, argues that historical, social and political changes are the main factors that influence language attitudes. This argument is true because as can be seen in the studies of how various languages have been viewed and how well they have been embraced by different people depends largely on these three factors. English, for instance, has got a multitude of speakers due to the might or strength of British colonizers. However, I am of the opinion that these are not the only factors that influence language attitudes. It is also possible that psychological viewpoints of the speakers play an important role in determining a positive or negative attitude towards a particular language.

Although Borbely (2011) argues that language attitudes are influenced by historical, social and political changes as the main factors, it is also possible that there could be a psychological element to the way people feel and respond towards languages. For instance, it is possible that a person feels more comfortable communicating in Kiswahili even if they are conversant and fluent in another language like English and would find themselves talking to others in Kiswahili more often, especially in non-formal situations. This may not be the effect of historical, social or political change only but may also have a psychological aspect to it.

In her research on teacher attitudes about language and education, Stone (2012) indicates that people can have both positive and negative attitudes towards their indigenous languages. In her study on teacher knowledge and attitudes about mother-tongue based multilingual education (MTBMLE), she indicates that initial interviews carried out for teachers joining a professional development program showed two distinct viewpoints: there were

those who supported the use of mother tongue in the first grade, while others did not like the idea. This perspective about language attitude is agreeable with the present study; the only differences are the contexts and the objectives of the two studies. Stone conducted interviews after the training which indicated that there was a change of perception for the teachers. All of them were more positive, after the training, about using mother tongue as the language of instruction for the first grade. I hold the same view that language attitudes can be directed to either mother tongues or 'foreign languages', where 'foreign languages' in this context and for this study refer to any language which is not a speaker's ethnic community's language.

According to Mukhwana (2008), the relevance of language attitudes to national language policies, their influence on socio-economic and political relationships, their contribution to underwriting social and economic privileges as well as their role in job discrimination, segregation and/or association, are issues which do not seem to have received adequate and in-depth critical enquiry in Kenya in particular and sub-Saharan Africa in general. Language choice and its attendant competence are issues that have received marginal attention, yet they are almost singularly responsible for influencing societal roles, presenting or constraining opportunities, on and above determining the nature of relationships and linkages between individuals, groups and social institutions. The study by Mukhwana (*ibid*) recognizes and appreciates the fact that there is an embryonic relationship between societal material conditions and language attitudes.

Mukhwana (2008) further argues that focus on attitudes towards local languages was lacking. This would mean that little or nothing in terms of research in this area, has been done. It is my hope that this study will contribute towards filling this gap. Since Mukhwana's research, there may be scholars who have taken interest in this area, but none that I have read about has carried out a research in the physical area where I carried out my research, or in the academic area focusing on Makongeni Estate. It is this gap that I wished to fill.

As earlier stated, Branch observes that the insistence that the very youngest children will learn best in their mother tongue languages seems, at first glance, sensible. Moreover, education in local languages is one way of protecting culture, literature and history that may otherwise be lost. Ngugi wa Thiong'o has long demonstrated the fertility of the soil of Kenya's vernaculars" (Branch, 2014). This observation can only be said to be true, but on a continuum. This is because even though Branch seems to support the notion that using the 'local languages' as the medium of instruction in lower primary is the way to go, the truth is that the scholar is critical of this notion. He cites the challenges posed by the diversity of the language situation in Kenya as an impediment to the application of such a policy. He argues that the situation has caused conflict in the past arguing that language has been adapted and changed to fit the multi-ethnic realities of everyday life. He also argues that application of such a policy would make the minority feel discriminated against since the language that would be used is the language of the majority. He also wonders what would happen with teachers who would find themselves in a situation where they were expected to handle a lower primary class in schools away from their home areas. These arguments may be verified by this study which seeks to find out if it is true, like he argues, that the diversity in the language situation actually produces conflict in Kenya.

According to Okombo (2014), people in the rural areas must participate in the ... matters of development that touch their bodies and souls in a direct manner: the education of their children, the markets for their fish and farm produce, and their representation at the local chief's *baraza*. All these discourses will ... take place in our indigenous languages. He further argues that these rural folk need to be empowered in their deliberations by making them literate in those languages. He further observes that they should be able to keep their accounts, record the proceedings of their deliberations, and even write business in the languages in which they think perceptively and express themselves fluently. What I found

relevant to my study in Okombo's argument for 'local languages is that it shows the importance of our mother tongues which could indicate their value.

For the purpose of this study, it should be understood that none of the primary schools that serve the children from Makongeni Estate in Thika, and generally no school within Thika Town, uses any of the Kenyan mother tongues as the media of instruction in the lower primary, or even teaches any of them as a subject; they all use Kiswahili, which is considered a national language in Kenya. This is an interesting situation because in this environment where children are exposed to a lot of material in Kiswahili and English, some still pick linguistic material from their mother tongues and use it, though not as extensively as their parents and other adults do.

1.10 Research Methodology

The study used the case study method of data collection. According to Coolican (2004) this method is used to gather detailed information about an individual or a group. According to Clark-Carter (2010), a case study is an in-depth analysis of either an individual or an organisation or institution. Bolgar (1965) argues that case studies have the ability to open the way for discoveries, while Shaughnessy and Zechmeister (1994) argue that the case study offers the best method for studying rare phenomena. The method uses interviews and questionnaire for data collection which makes it easy for the researcher to deal with events that they have no control over (Mukhwana 2008). The study focused on Makongeni Estate in Thika Town from where the sample was drawn. Therefore, it was a case study of attitudes towards local languages among the residents of Makongeni Estate in Thika Town.

The study had targeted a sample of about 100 respondents which comprised about 50 males and 50 female respondents. From the 50 males, about 25 comprised the youth aged between 14 and 30 years. These were mostly in the school going bracket, ranging from upper

primary pupils to university or college students. This applies also to the female sample for the study. The sample was drawn from among members of the Kamba, Luo, Luhya, Kisii, Ameru, Somali and Kikuyu. The study drew a sample of about 14 respondents from each of these ethnic communities which should comprise 7 youths and 7 adults. From each of these categories, there were about 5 males and 5 females. However, the study ended up with 94 respondents.

In terms of sampling, the study used the snowball sampling. This involves using initial contacts to identify other potential participants (Clark-Carter 2010). This sampling technique worked well because it was important to ensure the study involved members of the ethnic communities that the research targeted. It would be difficult to identify members of the different ethnic communities and to approach them for the study if not acquainted with them before. The contacts were vital in introducing the researcher.

The tool used for the study was a questionnaire. This was the most effective and reliable way of collecting data as it can be authenticated. A questionnaire has the advantage of saving time. This is because the questionnaire form is given out to those sampled, left with them to fill, and collected after some time. It is also cost-effective taking into account the fact that only the number of questionnaire forms required are printed and distributed. Once they are completed and collected, they form a record of the study. Fowler (1993:57) argues that this is the best method when the list of items to be asked is large and in a similar form. The argument here is that, having the interviewer read long lists of similar items is awkward.

For data analysis and presentation, the study used tables and graphs to present and summarise the data collected together with explanations.

CHAPTER TWO

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

2.1 Introduction

Fishman (1994) asks what is lost when a culture loses the language which it is associated with, or a country when it loses her language. In his presentation during the first symposium on Stabilizing Indigenous Languages, Fishman argued strongly for all languages demonstrating how each language was important, especially in identifying the speaker, expressing a culture and representing or symbolizing the culture of a people. It is within these perspectives that this study went out to investigate the language behaviour of the people residing within Makongeni Estate in Thika Town.

This chapter looked at and tried to explain the areas that the study was concerned with. These were the theoretical issues that the research set out to investigate and explain. They included language use, language preference, language attitudes, language loyalty, the contexts within which language was used and the underlying factors. This provided the basis for the data collection, analysis and presentation for this study.

2.2 Language Use Within Makongeni Estate

Kheimets and Epstein (2001) argue that language helps to identify the speaker and associate them with an ethnic group, a race or a clan. For instance Yiddish is associated with a certain group of Jews, Spanish is for Spaniards, *Mandarin* is spoken by the Chinese, while at the local level we have *Dholuo* for the Luo, *Gikúyú* for the Kikuyu and Somali for the Somali people.

Newmeyer (1986) argues that language is the most characteristic medium of social exchange and must therefore reflect and influence all facets of our social existence. This means that language should permeate all aspects of our lives and as Fishman (1994) posits, it represents our economy, religion, healthcare system, philosophy and everything else that is

part of our culture. Language is used in almost everything that man does. People need language for business transactions, for religious rituals or ceremonies, for aesthetics and recreation, for literature and entertainment. Language is used in all environments, that is, at home, in the church, mosque or temple, in school, at the hospital, in the transport system and even on the farm. However, the language used in these environments or contexts vary so that we have language associated with religious matters, language of the office, language used at home and even language used on the playground.

Every culture has a way of using language in different contexts and it becomes much easier to use one's indigenous language to express oneself in certain contexts than in any other language. This is what Fishman (1994) means when he argues that a language long associated with a culture is best able to express most easily, most exactly, most richly, with the appropriate overtones, the concerns, artefacts, values and interests of that culture, which he refers to as indexical relationship between a language and culture. Sometimes a word that may be used by one language to name something may not be adequate enough in meaning as it would be in one's mother tongue. For instance, English specifies the female dog with the term "bitch" but in Kiswahili there is only one term for a dog, be it male or female, the term "mbwa" applies. Human beings choose how to use a language according to contexts in order to convey the message effectively or for success in their transactions.

With the above in mind, this study set out to establish the language behaviour of the residents of Makongeni Estate in Thika Town in line with the problem identified for the study. It was necessary to establish how the residents used language in different situations. It was also necessary to establish whether the young people living within the estate, be it those born within the estate or those who went to live in the estate from other places, could speak in their mother tongue and the situations or circumstances in which they did so. This was also meant to help meet the objectives of the study.

The study was also interested in establishing the languages that the residents used, given that besides the mother tongue, there were two other languages which many could use freely, that is, Kiswahili and English. There were other languages available to all. However, these languages, which were at their disposal, could not be readily used by all since they were not familiar. These were the local languages which were usually spoken by their native speakers, that is, *Dholuo* by the Luo, *Luhya* by the Abaluhya, *Kisii* by the Abagusii, Somali by the Somali community and *Kamba* for the Akamba amongst others. However, the possibility of some residents using some of these local languages, which they were not native speakers of, could not be ignored. This was taken into consideration from the very beginning.

2.2.1 Language Attitude

In a research carried out by Nurani (2015), it was found out that some native speakers of the Javanese language in Indonesia had a negative attitude towards their own indigenous language. Despite having used the language since birth, a lady who was a house – help at a house in Bogor, refused to speak her native language with her children after moving from her rural village in Yogyakarta to Bogor. She was not alone as the study identified more people from among the Java who were more inclined to speak Indonesian and English than Javanese. They had a more positive attitude to the new languages than their own indigenous language and openly encouraged their children to learn the use of these two languages but neglected their own.

Like this study by Nurani, I set out to establish the kind of attitude the people of Makongeni had for their own languages. Many studies have been carried out to establish the attitude of a given population towards languages that are not their own. This study was carried out to establish the target group’s attitude towards their own languages. The residents of Makongeni Estate and the neighbouring environs seemed to like their own languages or even have some pride for them. Considering an occurrence like the one where a couple did

not want their children to speak their own indigenous language, this situation provided an opportunity for this study to establish whether there were people who liked or disliked their languages and if they were willing to teach the same to their children.

When people develop a negative attitude towards their own language, that becomes the beginning of the death of such a language. Such an ethnic group may not realise this until much later when in generations to come, they might try to revive their language, as Kheimets and Epstein (2001:123) argue. Fishman (1994) aptly illustrates what is lost when a language is lost. The culture associated with such a language loses a whole range of what makes it a culture. It loses its greetings, its curses, its praises, its laws, its songs, its riddles, its proverbs, its cures, its wisdom and its prayers (ibid). In other words, the culture dies together with its language.

A study carried out by Mbara (2012) showed that the *Suba* language was dying. According to the study, the language was dying because its native speakers had embraced the use of *Dholuo* in place of their own language. Considering the competing languages within an urban environment and other factors, it was interesting to find people growing up within such an environment and being able to express themselves in their own mother tongue. This could only happen as a result of a strong positive attitude towards the indigenous languages.

The situation at Makongeni Estate, according to this study, would be seen as making an effort by the various ethnic groups, either consciously or unconsciously, to maintain their languages despite the challenging situation. It compares to the situation described by Kheimets and Epstein (2001) where Soviet Jewish immigrants in Israel desired to maintain the Russian language.

2.2.2 Language Preference

Language preference has to do with the language that a speaker chooses to use in a given situation. This applies only in a bilingual or multilingual setting where the population

can speak more than one language. The language situation in Makongeni Estate, and most other urban centres in Kenya, is multilingual. In such circumstances, the speakers have to make a choice of the languages to use in different situations. This means that the speaker has a decided preference for a given language, which is context sensitive, according to Caldas and Caron-Caldas (2002).

It is important to note that language preference is not rigid. It is fluid as Cokely (2012) argues, and further suggesting that looking at how children experience their multilingualism and investigating their professed language preferences could help provide insights into the process of development, both linguistic and in terms of identity, of bilingual and multilingual adults. This is a good suggestion considering that children pick languages more easily than adults and most bilingual and multilingual adults may have picked the languages as they grew up. So, the choices they make while growing up about the use of language are likely to influence their language behaviour for life.

In the language situation at Makongeni Estate, this could be somehow observed with some respondents indicating that they had learned their mother tongue within the home setting. Some of the young respondents indicated that they could use their mother tongue well. So trying to find out their language of preference while they are young makes sense. However, since it has also been argued that language preference is fluid (*ibid*), other investigations should be conducted after sometime to establish whether they retain their language preference after growing up.

Given the kind of linguistic situation that Makongeni Estate offered, it was interesting to try and find out what the language behaviour of the residents would be like. The presence of a very diverse society, with people from all over Kenya residing within a small area, provided an opportunity for some languages to become superior to others. For instance,

Swahili or Sheng could have taken control and become the dominant languages in this environment instead of the competing local languages.

2.2.3 Language Loyalty

Price (2010) argues that the language a speaker uses is decoded by others, which allows them to read the identity of the speaker. Language helps to identify the speaker either through their accent or dialect or the language they speak in. Among Kenyan speakers it is often easy to identify a speaker of English or Kiswahili as coming from a certain part of the country due to their accent and other language behaviours. Within the many languages spoken in Kenya, there are a few differences or variations which are referred to as dialects. For instance, among the Abaluhya there are various dialects but the Bukusu and Maragoli are assumed to be the major dialects by outsiders of the native Luhya speakers. When people speak in their mother tongue, the language identifies them not only with their community but their culture too. This is what Fishman (1994) illustrates when he argues that a language is a symbol of a culture, representing the culture in the minds of the speaker and those of the outsiders while Kheimets and Epstein (2001) argue that ethnic groups use language as one of their most significant identifying features.

Thornborrow (2004) argues that social groups and communities use language as means of identifying their members. The question in relation to our mother tongues would be, is the speaker willing to be identified as a member of the ethnic group associated with the language they would speak as their mother tongue? If they were not willing to be identified with the speakers of the language then they would avoid it at all costs. One's willingness to identify with the speakers of the language of the ethnic group, clan, tribe or race that one belongs to goes hand in hand with loyalty.

Language loyalty refers to a situation where the speaker(s) of a language demonstrate a desire to identify themselves through the use of their language. It is language loyalty that

ensures that the speakers of a language do not abandon their language in favour of another. It may be associated with pride for the language by the speakers. The notion of language loyalty is widely associated with Joshua Fishman. In this study it was assumed that the residents of Makongeni Estate were loyal to their languages, which was the driving force behind their continued use of these languages in an environment that was quite challenging for the survival of these languages bearing in mind that they were not the dominant languages. Fishman (1972) argues, defined as mother tongues, legitimate languages require the allegiance and loyalty due to the motherland itself. This would seem to be true with the language situation at Makongeni Estate where the residents seemed to be striving to retain their identity and remain loyal to their “motherland”, meaning the places they had migrated from.

2.3 Contexts

The context within which language is used was also an issue of interest for the study. Language may be used in a wide range of contexts. For the purposes of this study, only a few contexts were identified. These included the home environment, the market place, shopping at the local kiosk or shop, socialising with friends and age mates and interacting with other people at social events such as weddings.

2.3.1 Home Environment

This study wanted to find out the language(s) of preference for use within the home environment. This was necessary in order to find out what kind of influence the home environment had on those growing up within that environment. If some of the young people could speak in their mother tongue, it was important to establish if they had picked this from within their homes. The study also wanted to find out the influence of the bigger languages such as Kiswahili and English on the local languages.

2.3.2 The Market Place

There is a large open air market at Makongeni. This market provides food items not only to the residents of Makongeni Estate, but also to far flung areas such as Garissa County as well as parts of Machakos and Kitui counties. This study wanted to establish the language(s) used during their transactions at the market place. The languages used at the market place were of interest to this study as a way of establishing the language use by the residents of Makongeni Estate during their interactions with their clients as well as other persons they came into contact with such the suppliers of the goods which were sold at the market.

2.3.3 Shopping at the Local Kiosk or Shop

Within the estate, there are kiosks and shops that provide the residents with foodstuffs and other provisions which they require on daily basis. This study wanted to find out the language(s) that the residents used while doing their shopping at these kiosks and shops. It would be possible for them to use their mother tongues if their shopping was done at a kiosk or shop whose owner came from their ethnic group. The study wanted to establish if this was the situation.

2.3.4 Social Gatherings

Social gatherings happen very often. In most cases attendance is by invitation. People often invite their friends to such gatherings. If such gatherings took place in the rural Kenya, most of the people attending would be from the same ethnic group. This may not be the case in an urban setting. This study wanted to establish the language(s) used at such gatherings. It also wanted to establish whether such gatherings could offer an opportunity for anyone to learn a language.

2.4 Factors Influencing Language Use in Makongeni Estate.

2.4.1 Class

The issue of class is a bit difficult to determine. Classifying people or families as high, middle or lower class is usually a tricky one if a survey is not carried out to classify a population. For instance, Chakrani (2010) used the socioeconomic scale to determine class for his research by collecting data on the earnings of the families. However, this may not give clear cut-lines of determining social class.

This study considered occupation, and residency in determining and classifying the respondents as working class based on the fact that most of the residents were either employed by the government or the private sector or they were in self – employment. The students on the other hand, were considered to belong to these families and their classification was then determined by their families. Grusky and Sorensen (1998) consider occupation to be a key dimension of classification. Occupation can be seen as an enabler of a few other dimensions such as income and residency. One can only live in decent housing, either own or rented, depending on the kind of income they earn from their occupation. Majority of the residents of Makongeni Estate live in rented houses ranging from single rooms to two-bedroom and three-bedroom houses which cost them between Kenya Shillings 2500 for the single rooms to around Kenya Shillings 13,000 to 15,000 for the three-bedroom houses which is relatively low.

2.4.2 Literacy

Alidou (2006), (quoting other sources, namely; Brock-Unte (2005), Chiatoh (2005), Manchisi (2004) and Ohannessian (1978)), presents the colonial period education and literacy as being driven by the motivation to spread Christianity for the missionaries while the colonial masters only educated a few for the purpose of liaison

between the colonial administration and the indigenous people. However, when the British administration introduced education to the masses, their indigenous languages were used in the first three years of school as the language of instruction while English was taught as a subject. Once the learners reached the fourth class, English became the language of instruction for the rest of their school days (Alidou, 2006).

He continues to explain that the French administration was less tolerant towards the use of African languages for educational and administrative purposes (ibid). Where Islam existed, Arabic was confined to the teaching of the Koran but was not allowed in any formal school. Furthermore, the introduction of the western forms of education undermined the use of any other language to write other languages and the only literacy which was acceptable was that acquired through western education (ibid). These policies impacted negatively on the African languages.

After gaining independence, the African countries retained the policies they inherited from their former colonial masters and continued to use the languages of their former colonisers both as official languages and the languages of instruction in their education systems. Consequently, the European languages continue to enjoy a dominant status as official languages of administration and education at the expense of the national languages which have no formal status. This has had a negative impact on the development of the education and literacy in both the official and national languages (ibid).

The scenario Alidou creates in his write-up is one of hopelessness for the African languages. Unless the African governments formulate policies that would promote their indigenous languages, they will always be dominated by foreign languages. That is the situation our languages find themselves in and have to compete

stiffly against the foreign languages, which actually enjoy a positive attitude from many Africans.

It is against this backdrop that our languages find themselves competing not only amongst themselves but against a dominating foreign language too, which we have all embraced for use in all spheres of our lives. Considering that Makongeni Estate is a cosmopolitan urban area, the local languages or mother tongues cannot be used in school either as languages of instruction or subjects to be taught in the school curriculum. This means that literacy is in either English or Kiswahili.

2.4.3 Language Policy

A language policy refers to a set of guidelines by the government on the language(s) that the people should use. It could be as drastic as the one issued by Francisco Franco in Spain in the 1930s which banned all other languages except Castilian which was and still is the official Spanish language (Barton, 2004). According to Fishman there are three kinds of language policies regarding minority languages. These are, one, prohibitive policies like the one by Franco, two, permissive policies which neither prohibit nor support any language and three, supportive policies which state themselves to be supportive of minority languages and their cultures (Fishman in O'Neil, 2005:10). According to this last kind of policies, any loss of language is seen as undesirable since any loss of language is equated to a loss of culture.

The Kenyan language policy may be seen to be supportive since the Kenyan constitution, 2010 allows Kenyan citizens to use their own languages freely, but identifies two as official languages. These are English and Kiswahili. Furthermore, Kiswahili is identified as the national language. The language policy for the education system in Kenya states that in lower primary, the language used as the medium of

instruction should be the language of the catchment area, which is usually one of the mother tongue languages or Kiswahili (Muitung'u and Njeng'ere, 2008). It is in the light of the constitution that the native and other languages are freely used within Makongeni Estate.

2.5 Conclusion

The issues discussed in this chapter formed the basis of this study with a view to establishing how the residents of Makongeni Estate in Thika Town used language in their interactions on a daily basis and in occasional meetings such as social gatherings. The study also wanted to find out whether the residents of Makongeni Estate had a positive or negative attitude towards their languages and those of other communities.

CHAPTER THREE

DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

3.1 Introduction

This research involved 94 respondents from Makongeni Estate in Thika Town who were drawn from Makongeni Phases 4, 5, 8 and 12. The number of males who responded was 46 while 48 females responded. Of the 46 males, 23 were categorised as young, between 14 years and 30 years, while 23 were categorised as older males, aged 31 years and above. Of the 48 female respondents, 25 were categorised as young, aged between 14 and 30 years and 23 were categorised as older females, aged above 31 years. These varying ages were vital for the study because the research aimed at finding out the attitudes of the residents of Makongeni Estate from as early as it could possibly be. At 14 years, though young, a child is expected to be in Form One and can reasonably express themselves and make informed decisions based on their past experiences.

In terms of education, the respondents were from varied educational backgrounds, with 16 having attained university level education, 35 with a college level educational status, 32 with a secondary level education and 11 having a primary level status. This information is summarised in the following table and pie chart:

Level of Education	No. of Respondents	Percentage
University	16	17.02
College	35	37.23
Secondary	32	34.04
Primary	11	11.70
Total	94	

Table 1: Level of education of the respondents involved in the study

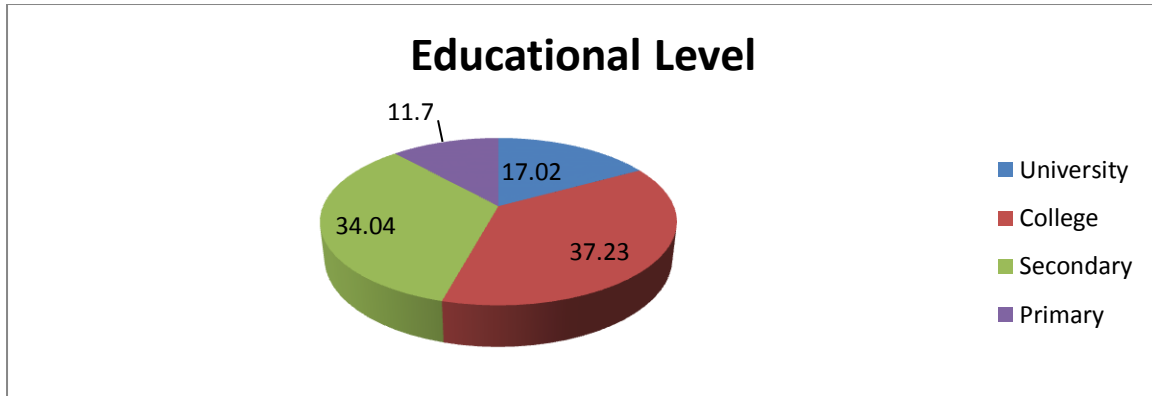


Fig. 1: Level of education of the respondents involved in the study

By looking at education as a variable, the study aimed at ascertaining the place of education in language preference within Makongeni Estate in Thika Town and in Kenya as country. Education could play a role in determining the language(s) that the target popular chose or preferred to use. This study wanted to find out if education had influenced the residents not to use their mother tongues.

The length of stay in the estate was also vital for the study. This would help to find out the behaviour of the respondents in terms of spoken language, depending on their length of stay in the estate. Out of the 94 respondents, 16 indicated that they were born and brought up within the estate. Out of those who had migrated to the estate from elsewhere, 12 had lived within the estate for more than 15 years, while 36 had lived in the estate for between 4 and 15 years.

The data used for this study was obtained through the use of questionnaires. The questionnaire forms were distributed to the respondents and collected at the agreed time because many of the respondents could not fill them immediately owing to their engagements which included, but not limited to, their work such as trading at the market place or selling at the local kiosk among other engagements.

In this chapter, the data collected is presented and analysed in terms of numbers of the respondents and percentages of the total number of the respondents. The data is also

presented and analysed in explanations as well as tables and pie charts to summarise the information.

The study used the motivation theory for analysis of the data as it was the most appropriate for the study.

3.2 Language Use within Makongeni Estate

In this subsection, the study looked at and analysed how the people of Makongeni Estate in Thika Town used language in different situations. The study looked at how the various languages were used for different interactions. The study singled out the home environment, the market place, the local kiosk or shop and the office as some of the key areas where language could be used differently.

3.2.1 Language Used at Home

The study looked at how the residents of Makongeni Estate used language within the home and came up with the following findings:

Among the youth, 10 out of the 23 male respondents used their mother tongue within their homes while 12 out of the 25 female respondents used their mother tongue at home. Among the older generation, 15 out of the 23 male respondents, and 12 out of the 23 female respondents used their mother tongue within their homes. These figures add up to a total of 49, the number of those who use their mother tongue within their homes, and translate to 52.13% of the respondents. This data is presented in the following table and pie chart:

	Young Males	Young Females	Older Males	Older Females	Total	Percentage
No. of Speakers	10 out of 23	12 out of 25	15 out of 23	12 out of 23	49/94	52.13
Percentage	43.48	48.00	65.22	52.17		

Table 2: Respondents who use mother tongue at home

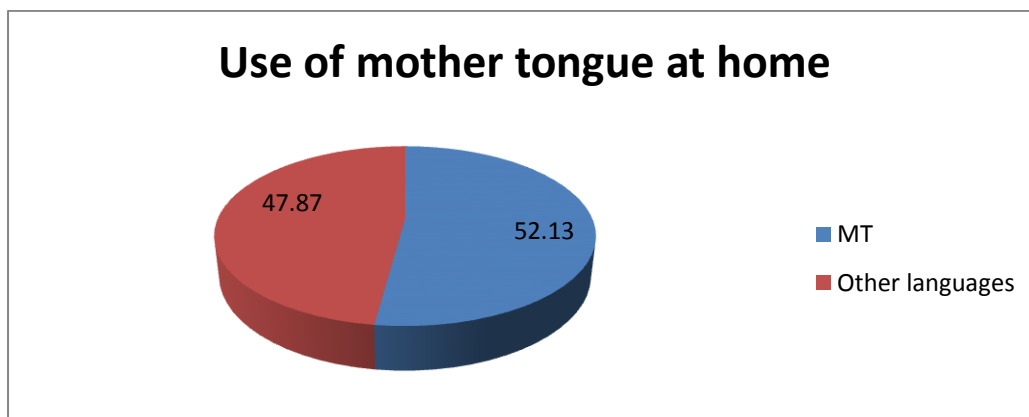


Fig 2: Use of mother tongue by respondents at home

Out of the 94 respondents, 11 out of 23 young males, 13 of the 25 young females, 8 out of the 23 older males and 11 of the 23 older females used Kiswahili within the home setting. These figures add up to 43 out of the 94 that responded, and translate to 45.74%. This information is presented in the following table and chart:

	Young Males	Young Females	Older Males	Older Females	Total	Percentage
No. of Speakers	11 out of 23	13 out of 25	8 out of 23	11 out of 23	43/94	45.74
Percent	47.83	52.00	34.78	47.82		

Table 3: Respondents who use Kiswahili at home

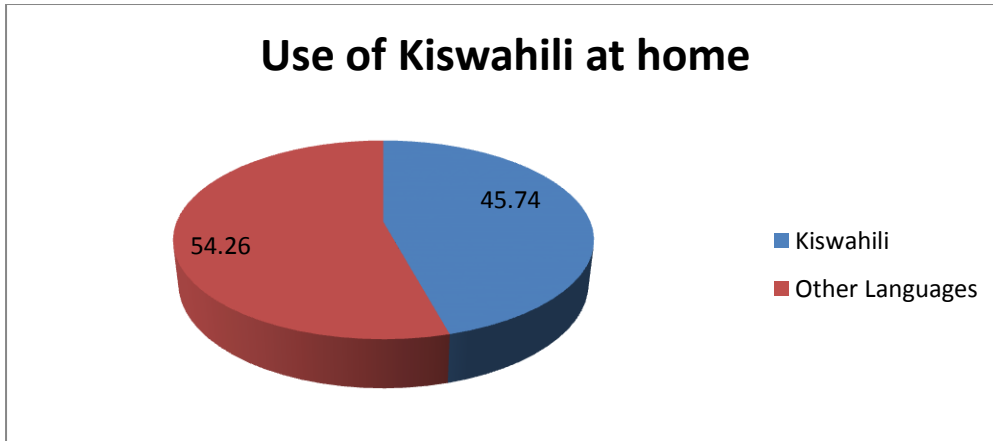


Fig 3: Use of Kiswahili at home

From the table and chart, it is clear that almost half of the respondents used Kiswahili at home. This showed that the residents of Makongeni Estate liked the language or were more comfortable using Kiswahili at home after their mother tongue.

Out of the 94 respondents, one indicated that they used English and another used *Sheng* at home.

3.2.2 Language Use at the Market Place

The responses on the use of language used at the market were as follows:

Among the older generation, that is, those above 30 years, 22 out of the 23 male respondents used Kiswahili and one (1) used mother tongue. As for the female respondents, the figures are replicated, that is, 22 of the 23 respondents used Kiswahili while 1 used mother tongue. Among the younger generation, that is, 30 years and below, 22 of the 23 male respondents used Kiswahili while 1 (one) used *Sheng*. For the young female respondents, 23 of the 25 respondents used Kiswahili, 1 (one) used mother tongue while 1 (one) used English. This information is presented in the following table and pie chart:

	Young Males	Young Females	Older Males	Older Females	Total	Percentage
Swahili Speakers	22 out of 23	23 out of 25	22 out of 23	22 out of 23	89/94	94.68
Mother Tongue	Nil	1	1	1	3	3.19
English	Nil	1	Nil	Nil	1	1.06
<i>Sheng</i>	1	Nil	Nil	Nil	1	1.06

Table 4: Language used at the market place.

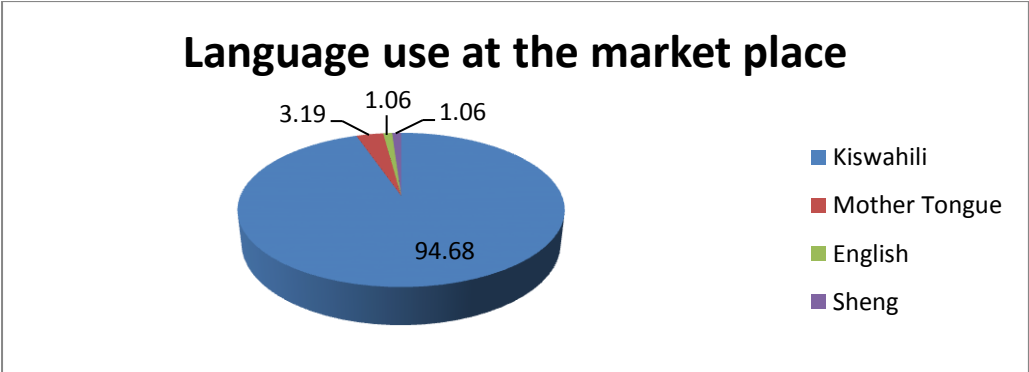


Fig 4: Use of language at the market place

Since Makongeni Estate is cosmopolitan, it would be hard to expect the people to use their mother tongues at the market place. However, from the study it is clear that a few of the respondents still used their mother tongues at the market place but the majority 94.68% used Kiswahili which is a national language in Kenya.

3.2.3 Language Used while Shopping at the Neighbourhood Kiosk

On the language used while shopping at the kiosk in the neighbourhood, the responses were as follows:

Among the older respondents, 22 of the 23 males used Kiswahili while 1 used mother tongue. For the female respondents, 21 of the 23 used Kiswahili while 2 used mother tongue. Among the younger respondents, 20 of the 23 males used Kiswahili, 2 used mother tongue, while 1 used *Sheng*. As for the female respondents, 22 of the 25 used Kiswahili while 3 used mother tongue. This is presented in the following table and pie chart:

	Young Males	Young Females	Older Males	Older Females	Total	Percentage
Swahili Speakers	20 out of 23	22 out of 25	22 out of 23	21 out of 23	85/94	90.43
Mother Tongue	2	3	1	2	8	8.51
Other	1	Nil	Nil	Nil	1	1.06

Table 5: Language used while shopping at the kiosk in the neighbourhood.

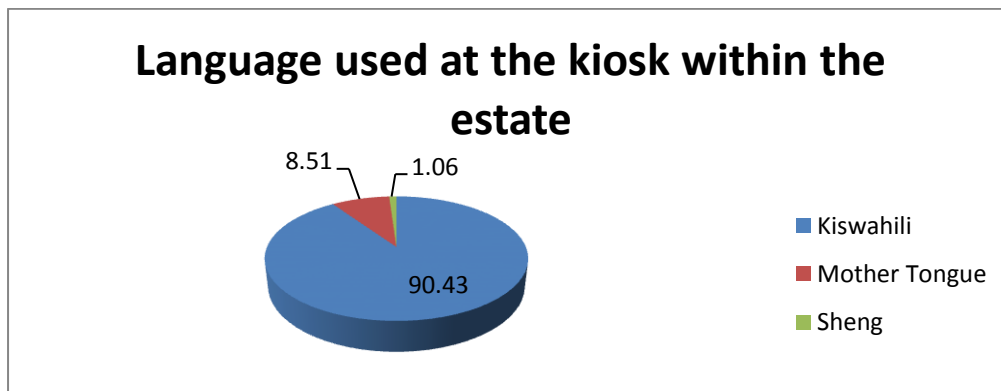


Fig 5: Use of language at the local shop/kiosk

From the data collected, it was clear that Kiswahili, which is a national language in Kenya, was more widely used at the local kiosk or shop. However, it would be worth noting that mother tongue had a higher usage at the local kiosk or shop 8.51% than at the market place 3.19%. This would probably be as result of where one preferred to do their shopping.

3.2.4 Language Used for Official Matters

In response to the question about the language they used while attending to official matters, the respondents indicated their use of language as follows:

For the younger respondents, 15 of the 23 males used English while 8 of them used Kiswahili. The young female respondents on the other hand indicated that 18 of the 25 used English while 7 used Kiswahili. Among the older respondents, 9 of the 23 males used English for official matters while 14 used Kiswahili. As for the female respondents, 8 of the 23 used English while 15 used Kiswahili. This information is presented in the following table and pie chart:

	Young Males	Young Females	Older Males	Older Females	Total	Percentage
English Users	15 out of 23	18 out of 25	9 out of 23	8 out of 23	50/94	53.19
Swahili Users	8	7	14	15	44/94	46.81

Table 6: Language used for official matters.

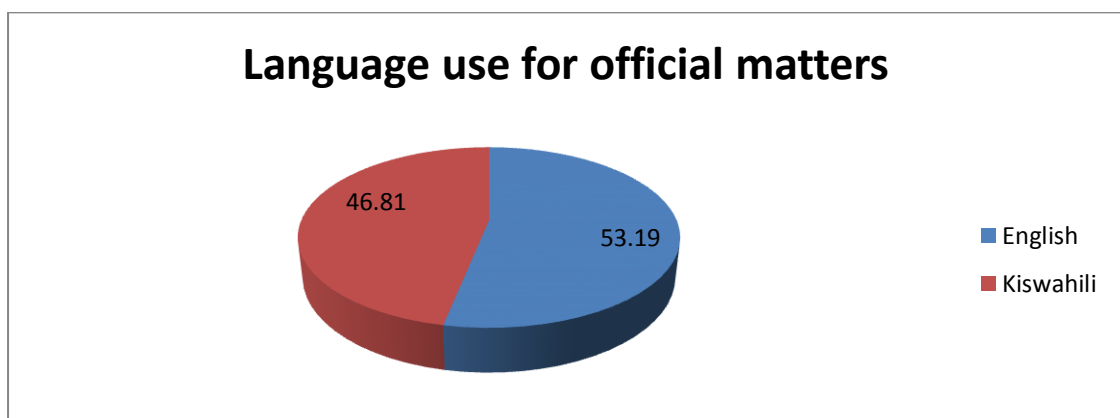


Fig 6: Use of language for official matters

The fact that both English and Kiswahili are official languages in Kenya besides Kiswahili being a national language, may explain why the two languages were used for

conducting official business by the respondents. Hardly any respondent indicated that they ever used their mother tongues for official matters.

3.2.5 The Number of Languages that the Respondents Used

The respondents indicated that they used a number of languages which is also clear from the foregoing information. Asked the number of languages they could speak, the respondents indicated they could speak from two (2) to more than four (4) languages as follows:

Among the young respondents, out of 23 males, 1 could speak 2 languages only, 12 could speak 3 languages, and 10 could speak 4 languages. As for the 25 female respondents, 3 could speak only 2 languages, 14 could speak only 3 languages while 8 could speak 4 languages. Among the older respondents, out of 23 males, 13 could speak only 3 languages, 7 could speak 4, while 3 could speak more than 4 languages. For the 23 female respondents, 2 could speak only 2 languages, 13 could speak only 3 languages, 3 could speak 4, while 5 could speak more than 4 languages. This information is presented in the following table and pie chart:

No. of Languages Spoken	Young Males	Young Females	Older Males	Older Females	Total	Percentage
2	1	3	Nil	2	6	6.38
3	12	14	13	13	52	55.32
4	10	8	7	3	28	29.78
More than 4	Nil	Nil	3	5	8	8.51

Table 7: Number of languages which respondents could speak

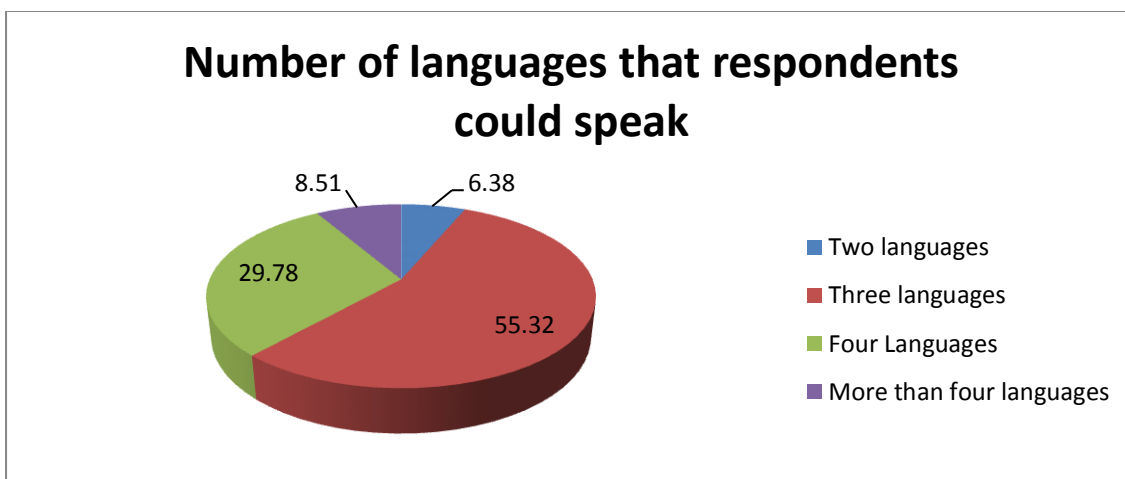


Fig 7: Number of languages that the residents could speak

This data clearly indicated that most of the residents of Makongeni Estate could speak several other local languages besides their own. More than half of those who were involved in the study could speak three local languages which meant that they could speak two languages of other local communities.

3.2.6 Ability of the Respondents to Use other Local Languages

Respondents were also required to indicate if they could speak in any of the local (indigenous) languages besides their mother tongue. The responses were as follows:

Among the younger respondents, 10 of the 23 males could speak one other local language beside their mother tongue. As for the young female respondents, 8 out of 25 could speak one other local (indigenous) language. For the 23 older male respondents, 12 could speak one other local language, 3 respondents could speak 2 languages, while 1 of them could speak 3 languages. On the other hand, the older female respondents who could speak other local languages were as follows; 8 of the 23 could speak 1 other local language, 2 respondents could speak 2 languages, 1 respondent could speak 3 other local languages while another respondent could speak more than 3 other local languages.

Of the 94 respondents, only 6 young male and 6 young female respondents indicated they ever used *Sheng* in any of their communication. This would represent about 12.77

percent of the total number of respondents. This information is presented in the table and pie chart below:

No. of Languages Spoken	Young Males	Young Females	Older Males	Older Females	Total	Percentage
1	10	8	12	8	38	40.33
2	Nil	Nil	3	2	5	5.32
3	Nil	Nil	1	1	2	2.13
4 & above	Nil	Nil	3	1	4	4.26
Total	10	8	19	12	49	52.13

Table 8: Ability to use other local languages

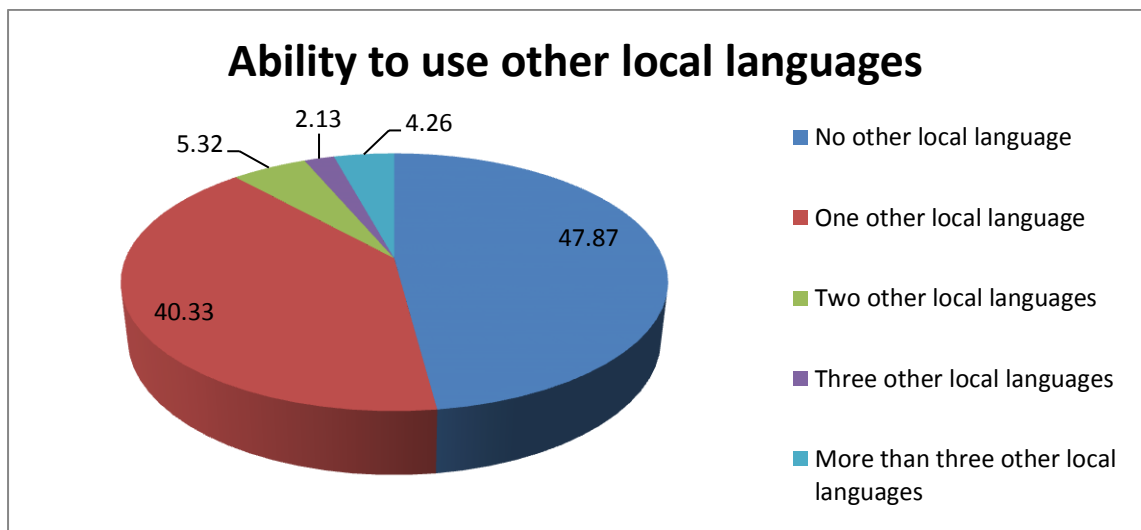


Fig 8: Ability to use other local languages

From the above information, it was clear that more than half of the respondents could speak in at least one other local language besides their own mother tongue.

3.2.7 The Respondent's Language Proficiency

The study also wanted to find out which language the respondents felt more comfortable and at ease using. This means that they do not strain when using the language. The respondents were not provided with options but were expected to provide their own answers. The responses are categorised into 5, namely; English, Kiswahili, mother tongue, Sheng and others. Under the category of others are languages that do not fall under the preceding 4 categories. For example, there were respondents who were noted to consider local languages, which were not their own mother tongue, as their strongest language. The responses were as shown below.

Among the younger respondents, the males responded as follows: 10 out of 23 indicated they considered their mother tongue as their most proficient language, 9 considered Kiswahili while 4 considered English as their most proficient language. As for the female respondents, 9 were for mother tongue, 7 for Kiswahili and 9 for English. Among the older respondents, the responses were as follows; the male responses indicated that 14 out of 23 considered their mother tongue as their strongest language, 6 were for Kiswahili, 1 was for English while 2 were for other languages. For the women, 16 of the 23 were for mother tongue, 6 for Kiswahili and 1 for English. The following table and chart summarise this information:

Most Proficient Language	Young Males	Young Females	Older Males	Older Females	Total	Percentage
Mother Tongue	10	9	14	16	49	52.13
Kiswahili	9	7	6	6	28	29.79
English	4	9	1	1	15	15.96
<i>Sheng</i>	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	0.00
Other	Nil	Nil	2	Nil	2	2.13
Total	23	25	23	23	94	

Table 9: Respondents' language proficiency

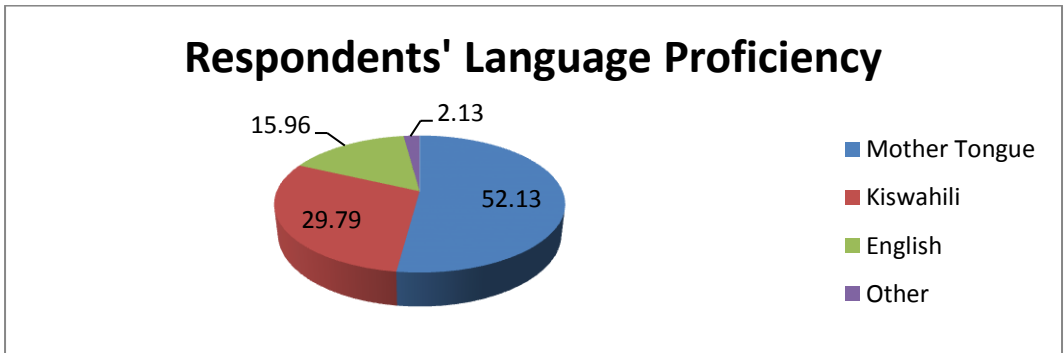


Fig 9: Residents' language proficiency

From this data, it was clear that the respondents felt that their mother tongues were their strongest languages. More than half of the respondents indicated that their mother tongues were their strongest languages. What this meant was that they could use their mother tongues with a lot of ease.

3.3 Language Loyalty

In this subsection, the study looked at how loyal the residents of Makongeni Estate were to their mother tongues. In other words the study looked at whether the respondents liked their languages and where they learnt the language. This was important as it helped to establish whether the residents valued their languages and if they would put any effort towards teaching their offspring their mother tongues. It also helped to establish whether there was any effort by those born within the estate to learn their own mother tongues.

Language loyalty can be seen as a desire to maintain one's language in spite of great challenges or conditions which could be termed unfriendly. It is shown through the use of a language as well as adherence to the cultural practices associated with the language. (<https://sk.sagepub.com>>bilingual)

3.3.1 Use of Mother Tongue within Makongeni Estate

The study asked the respondents whether they used their mother tongue within Makongeni Estate at all. The responses to this question were as follows: among the younger respondents, 21 of the 23 males indicated that they did while 2 indicated that they never did. As for the female respondents, all the 25 indicated they did use their mother tongue within the estate. Among the older respondents, all the 23 older males involved in the study indicated they used their mother tongue within the estate. For the older female respondents, 20 of the 23 indicated they did use their mother tongue within the estate, but 3 of the respondents never used their mother tongue within the estate. This information is represented in the following table and charts:

	Young Males	Young Females	Older Males	Older Females	Total	Percentage
No. of those who use their Mother Tongue at all	21	25	23	20	89	94.68
Total Number of Respondents	23	25	23	23	94	
Percentage	91.30	100	100	86.96		

Table 10: Respondents who used their mother tongue within Makongeni Estate

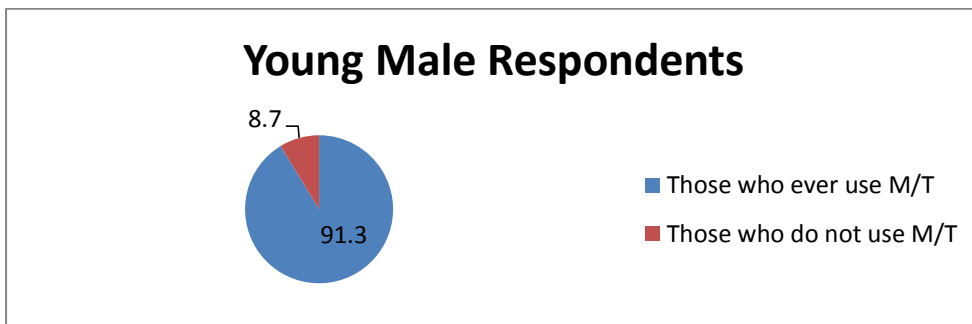


Fig 10 (a): Respondents who used mother tongue within Makongeni Estate – young males

From this chart it was clear that young males living within Makongeni Estate could and did use their mother tongues. The percentage of those who ever used their mother tongue within the estate was quite high 91.3%. This clearly indicated that the youthful men living within Makongeni Estate were very loyal to their mother tongues.

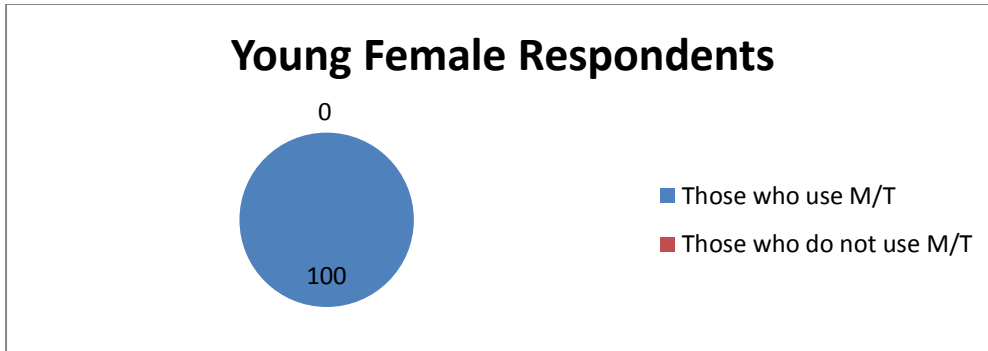


Fig 10 (b): Young female respondents who used their mother tongue within Makongeni

This chart shows that the young women living within Makongeni Estate were highly loyal to their mother tongues. All those involved in the study indicated that they did use their mother tongues within the estate.

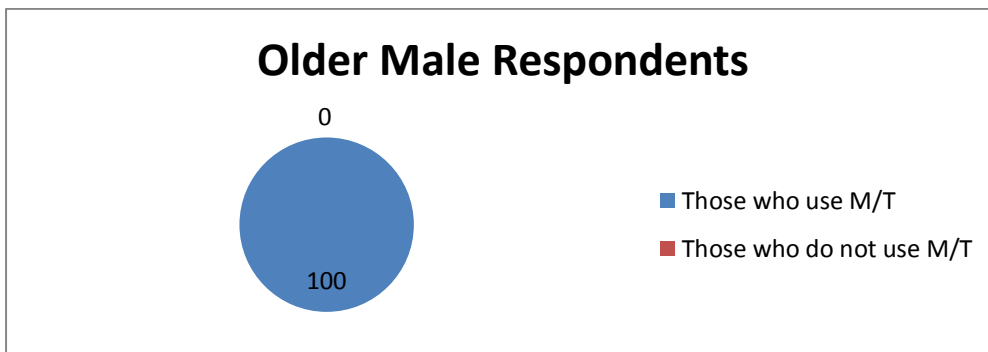


Fig 10 (c): Older male respondents who used their mother tongue within Makongeni Estate

All the older men living within Makongeni Estate indicated that they ever used their mother tongues within the estate. This was an indication that they really liked their mother tongues.

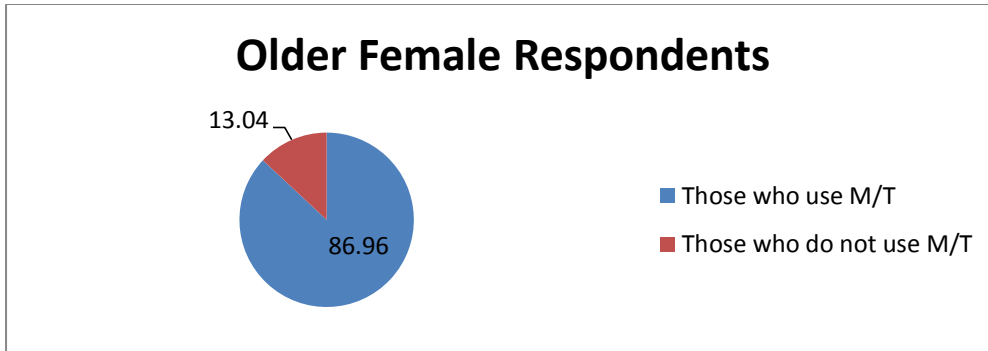


Fig 10 (d): Older female respondents who used their mother tongue within Makongei Estate

The older women living within Makongeni Estate indicated that they liked their mother tongues, although some of them did not use their mother tongues within the estate. However, 86.96% of those who were involved in the study indicated that they ever used their mother tongues within the estate.

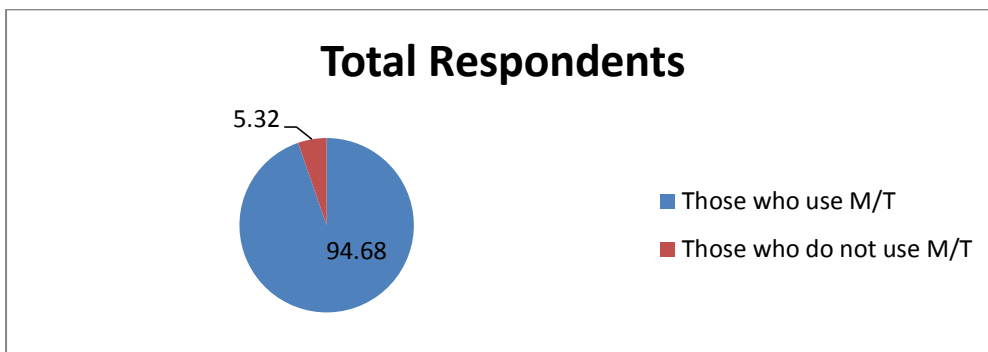


Fig 10 (e): Respondents who used their mother tongue within Makongeni Estate

The overall response on whether the respondents ever used their mother tongues within the estate indicated that 94.68% of the respondents did use their mother tongues within the estate. This showed that the residents of Makongeni Estate were very loyal to their mother tongues. Only 5.32% of the respondents indicated that they never used their mother tongues within the estate. This was quite a small percentage.

3.3.2 Where the Use of Mother Tongue was Learnt

The study wanted to find out where the use of mother tongue was learnt. The responses given indicated that 19 of the 21 younger male respondents, who ever used their mother tongue within Makongeni Estate, learnt their mother tongue at home, 1 learnt the language at school while 1 learnt at social events and gatherings. For the young female respondents, 24 learnt their mother tongue at home and 1 learnt it at school. Among the older respondents, 21 males learnt the language at home, 1 learnt the language at social places while 1 learnt it in the church. As for the female respondents, all the 20 respondents, who indicated that they ever use their mother tongue, learnt the language at home. The following table and chart represents these responses.

Where Mother Tongue was Learnt	Young Males	Young Females	Older Males	Older Females	Total	Percentage
At Home	19	24	21	20	84	94.38
At School	1	1			2	2.25
In the Church			1		1	1.12
At Social Gatehrings/Events	1		1		2	2.25
Total Number	21	25	23	20	89	

Table 11: Where mother tongue was learnt

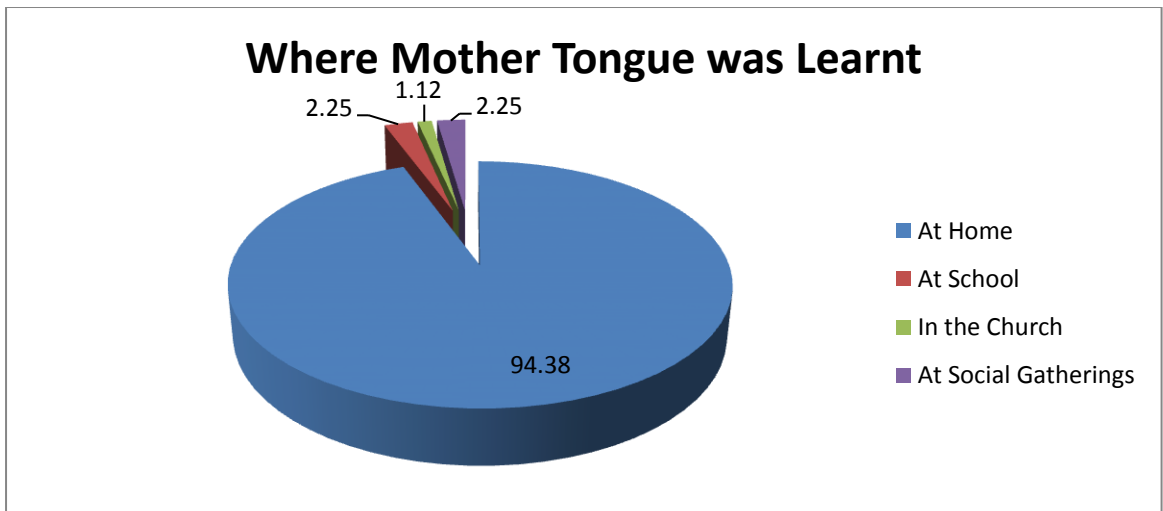


Fig 11: Where residents learnt mother tongue

The data collected showed that most of the residents who could speak in their mother tongues learnt the language within the home environment. This clearly showed that the parents made a deliberate effort to teach their young ones their mother tongues. Of those who could speak their mother tongues, 94.38% learnt the language within their homes.

3.3.3 Language Used with Friends

Bearing in mind that Makongeni Estate is cosmopolitan, the study wanted to find out the language(s) commonly used by the residents especially in cross-ethnic social encounters. The responses were as follows: among the younger respondents, 17 of the 23 males indicated that they used Kiswahili while 6 used *Sheng*. For the female respondents, Kiswahili got 21 out of the 25 respondents, *Sheng* 3 and English 1. Among the older respondents, 21 out of the 23 males indicated they used Kiswahili while with their friends and 2 indicated they used English. As for the female respondents, the language they mainly used was Kiswahili, and so 23 out of 23 respondents indicated that they used Kiswahili while with their friends. The following table and chart summarises this information:

Language Used with Friends	Young Males	Young Females	Older Males	Older Females	Total	Percentage
Kiswahili	17	21	21	23	82	87.23
English	Nil	1	2	Nil	3	3.19
<i>Sheng</i>	6	3	Nil	Nil	9	9.57
Total	23	25	23	23	94	

Table 12: Language spoken with friends

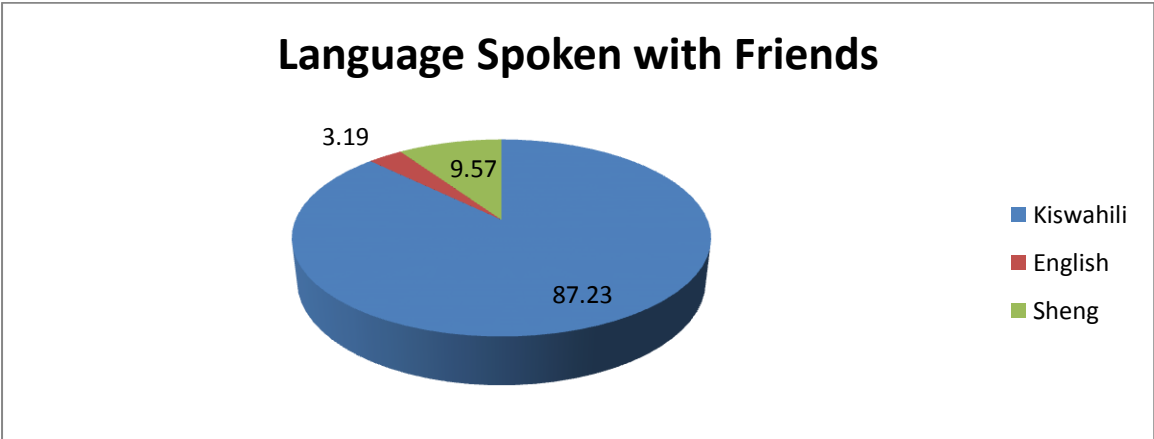


Fig 12: Language that residents use while with friends

The data collected showed the position Kiswahili among the residents of Makongeni Estate. When with friends with whom they did not share a common mother tongue, most residents used Kiswahili for their interactions. *Sheng*, which is largely associated with neighbourhoods where the population comprises largely of the working class, due to its emergence in the poor areas of Nairobi and its adoption as the youth’s secret code (Githinji, 2008), had very little prominence, with 9.57% usage, within Makongeni Estate.

3.3.4 Preferred Language

The study wanted to find out the respondents' language of preference. The responses indicated that 15 of the 23 young male respondents preferred speaking in Kiswahili, 6 in English, 1 in mother tongue and 1 in Arabic. For the young female respondents, 16 of the 25 preferred speaking in Kiswahili, 5 in English, 3 in mother tongue and 1 in *Sheng*. Among the older respondents, 17 of the 23 males preferred speaking in Kiswahili and 6 in mother tongue. As for the 23 female respondents, 21 preferred speaking in Kiswahili, 1 in mother tongue and 1 in English. This information is summarised in the following table:

Preferred Language	Young Males	Young Females	Older Males	Older Females	Total	Percentage
Kiswahili	15	16	17	21	69	73.40
English	6	5	Nil	1	12	12.77
Mother Tongue	1	3	6	1	11	11.70
<i>Sheng</i>	Nil	1	Nil	Nil	1	1.06
Other	1	Nil	Nil	Nil	1	1.06
Total	23	25	23	23	94	

Table 13: Preferred language

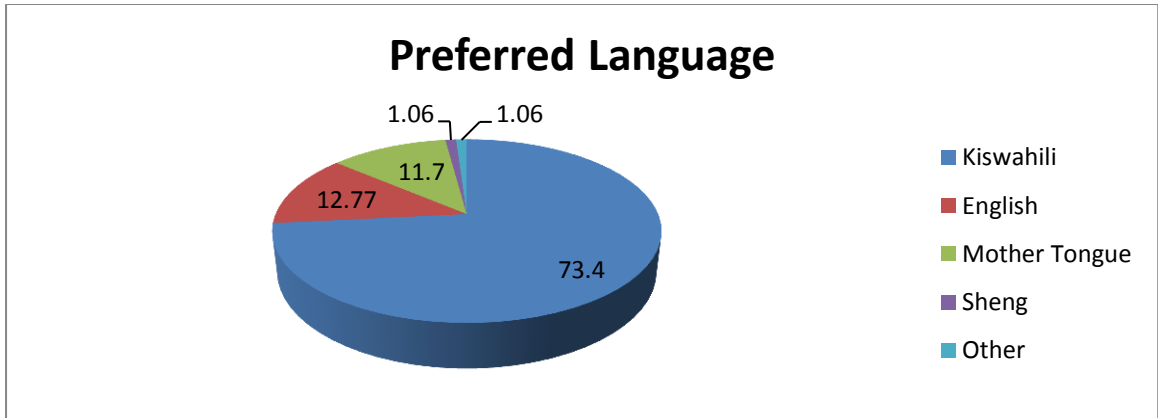


Fig 13: The language preferred by residents

2.3.5 Respondents Born and Brought Up in Makongeni Estate

The study also wanted to find out the language behaviour of those residents who were born and brought up in the estate. From the responses, the behaviour of this category of respondents was as indicated by the following data and explanations.

3.3.5.1 Those Who Spoke in Mother Tongue at All

Among the younger respondents born and brought up within Makongeni Estate, 5 out of 6 males did use their mother tongue within the estate, while among the younger female respondents, 5 out of 5 displayed that behaviour. Among the older male respondents only one indicated he had been born and brought up within the estate. The respondent indicated that he used his mother tongue while in the estate. Among the older female respondents, 4 were born and brought up within the estate. Three (3) of these respondents indicated that they did use their mother tongue within the estate, while 1 indicated that she never used her mother tongue in the estate.

The total number of those who indicated that they were born and brought up within the estate was 16. The following table and charts summarise this information:

	Young Males	Young Females	Older Males	Older Females	Total	Percentage
No. of Speakers	5 out of 6	5 out of 5	1 out of 1	3 out of 4	14/16	87.50
Percent	83.33	100.00	100.00	75.00		

Table 14: Residents born within who use their mother tongue in the estate

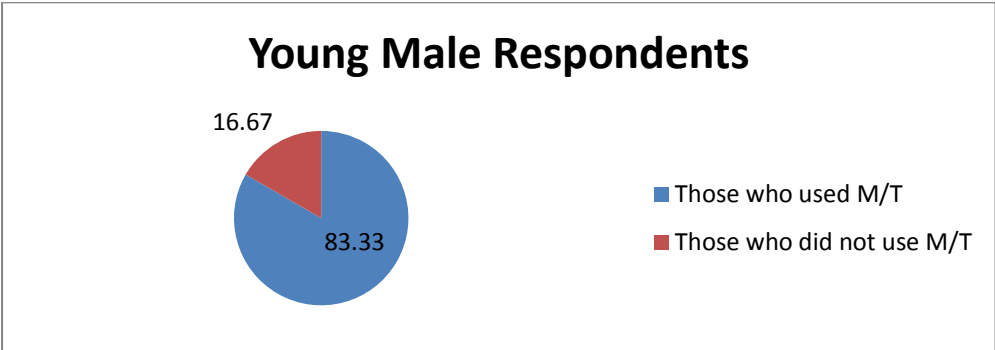


Fig 14 (a) Young males who used their mother tongue

The study showed that even among those who had been born and brought up within this urban setting there were those who could and did use the language of their parents which is also referred to as mother tongue. From among the younger male respondents, 83.33% indicated that they used their mother tongue.

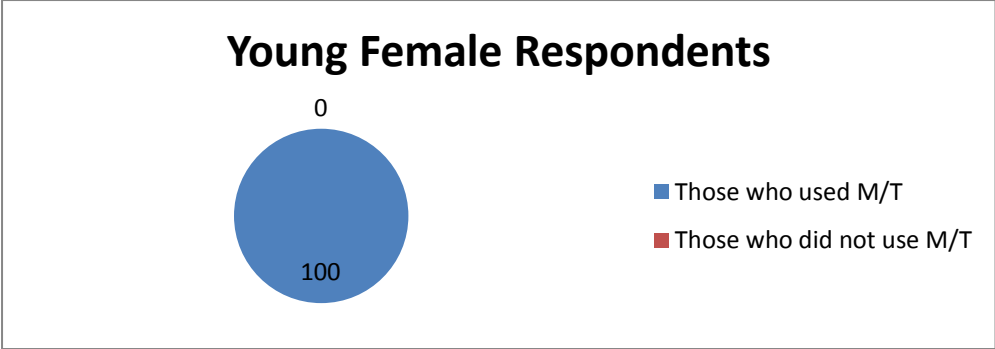


Fig 14 (b): Young females who used their mother tongue

For the younger female respondents, the results indicated that all those born and brought up within the estate did use their mother tongues within the estate as the chart above clearly shows.

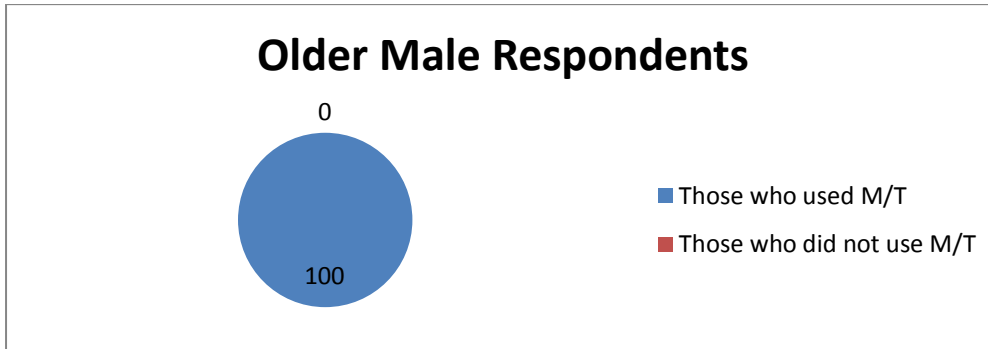


Fig 14 (c): Older males who used their mother tongue

For the older males, just as for the younger female respondents born and brought up within the estate, the use of mother tongue within the estate was by 100%.

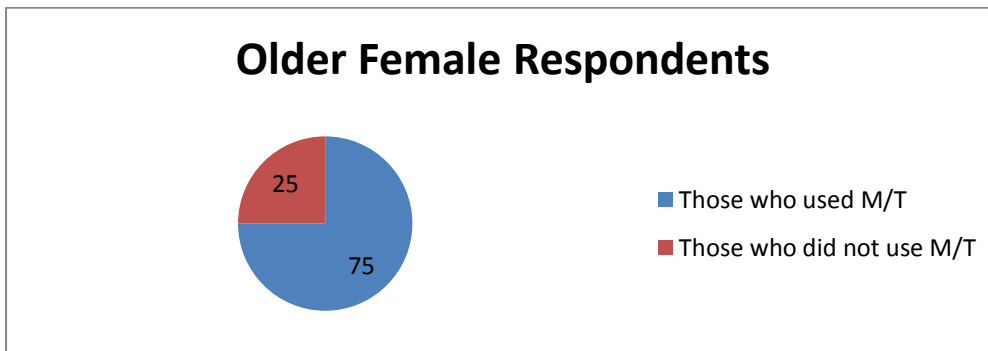


Fig 14 (d): Older females who used their mother tongue

Among the older female respondents, 75% indicated that they used their mother tongues within the estate. This was a significant percentage just as the other segments of respondents indicated in their responses.

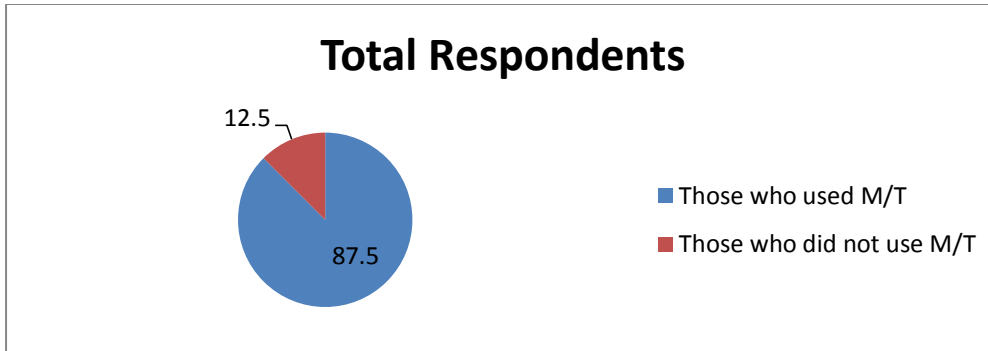


Fig 14 (e): Total respondents who used their mother tongue

When these responses were looked at from the total respondents of those born and brought up within Makongeni Estate, the data showed that a large percentage of 87.5% used their mother tongues within the estate.

3.3.5.2 Language Proficiency versus Preferred Language

The study was also interested in finding out their language behaviour in terms of their strongest or most proficient language as well as their preferred language. The responses received were as shown here. Since there was only one male respondent in the older category, it was only prudent to consider the responses of all males together. Therefore, taking the number of the male respondents as 7, the responses were as follows: 4 out of 7 indicated Kiswahili as their strongest language, 2 were for English and 1 for mother tongue. As for their preferred language, 4 indicated Kiswahili to be their preferred language, while 3 preferred using English. Considering the variation in language choice observed between the older and younger female respondents, their responses were considered separately. Among the 5 younger respondents, 1 indicated Kiswahili as her strongest language, while 4 indicated English to be their strongest language. For the 4 older female respondents, 3 indicated their mother tongue to be their strongest language while 1 indicated Kiswahili as her strongest language. In terms of preference, 3 of the 5 younger female respondents preferred speaking in Kiswahili while 2 preferred speaking in English. For the 4 older female respondents, 2 preferred speaking in Kiswahili, 1 preferred speaking in her mother tongue while 1 preferred

speaking in other local language, that is, a local language other than her mother tongue. This information is summarised in the following tables and charts:

Strongest Language	Males	Young Females	Older Females	Total	Percentage
Kiswahili	4	1	2	7	43.75
English	2	4	Nil	6	37.50
Mother Tongue	1	Nil	1	2	12.50
Other	Nil	Nil	1	1	6.25
Total	7	5	4	16	

Table 15: Language proficiency of respondents born and brought up within Makongeni Estate

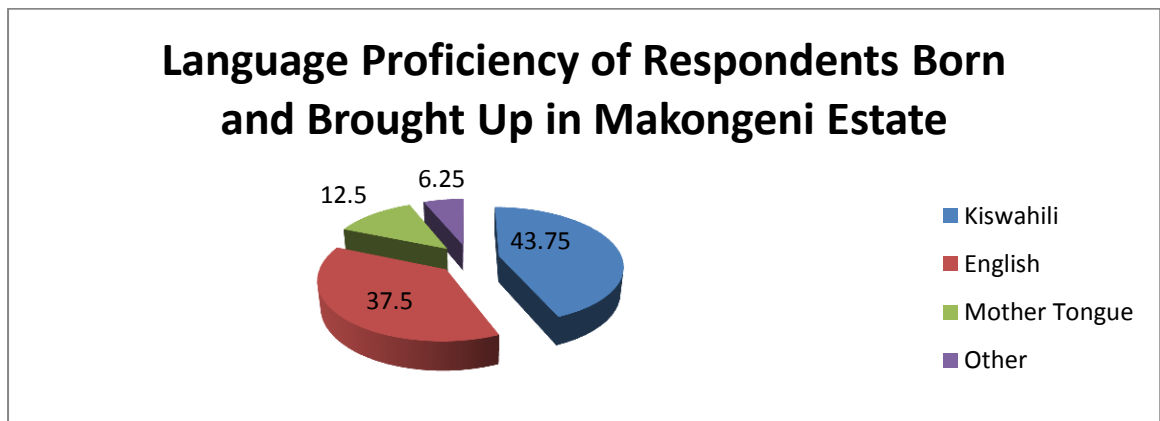


Fig 15: Language proficiency of respondents born in Makongeni Estate

The cosmopolitan nature of Makongeni Estate could very well explain the data as shown in the chart above. Kiswahili being the national language in Kenya plays an important position in uniting people from all ethnic communities. However, the 12.5% of the respondents born and brought up within this urban setting cannot be ignored. It shows that the residents do attach some value to their mother tongues despite their urban background.

Preferred Language	Males	Young Females	Older Females	Total	Percentage
Kiswahili	4	3	3	10	62.50
English	3	2	Nil	5	31.25
Mother Tongue	Nil	Nil	1	1	6.25
Total	7	5	4	16	

Table 16: Preferred language of respondents born and brought up within Makongeni Estate

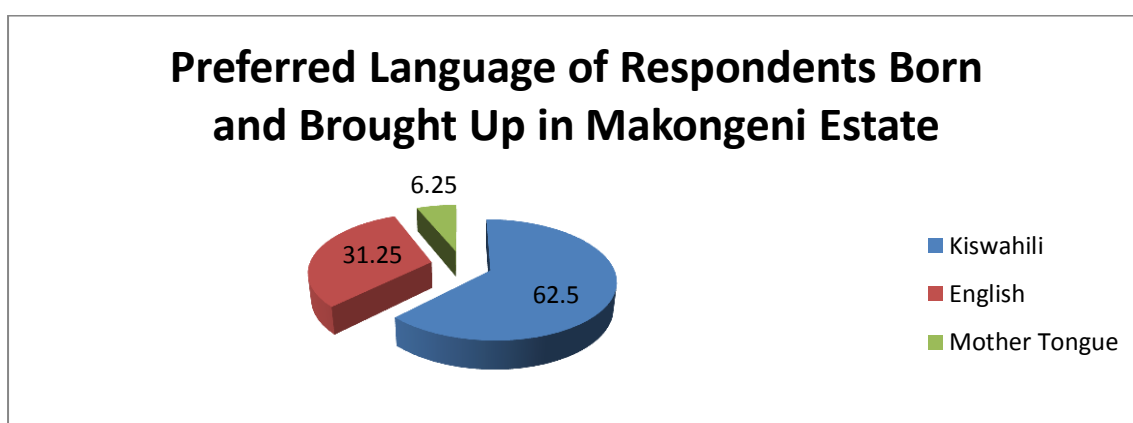


Fig 16: Preferred language of respondents born in Makongeni Estate

From the data collected, those born and brought up within Makongeni Estate indicated that the majority preferred Kiswahili to any other language. In terms of percentage this majority was 62.5% which exceeded half of the respondents in this category of respondents born and brought up within Makongeni Estate.

3.3.6 Migrant Residents to Makongeni Estate with Over 15 Years Stay

Another smaller group that was of interest in the study was that of residents with over 15 years residency within the estate, having migrated from elsewhere. The study looked at their language behaviour in terms of their strongest language and preferred language as well as whether they used their mother tongue within the estate. There were 9 male and 3 female respondents. The findings were as shown here:

All the 12 respondents, both male and female indicated that they used their mother tongue within the estate. In terms of their strongest language, 6 of the 9 male respondents indicated their mother tongue as their strongest language, 2 were for Kiswahili while 1 was for another local language, that is, a local language other than his mother tongue. For the female respondents, 2 indicated their strongest language to be their mother tongue while 1 was for Kiswahili.

In terms of preferred language, 3 of the 9 male respondents indicated that their preferred language was mother tongue while 6 preferred Kiswahili. For the female respondents, all 3 respondents indicated that they preferred to speak in Kiswahili. This information is summarised in the tables and charts below:

	Males	Females	Total	Percentage
No. of Speakers	9 out of 9	3 out of 3	12/12	100.00
Percentage	100.00	100.00		

Table 17: Use of mother tongue by residents who migrated to Makongeni

The data collected indicated that, although this group of residents had stayed in the estate for a long time, they still used their mother tongues in some of their interactions. All of them indicated that they did use their mother tongues at times within the estate.

Strongest Language	Males	Females	Total	Percentage
Kiswahili	2	1	3	25
Mother Tongue	6	2	8	66.67
Other	1	Nil	1	8.33
Total	9	3	12	

Table 18: Language Proficiency of migrant residents

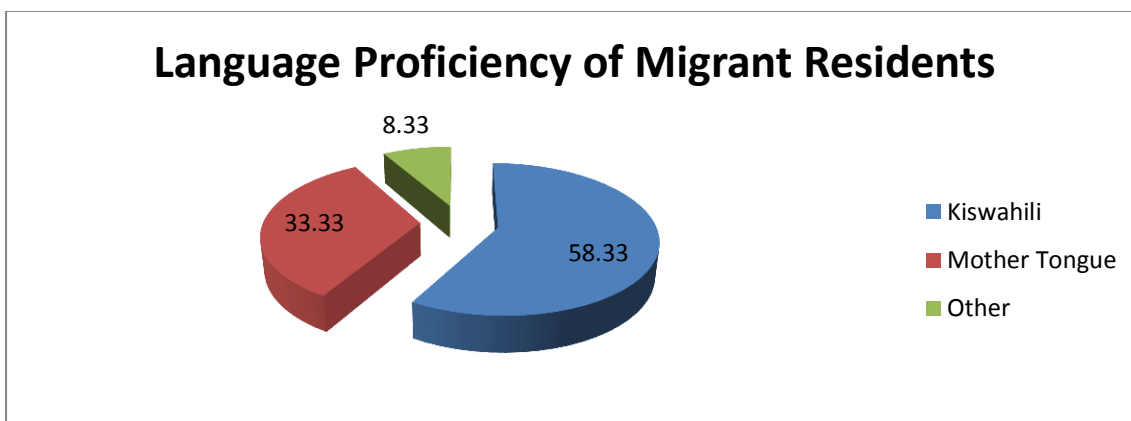


Fig 18: Migrant residents' language proficiency

Like other residents of Makongeni Estate, most of those who had migrated from other places to Makongeni and had been there for 15 years or more indicated that Kiswahili was their most proficient language. More than half of them, that is 58.33% of the respondents, indicated that Kiswahili was their strongest language with 33.33% indicating that their mother tongue was their language of proficiency. Only 8.33% indicated that their most proficient language was any other apart from either Kiswahili or their mother tongues.

Preferred Language	Males	Females	Total	Percentage
Kiswahili	6	3	9	75.00
Mother Tongue	3	Nil	3	25.00
Total	9	3	12	

Table 19: Preferred language of the migrant residents

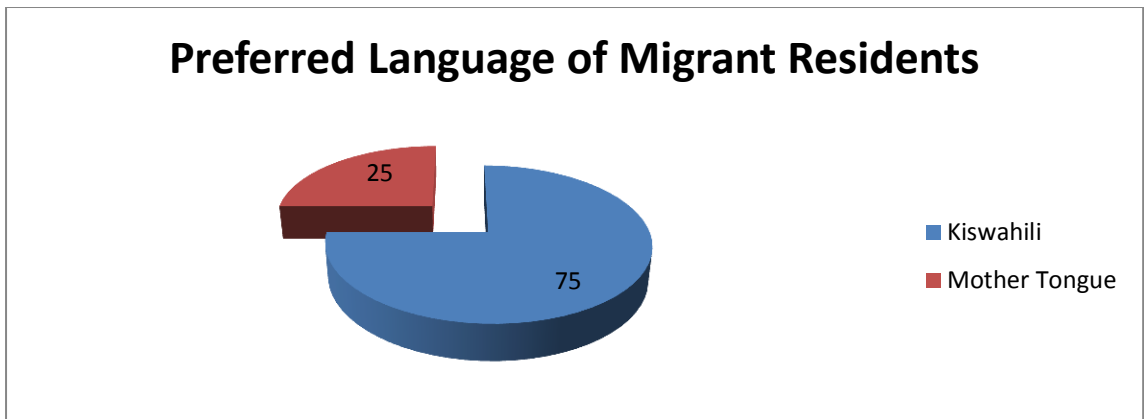


Fig 19: Migrant residents' preferred language

On their language of preference, residents who had migrated from other areas and had been living within Makongeni Estate for more than 15 years, indicated that they had only two languages of choice, Kiswahili and mother tongue. Those who preferred Kiswahili were in the majority at 75% while those preferred their mother tongue were 25%.

3.4 Conclusion

From the foregoing findings, it is clear that the residents of Makongeni Estate have a positive attitude towards both Kiswahili and their mother tongues. This is evident from the high numbers that use these two languages, though in varied environments.

The next chapter further analyses and explains these results in order to try and explain the behaviour of the residents of Makongeni Estate and the implications of their linguistic behaviour.

CHAPTER FOUR

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter the study presents the results and findings of the data collected in order to show the language behaviour of the residents of Makongeni Estate and their language preference and attitude towards the various languages at their disposal. The main aim was to establish the language preference and attitude of this community toward local languages bearing in mind that the setting was cosmopolitan.

4.2 Language Use at Home

From the data collected and presented and analysed in chapter three, it was clear which language(s) the residents of Makongeni Estate used within their home environments. Both Kiswahili and mother tongue shared an almost half – half preference and usage. The older members of the society used either one or the other with the male respondents showing a strong preference and positive attitude toward their mother tongue at 65.22% against 34.78% for Kiswahili. Though the female respondents also showed a strong attitude toward their mother tongues, their use of mother tongue and Kiswahili at home was almost the same with a 52.17% use of mother tongue and 47.83% for Kiswahili.

The younger residents on the other hand also showed a half – half usage of these two languages with both genders showing a slightly higher use of Kiswahili than their mother tongues. The younger female respondents had a 52% use of Kiswahili to 48% use of mother tongue, while the males had a 47.83% use of Kiswahili against 43.48% use of mother tongue, and 8.69 for other languages.

From the results obtained, it is therefore true to say that the older residents of Makongeni Estate were inclined to use more of their mother tongue within the home setting than any other language. It is also true to say that this category of the society used only their

mother tongues and / or Kiswahili within the home environment. Similarly, the younger residents of Makongeni Estate used both Kiswahili and their mother tongues almost equally. From this study, it is clear that both the mother tongues and Kiswahili enjoy a near half – half preference in the home setting of the residents of Makongeni Estate in Thika Town. This data is summarised in the following table and pie charts:

	Young Males (%)	Young Females (%)	Older Males (%)	Older Females (%)
Mother Tongue	43.48	48	65.22	52.17
Kiswahili	47.83	52	34.78	47.83
Other	8.69	0	0	0

Table 20: How residents of Makongeni estate use language at home

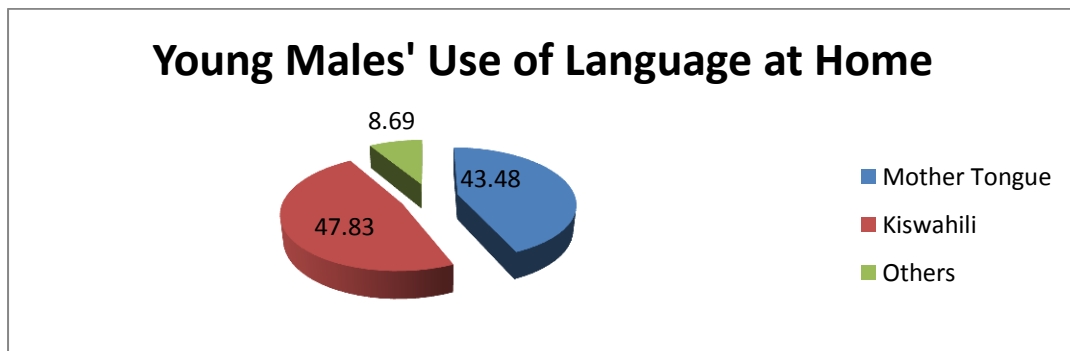


Fig 20 (a): How young males in Makongeni estate use language at home

From these results, it is clear that the young males living within Makongeni Estate used Kiswahili and mother tongue within the home environment in an almost half – half ratio. Those who used Kiswahili at home were 47.83% while those who used their mother tongues were 43.48% with only 8.69% using other languages. This would mean that their attitude to Kiswahili and their mother tongues was equally strong for this segment of the respondents.

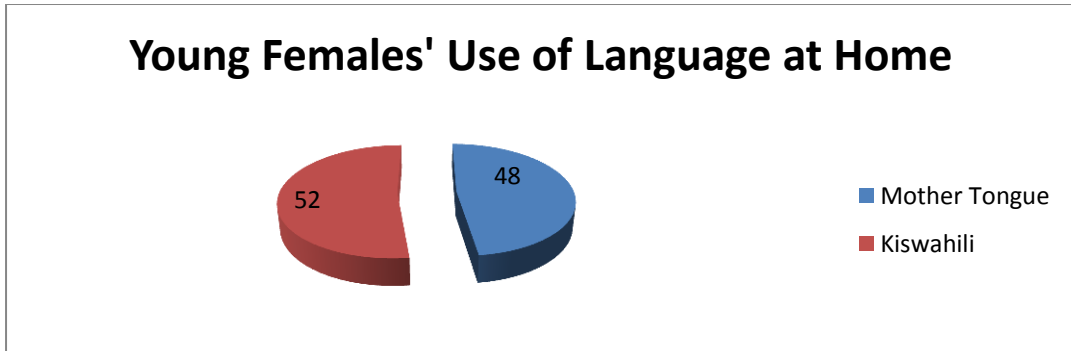


Fig 20(b): How young females in Makongeni use language at home

For this group of respondents, their attitude towards Kiswahili was slightly stronger than that of their mother tongues but the margin was very narrow. With a 52% use of Kiswahili at home against 48% use of mother tongue, the margin was very narrow. Therefore, it would be easy to conclude that the young females within Makongeni Estate used both Kiswahili and their mother tongues in a near 50/50 basis.

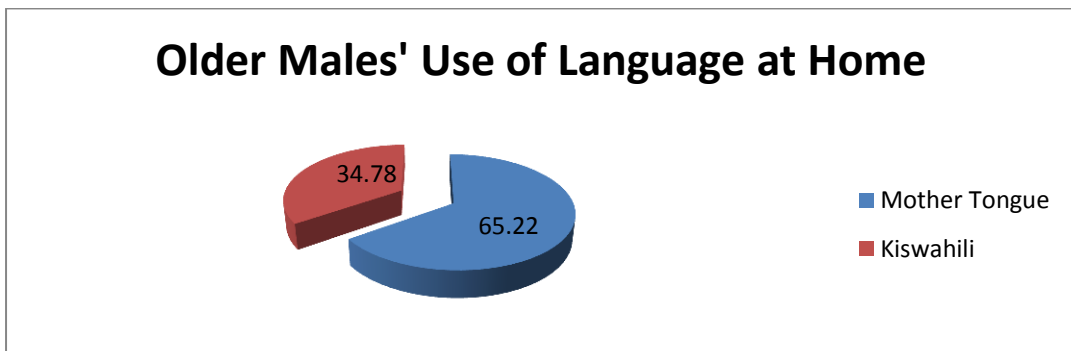


Fig 20(c): How older males in Makongeni use language at home

For the older males living within Makongeni Estate, it was clear that their attitude towards their mother tongues was very strong. Their use of mother tongue at home was 65.22% against 34.78% use of Kiswahili.

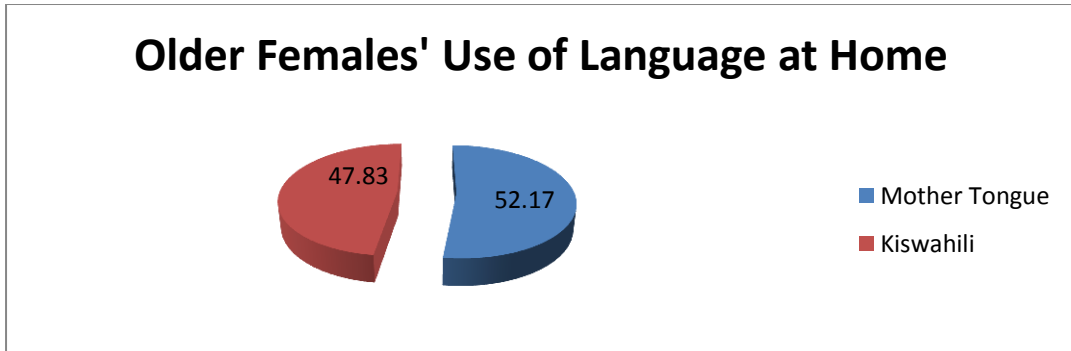


Fig 20(d): How older females in Makongeni Estate use language at home

Among the older females, their use of mother tongue and Kiswahili at home was almost half – half. However, mother tongue had a slightly higher usage than Kiswahili with 52.17% for mother tongue and 47.83% for Kiswahili. This shows a strong attitude for both mother tongue and Kiswahili.

From the above results, it would seem that the home environment helped a lot to shape the linguistic behaviour of the residents of Makongeni Estate especially the younger residents, since the older residents had a strong attitude for both Kiswahili and mother tongue. From these older residents, the younger residents may have picked this behaviour, hence their positive attitude towards the two languages.

4.3 Use of Language at the Market Place

The data collected showed that the language used in the market place across all categories of the respondents is Kiswahili. The fact that this is a cosmopolitan estate gives credence to these findings. The findings showed that 95.65% of the younger men, and both the older women and men used Kiswahili at the market place while for the younger women it was 92%. The remaining 4.35% of the younger men indicated that they used *Sheng* at the market place, while for both the older men and women the 4.35% used their mother tongue at the market place. For the younger women 4% used English, while the remaining 4% used mother tongue at the market place.

These findings show a strong positive attitude toward Kiswahili. Being a cosmopolitan setting, it would be difficult to expect the people to interact more in mother tongue languages though that kind of interaction cannot be completely ruled out. However, as the findings indicate, such incidences account for very minimal interactions at the market place within Makongeni Estate. These findings are represented in the table and charts below:

	Young Males (%)	Young Females (%)	Older Males (%)	Older Females (%)	Total (%)
Mother Tongue	0	4	4.35	4.35	3.19
Kiswahili	95.65	92	95.65	95.65	94.68
Other	4.35	4	0	0	2.13

Table 21: How residents of Makongeni Estate use language at the market place

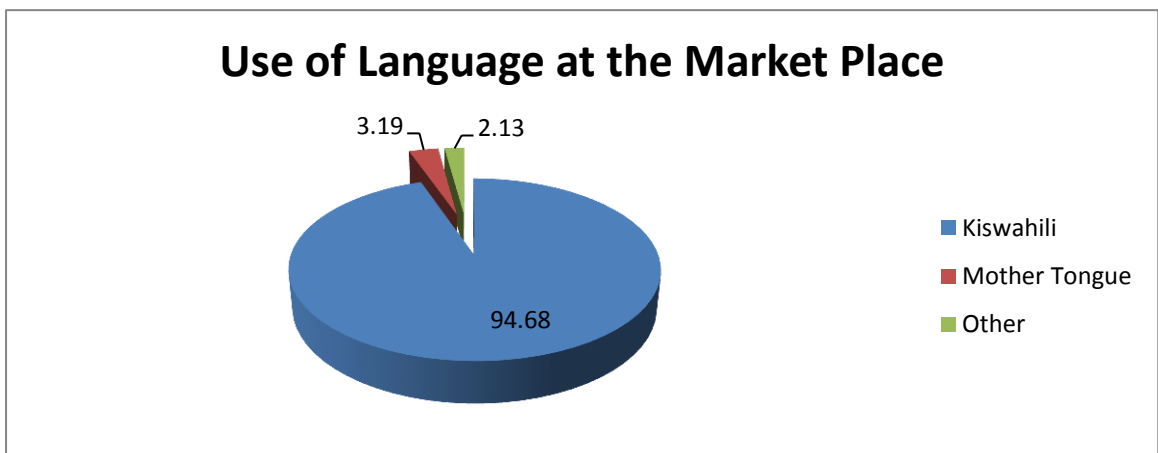


Fig. 21: How residents used language at the market place

4.4 Language Used During Shopping at the Kiosk in the Neighbourhood

The responses for the language that the residents of Makongeni Estate used showed that Kiswahili was the language that most people used within the estate while doing shopping

at the kiosks within the estate. All categories of the respondents indicated that more than 85% of them used Kiswahili for their interactions at the local kiosk.

The findings indicated that among the younger males, 86.96% used Kiswahili while 8.70% used mother tongue and 4.35% used *Sheng*. Among the younger female residents, 88% used Kiswahili while 12% used their mother tongue. For the older respondents, 95.65% of the older males used Kiswahili while 4.35% used their mother tongue, and among the older females, 91.30% used Kiswahili and 8.70% used their mother tongue. The following table and charts represent this data:

	Young Males (%)	Young Females (%)	Older Males (%)	Older Females (%)	Total %
Mother Tongue	8.70	12	4.35	8.70	8.51
Kiswahili	86.96	88	95.65	91.30	90.43
Other	4.35	0	0	0	1.06

Table 22: How residents of Makongeni Estate use language at the local kiosk or shop

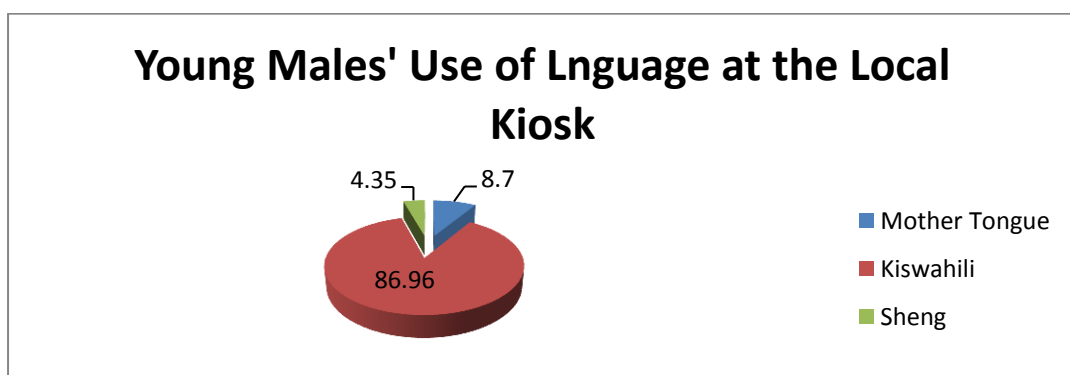


Fig 22(a): How young males in Makongeni use language at the local kiosk or shop

At the local kiosk or shop, that is, the kiosk or shop within the estate, most young male residents 86.96% used Kiswahili, 8.7% used their mother tongues while 4.35% used *sheng*.

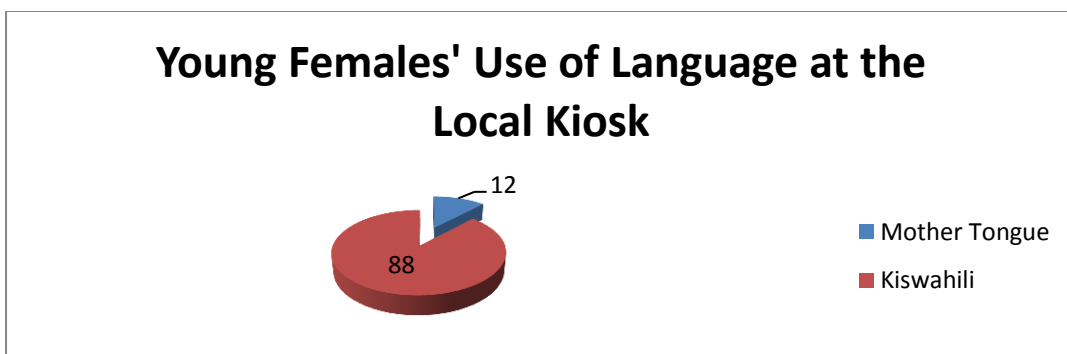


Fig 22(b): How young females in Makongeni use language at the local kiosk or shop

For the young female respondents, the use of Kiswahili while doing shopping at the local kiosk or shop was by 88% of the respondents while 12% indicated that they used their mother tongue.

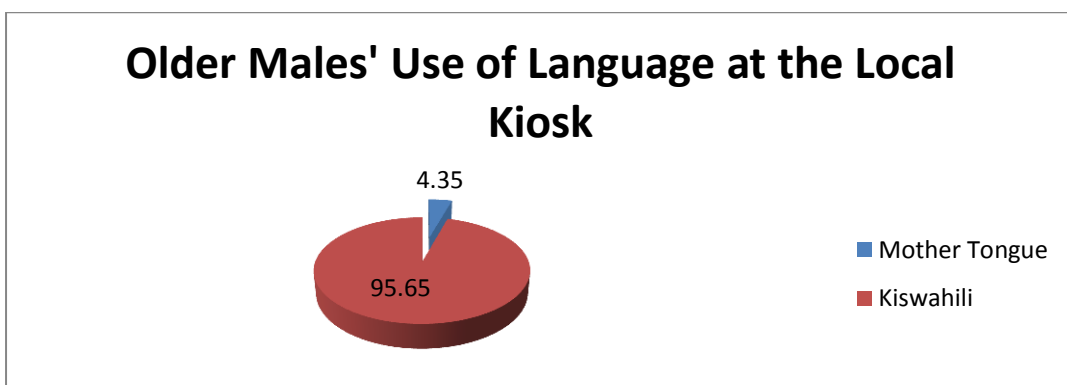


Fig 22(c): How older males in Makongeni use language at the local kiosk or shop

The older male respondents indicated that up to 95.65% used Kiswahili while doing shopping at the local kiosk while 4.35% used their mother tongue.

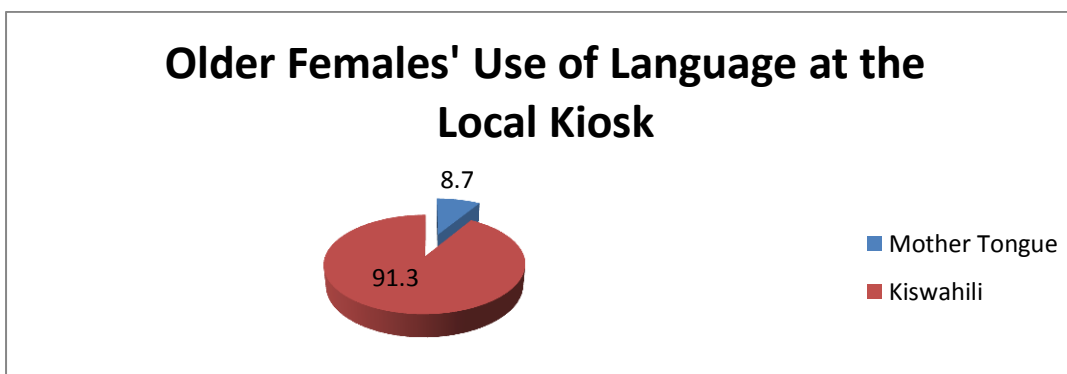


Fig 22(d): How older females in Makongeni use language at the local kiosk or shop

For the older female residents 91.3% used Kiswahili while doing their shopping at the local kiosk while 8.7% used their mother tongue.

4.5 Language Used for Official Matters

The findings here show a remarkable difference in the use of language among the residents of Makongeni Estate. Whereas the younger residents indicated that they use more of English than Kiswahili, the older residents indicated that they used more of Kiswahili than English in the transaction of official matters.

The data collected showed that 65.22% of the younger male residents of Makongeni Estate used English to transact official matters while 34.78% of this category of residents used Kiswahili. For the younger female residents 72% used English while 28% used Kiswahili. Among the older male residents 39.13% used English while 60.87% used Kiswahili, and for the older female residents it was 34.78% for English and 65.22% for Kiswahili. As Mukhwana (2008) argues, a majority of Kenyans can be said to have sufficient communicative abilities in either English or Kiswahili or both. This argument seems to be supported by this study. The analyses of the findings of the use of language for official matters are presented in the table and charts below:

	Young Males		Young Females		Older Males		Older Females		Total/ Percent
	No. of speakers	%	No. of speakers	%	No. of speakers	%	No. of speakers	%	
English Users	15	65.22	18	72	9	39.13	8	34.78	50/ 53.19
Swahili Users	8	34.78	7	28	14	60.87	15	65.22	44/ 46.81
Total	23		25		23		23		94

Table 23: Use of language for official matters by residents of Makongeni Estate, Thika

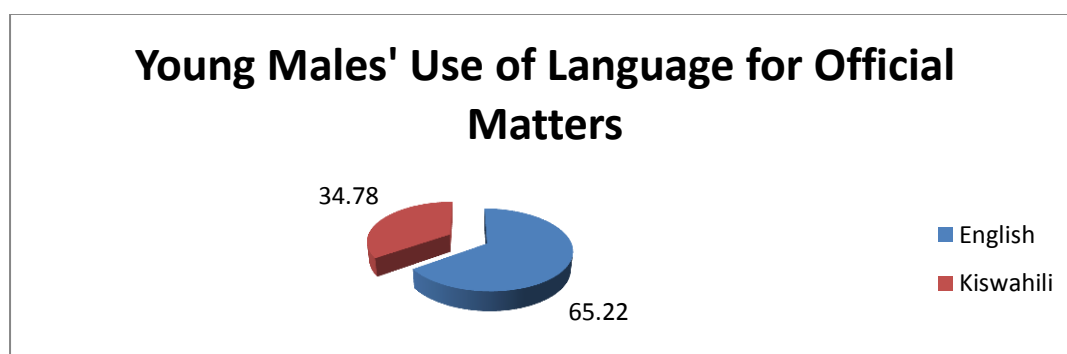


Fig 23(a): How young males in Makongeni use language for official matters

Majority of the young male 65.22% respondents used English to transact official business. This could be informed by the fact that most young people had gone to school and could therefore express themselves in English with ease. The rest, 34.78% used Kiswahili for official matters.

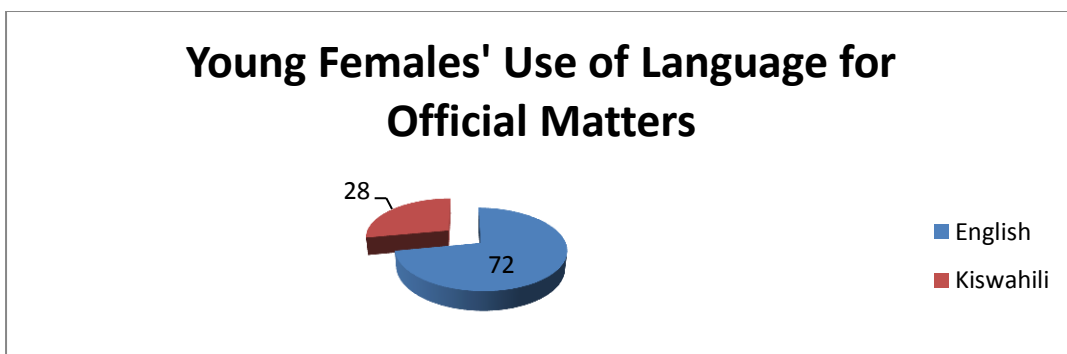


Fig 23(b): How young females in Makongeni use language for official matters

Among the young female respondents, 72% used English for official matters while 28% used Kiswahili. Again, just as with the young male respondents, it is highly likely that this was indicated by the results of the study owing to the fact that many young women have been to school.

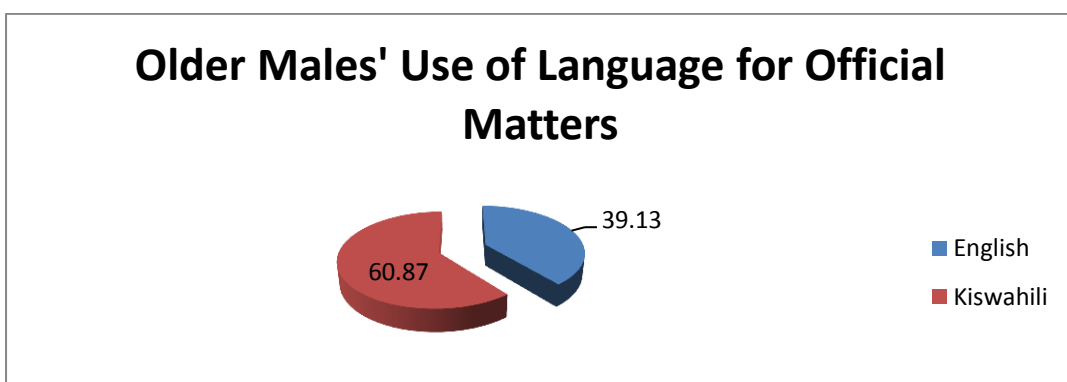


Fig 23(c): How older males in Makongeni use language for official matters

For this category of residents, the majority 60.87% used Kiswahili to transact official business compared to 39.13% who used English. This may be as a result of many of them not having gone to school or not proceeding beyond the primary school level.

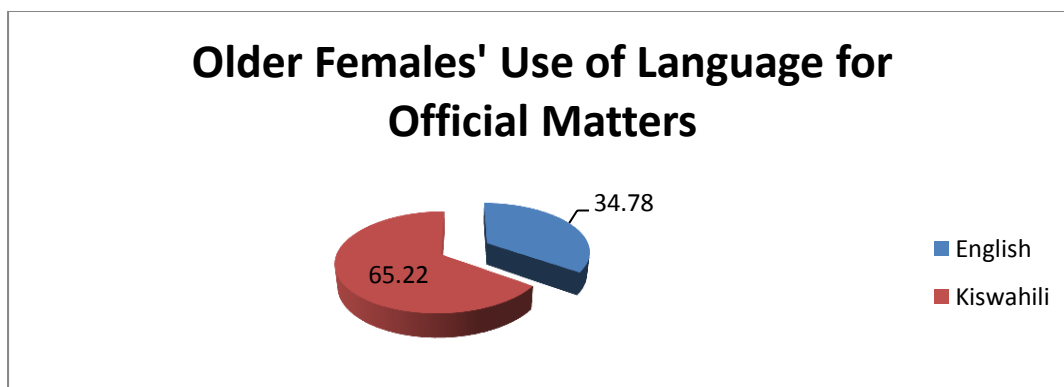


Fig 23(d): How older females in Makongeni use language for official matters

As in the responses by the older males, majority of the older female respondents 65.22% used Kiswahili for official matters while 34.78% used English. Again the reason for this kind of situation could be the education factor.

4.6 The Number of Languages which the Residents Could Speak

The study wanted to establish the number of languages that the residents of Makongeni Estate could speak. This was important because it would make it clear if, apart from the speaker's mother tongue, English and Kiswahili, a person could speak another local language. For example, if a respondent was from the Kamba or Somali community, could they speak in another language apart from their mother tongue, English and Kiswahili? Could a member of the Kikuyu, Luo or Luhya community transact any business in another local language like Kamba, Kimeru, Kalenjin and so on? The findings indicated that there was such a possibility of people transacting business in languages that were not their own, and not either English or Kiswahili.

The responses indicated that some residents could speak more than one other local language. One respondent actually indicated they could speak up to seven languages including English, Kiswahili and their mother tongue. This, therefore, means that this respondent could speak four (4) other local languages that are not their mother tongue. It is worth noting that the respondents with this ability came from different communities. The

results showed that at least 52.13% of the respondents could speak in at least one other local language other than their own mother tongue. The following tables and charts summarise these responses:

No. of Languages Spoken	Young Males		Young Females		Older Males		Older Females		Total	Percentage
		%		%		%		%		
2	1	4.35	3	12	Nil	0.00	2	8.70	6	6.38
3	12	52.17	14	56	13	56.52	13	56.52	52	55.32
4	10	43.48	8	32	7	30.43	3	13.04	28	29.79
More than 4	Nil	0.00	Nil	0.00	3	13.04	5	21.74	8	8.51
Total	23		25		23		23		94	

Table 24: The number of languages the respondents could speak

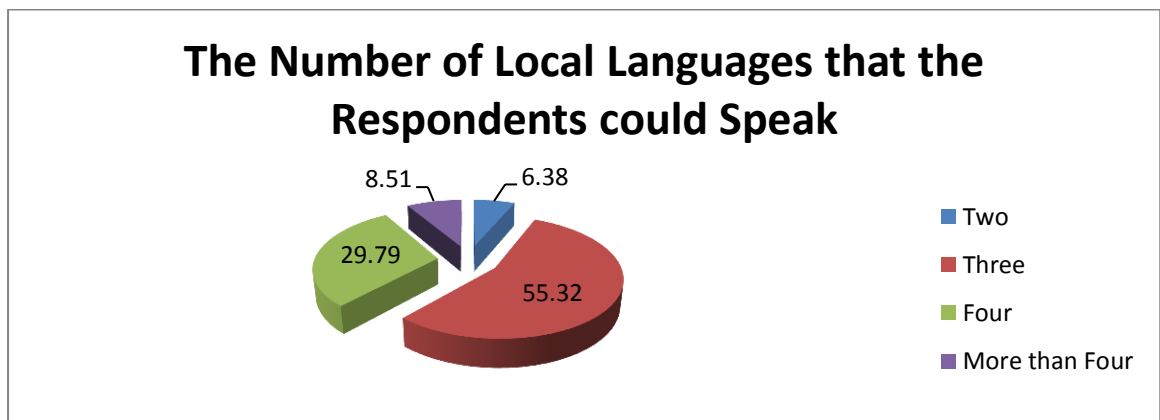


Fig 24: Percentages of residents of Makongeni who can use more than one language

4.7 Respondent's Language Proficiency

The data collected showed that a majority of the respondents 52.13% considered their mother tongue to be their most proficient language. This seemed to be true for the four categories of residents with a slight exception for the younger females who indicated that

their attitude towards English and mother tongue was equal at 36%. For all the other categories their attitude towards their mother tongue was higher than each of the other languages. This is summarised in the following table and pie chart:

Strongest Language	Young Males		Young Females		Older Males		Older Females		Total	
		%		%		%		%		%
Mother Tongue	10	43.48	9	36	14	60.87	16	69.57	49	52.13
Kiswahili	9	39.13	7	28	6	26.09	6	26.09	28	29.79
English	4	17.39	9	36	1	4.35	1	4.35	15	15.96
Other	Nil	0.00	Nil	0.00	2	8.70	Nil	0.00	2	2.13
Total	23		25		23		23		94	

Table 25: Respondents' language proficiency

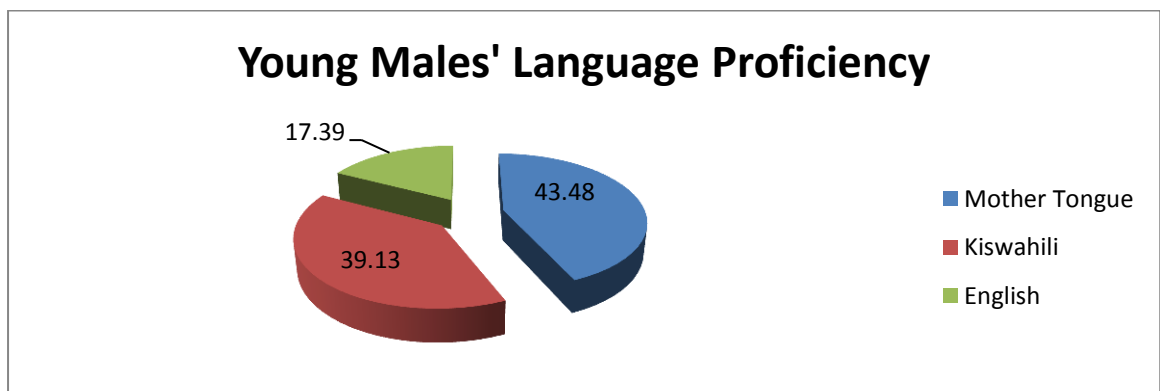


Fig 25(a): Young males' language proficiency

When asked which language they felt was their strongest or most proficient in, in other words the language that they felt that they had a good command of, the younger male respondents indicated that their mother tongue was their strongest with 43.48 percent followed by Kiswahili with 39.13 percent.

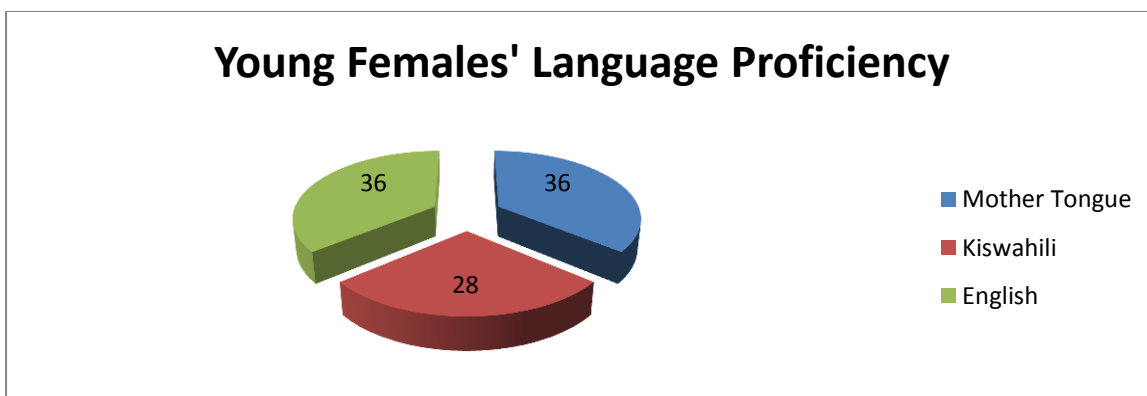


Fig 25(b): Young females' language proficiency

With the younger female residents, their response to the question about which language was their strongest, the study showed there was a 36% proficiency for both mother tongue and Kiswahili. Those who felt that English was their strongest language were only 28% of the respondents.

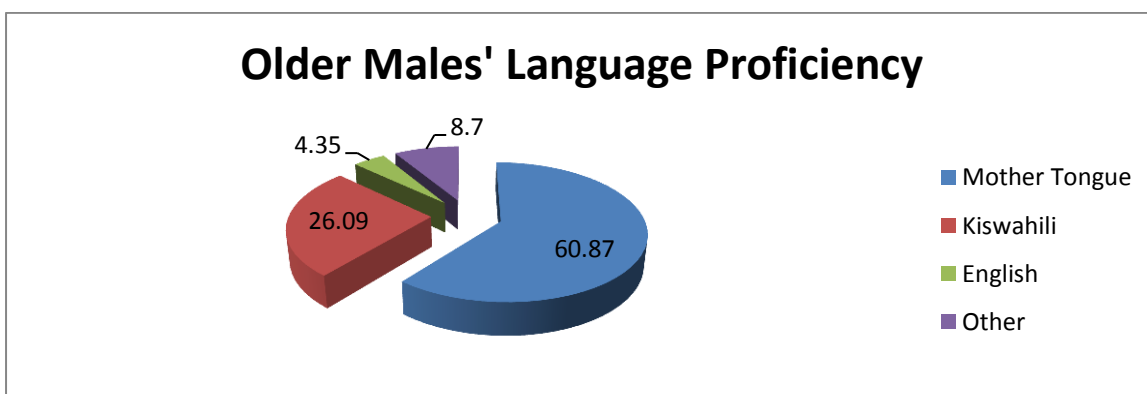


Fig 25(c): Older males' language proficiency

For the older male residents, 60.87% indicated that they felt their mother tongue was their strongest language, 26.09% indicated that Kiswahili was their strongest while 4.35% and 8.7% were for English and other languages respectively.

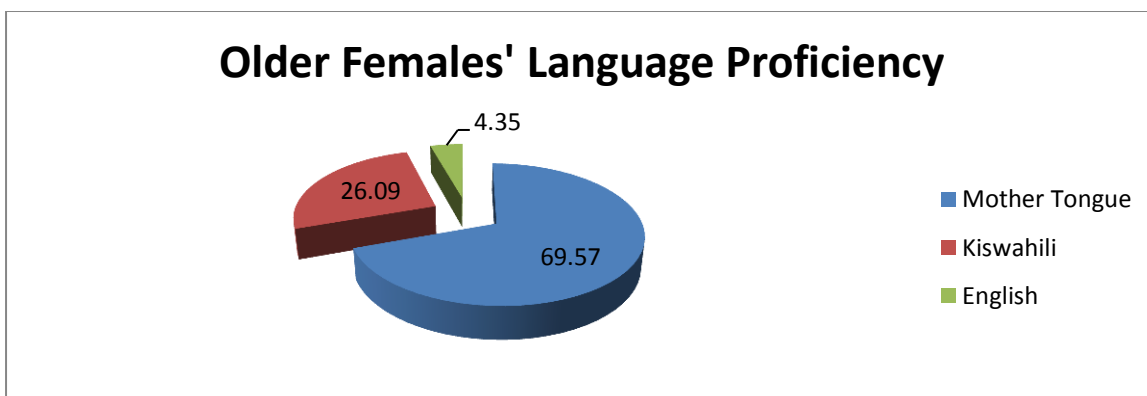


Fig 25(d): Older females’ language proficiency

Of the older females involved in the study, 69.57% indicated that mother tongue was their strongest language, 26.09% for Kiswahili while 4.35% indicated that English was their strongest language.

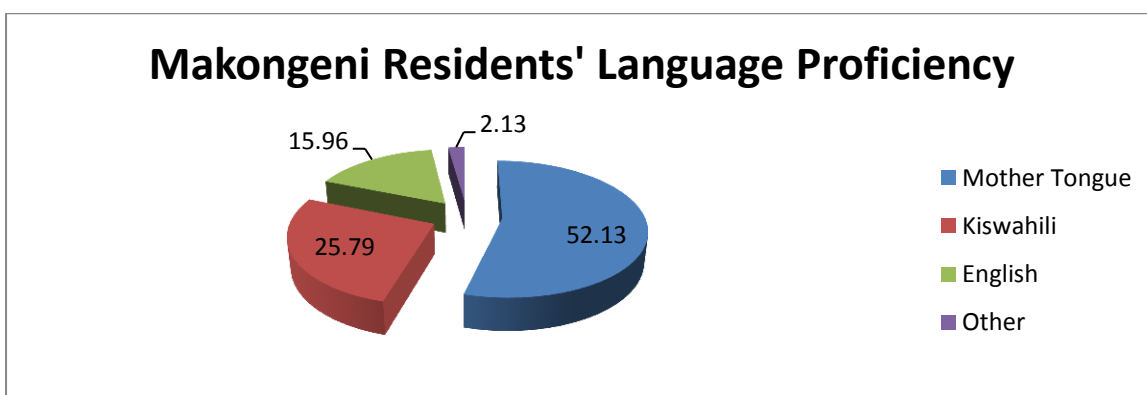


Fig 25(e): Language proficiency of the residents of Makongeni Estate

From the combined total of the residents who were involved in the study, 52.135 indicated that mother tongue was their strongest language, 25.79% for Kiswahili, 15.96% for English and 2.13% for other languages. This showed that the residents of Makongeni Estate felt or considered their mother tongues to be their most proficient or strongest languages.

4.8 Use of Mother Tongue within Makongeni Estate

It was important for this study to find out whether the respondents ever used their mother tongue within Makongeni Estate. Considering the cosmopolitan nature of the estate, it was paramount to establish whether those individuals born within the estate could actually

use their mother tongue. This is because many people who are born and brought up within urban areas may have a challenge acquiring and using their parents' language which is their mother tongue. The results of the study showed that majority of the respondents did use their mother tongue within the estate. The younger female respondents, for example, returned a 100% 'yes' to the question whether they ever used their mother tongue. This was the same result that the question returned with the older males. The younger male respondents, however, did not return the same results though the response in the affirmative was very high at 91.30% while the older females returned 86.96% for 'yes'.

This information is summarised in the following table and bar chart:

	Young Males	Older Males	Young Females	Older Females	Total
Those who ever use mother tongue	21 out of 23	23 out of 23	25 out of 25	20 out of 23	89/94
Percentage	91.30	100	100	86.96	94.68

Table 26: Use of mother tongue within the estate

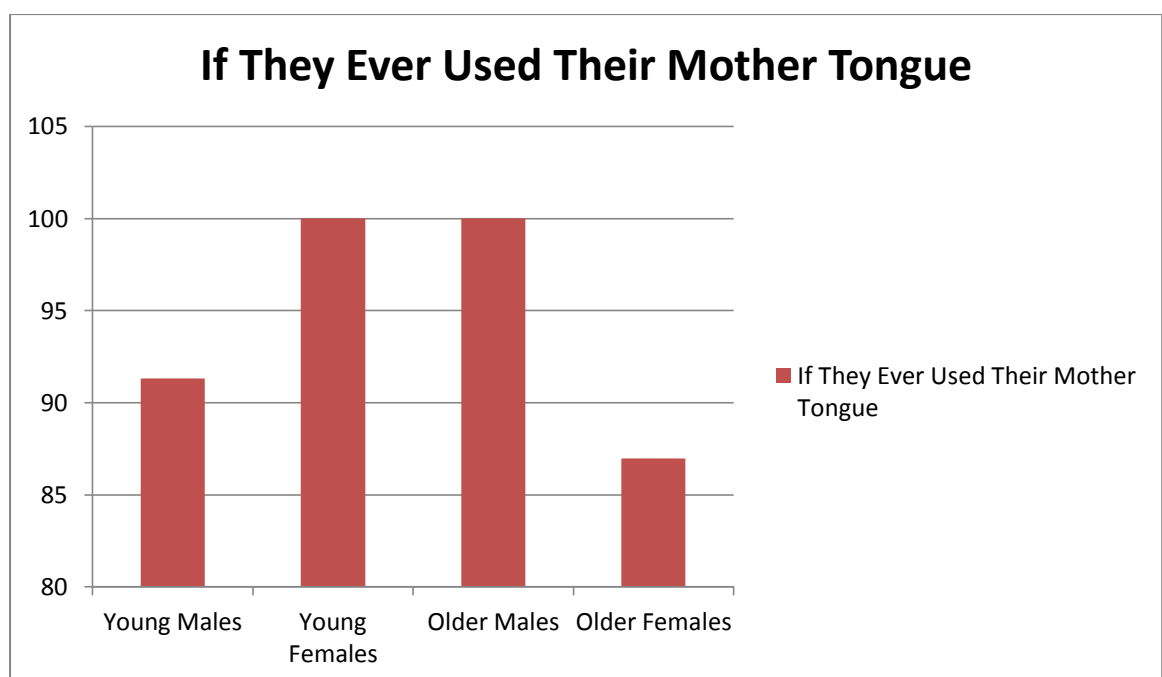


Fig 26: Use of mother tongue within the Makongeni Estate

Looking at how the residents of Makongeni Estate use their mother tongues in different situations, it is clear that the residents can be said to have a positive attitude towards their mother tongues. This is demonstrated by the fact that more than 50% of the residents use their mother tongues mostly at home and in some rare occurrences, a few will use their mother tongue at the market place and at the local shop or kiosk. Though this category of speakers, who use their mother at public places, is relatively small, it is worth noting that it does exist considering that the estate is cosmopolitan. This information is represented in the following table and graph:

	Young Males		Young Females		Older Males		Older Females		Total	
		%		%		%		%		%
At Home	10	43.48	12	48	15	65.22	12	52.17	49	52.13
At the Market	0	0	1	4	1	4.35	1	4.35	3	3.19
At the Shop/Kiosk	2	8.70	3	12	1	4.35	2	8.70	8	8.51
For Official Matters	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 27: Use of mother tongue in different situations

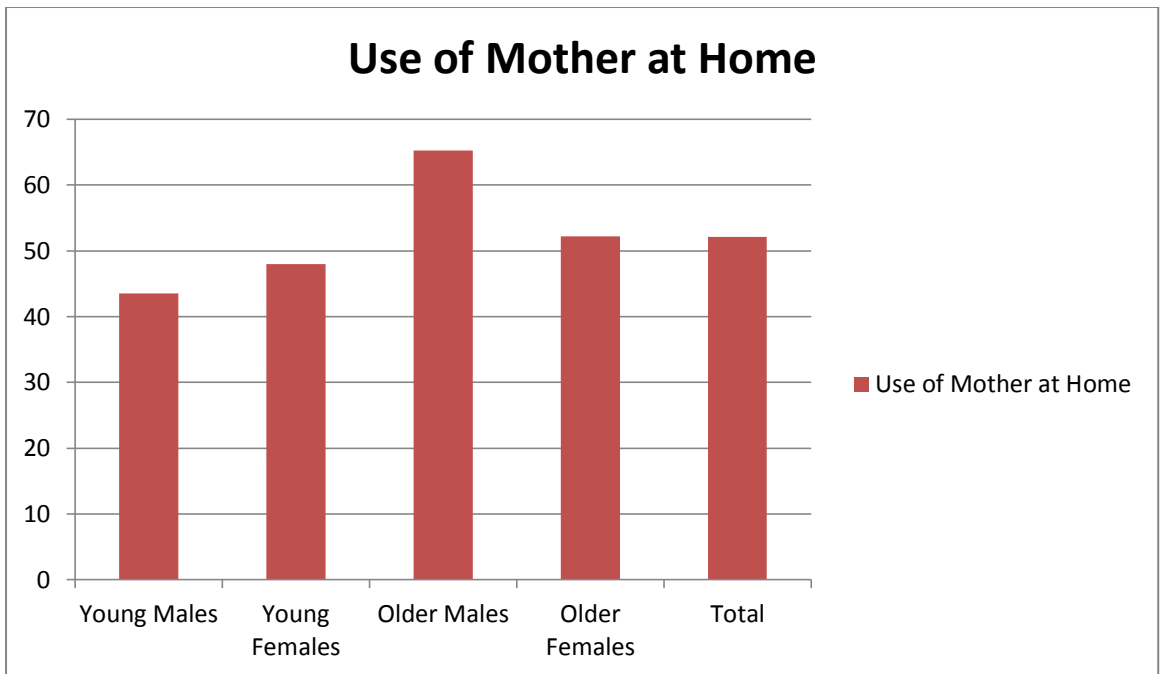


Fig 27(a): Use of mother by Makongeni residents at home

This graph shows that the residents of Makongeni Estate used their mother tongues a lot at home than any other language. The lowest use of mother tongue at home was by the young males with 43.48% while the highest use was by the older male respondents with 65.22%.

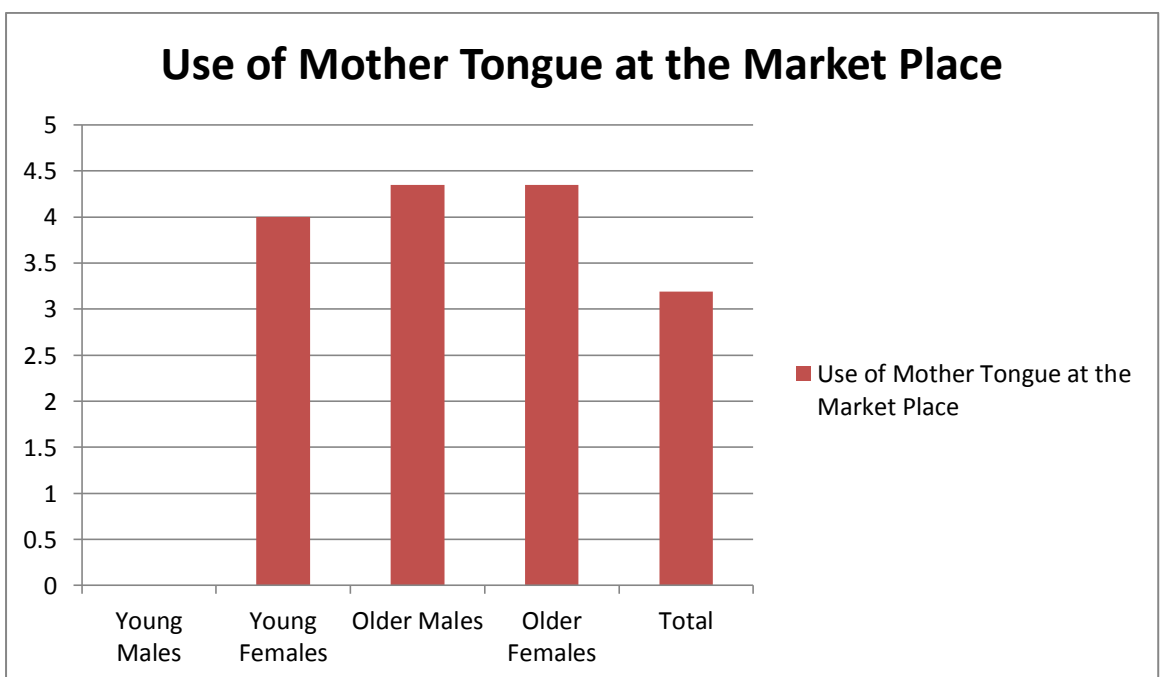


Fig 27(b): Use of mother tongue by residents of Makongeni at the market place

Although mother tongue was not commonly used at the market place, a few of the residents still used it. Of all the respondents, none of the young males used their mother tongues at the market place. The highest use of mother tongue was by both the older males and females with 4.35% use of mother tongue at the market.

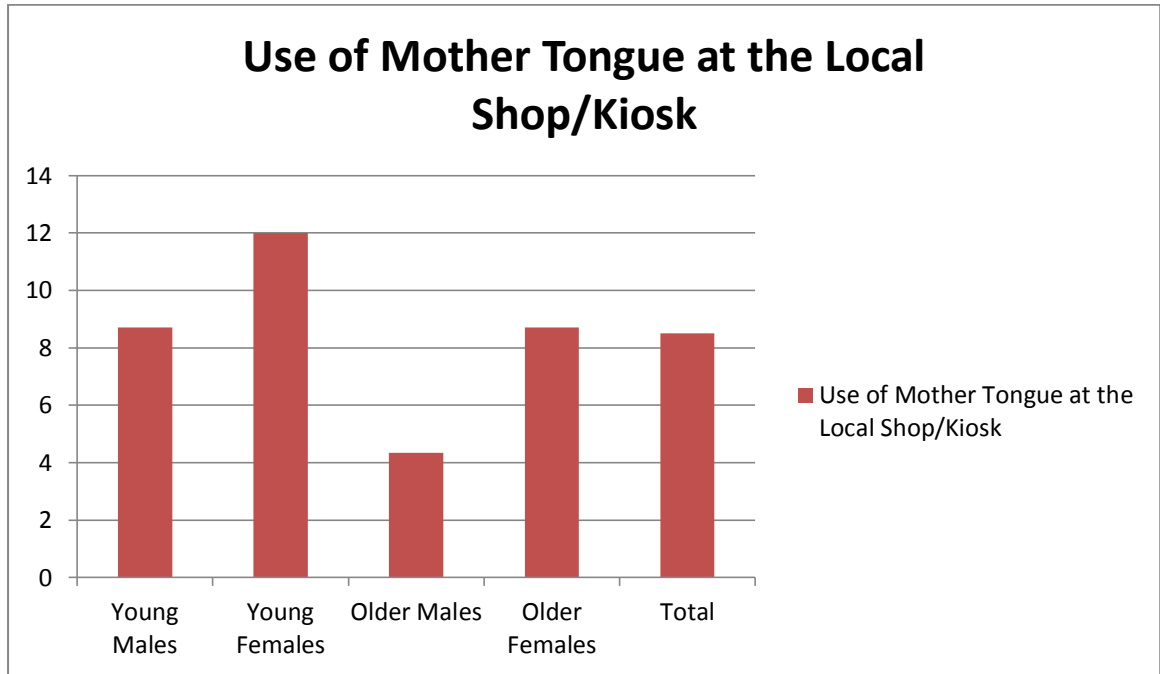


Fig 27(c): Use of mother tongue at the local kiosk or shop by residents of Makongeni

Although the use of mother tongue at the local kiosk or shop was low, the usage here was higher than at the market place. The lowest use of mother tongue at the local kiosk or shop was by older males at 4.35% while the highest was by the younger females at 12%.

4.9 Where the Use of Mother Tongue was Learnt

The study aimed to find out, if the residents ever used their mother tongue, where did they learn to use it? The responses indicated that most residents, who ever used their mother tongue, learnt the language at their homes. Of the 21 young male respondents who indicated they ever use their mother tongue within the estate, 19 learnt their mother tongue at home. This translates to 90.48% of the young male respondents who use their mother tongue within the estate. For the young female respondents, 24 of the 25, who used their mother tongue

within the estate, learnt to use the language at home, which translates to 96%. Among the older males, 21 out of the 23, who ever used their mother tongue within the estate, learnt the language within the home environment. This number translates to 91.30%. As for the older female respondents, all the 20, who indicated they ever used their mother tongue within the estate, learnt the language within their homes. This means, therefore that 100% of the older women involved in the study, who ever used their mother tongue within the estate, learnt the language within the home environment. This information is summarised in the following table and chart:

Where Mother Tongue was Learnt	Young Males		Young Females		Older Males		Older Females		Total	
		%		%		%		%		%
At Home	19	90.48	24	96	21	91.30	20	100	84	94.38
At School	1	5.26	1	4	None	0.00	None	0.00	2	2.25
Church	None	0.00	None	0.00	1	4.76	None	0.00	1	1.12
Social Places	1	5.26	None	0.00	1	4.76	None	0.00	2	2.25
Total	21		25		23		20		89	

Table 28: Where the residents learnt to use mother tongue

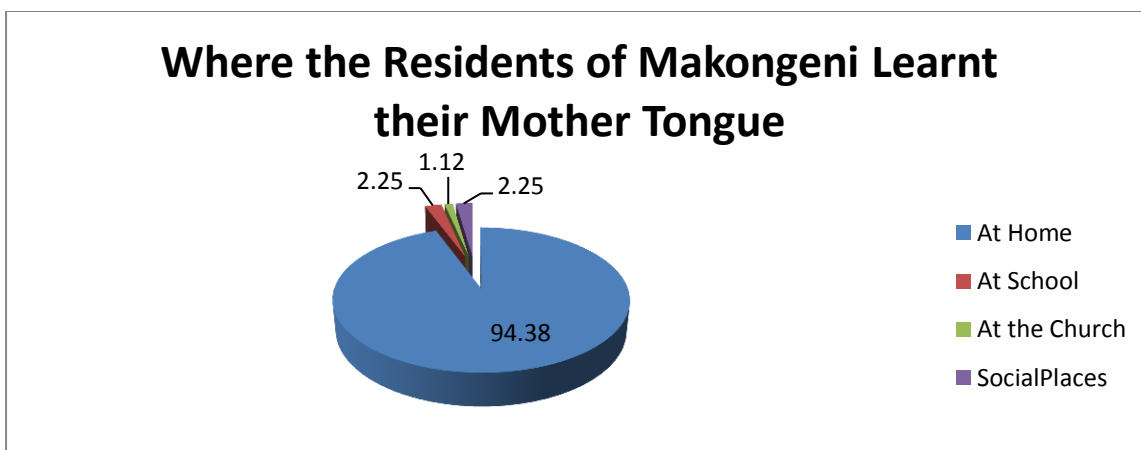


Fig 28: Where the residents of Makongeni Estate learnt their mother tongue

4.10 Use of Kiswahili within Makongeni Estate

From the data collected, it was evident that the use of Kiswahili within Makongeni Estate is prevalent. It turned out to be the preferred language of most residents within the estate at 62.5% for those born within the estate and 75% for those who moved to the estate from elsewhere. In the overall it had a rating of 73.4% of preference by the residents of Makongeni Estate.

Being a cosmopolitan setting, the prevalence in the use of Kiswahili was understandable. However, it is worth noting that Sheng which is usually a common feature in many urban middle class and slum settlements does not seem to feature prominently within Makongeni Estate even among the younger generation, who are usually the majority users of the ‘slang’ language.

Kiswahili according to the data collected is used in more social situations than all the other languages. It is the language used by a majority of the residents at the market place, at the local kiosk or shop, and when with friends of different ethnicity. The use of Kiswahili in different social settings is summarised in the table and graph below:

	Young Males		Young Females		Older Males		Older Females		Total	
		%		%		%		%		%
At Home	11	47.83	13	52	8	34.78	11	47.83	43	45.74
At the Market	22	95.65	23	92	22	95.65	22	95.65	89	94.68
At the Shop/Kiosk	20	86.96	22	88	22	95.65	21	91.30	85	90.43
For Official Matters	8	34.78	7	28	14	60.87	15	65.22	44	46.81

Table 29: The use of Kiswahili in different settings

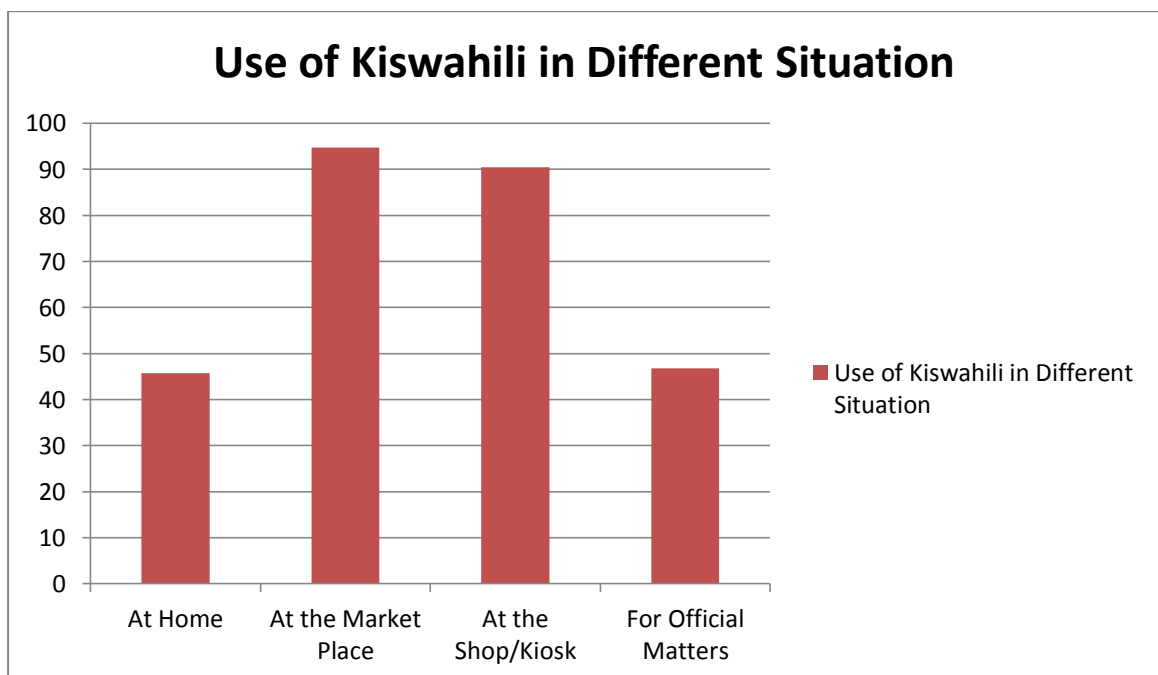


Fig 29: How residents of Makongeni Estate use Kiswahili in different situations

4.11 Language Loyalty

In this subsection of the study, we discuss the loyalty of the residents of Makongeni Estate in Thika Town to their mother tongues. The study looked at how frequently mother tongue languages were used within the estate, and more so during the various transactions and in different situations. This would be important in demonstrating the value of mother tongue languages for the residents.

4.11.1 Use of Mother Tongue within Makongeni Estate

Asked if they ever used their mother tongue within the estate, 94.68% answered in the affirmative. Out of the total of 48 young residents, 95.83% answered in the affirmative while 93.48% of the older residents gave this response.

The study went further and wanted to find out how often they used their mother tongue and the findings showed the following: 13.83% used their mother tongue almost always, 41.49% used it often, and 23.40% used it sometimes while 15.96% rarely used their mother tongue within the estate. The remaining 5.32% never used their mother tongue. This outcome is represented in the diagram below:

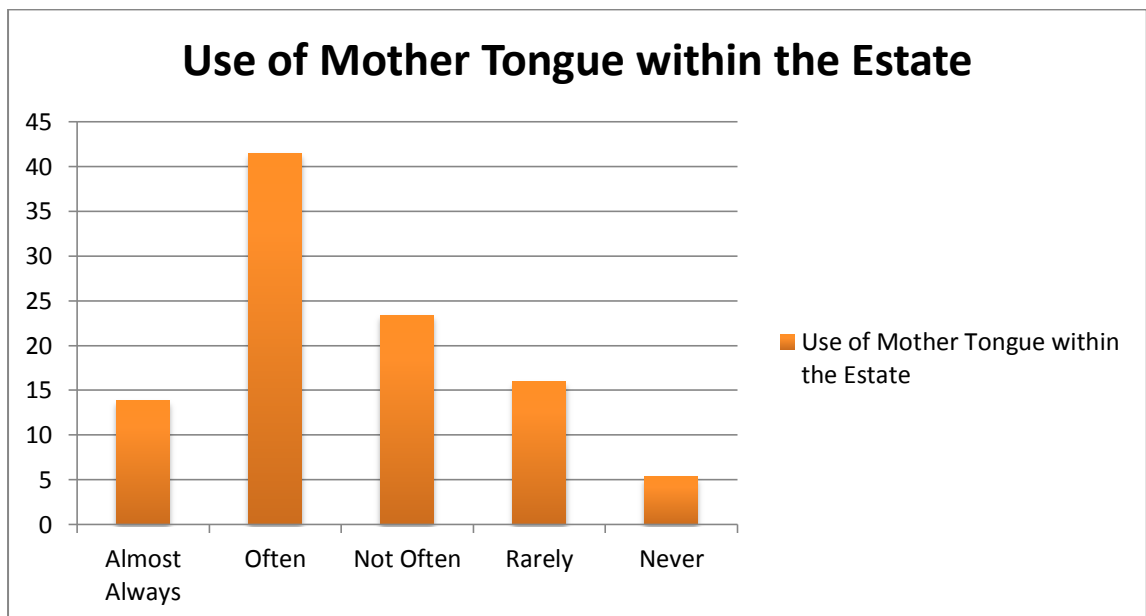


Fig 34: Use of mother tongue within Makongeni Estate

The study also found that, in different situations, mother tongue was the language in high use in the home setting at 52.13% across all the category of speakers. In other settings, mother tongue is hardly used due to the cosmopolitan nature of the Estate. However, a few residents do actually use their mother at the market place and at the shop or kiosk, despite the places being public, with the likelihood of interactions involving people from different ethnic backgrounds. For example, about 8.51% of the residents indicated that they used their mother

tongue at the shop or kiosk. This is a clear indication of the positive attitude that residents have for their mother tongues.

4.11.2 Where They Learnt to Use their Mother Tongue

The findings of the study indicated that the majority of those who could use their mother tongue had learnt to use the language at their homes. Out of the total number that could use their mother tongue, 94.38% had learnt to use the language within the home environment. The rest 5.62% indicated they had learnt the language at other places which included school, churches and other social places combined.

4.11.3 Feelings toward the Use of Other Languages

The study wanted to find out how the residents felt if and when other people, not from their ethnic community, used their mother tongues in their presence. The findings of the study indicated that 50% did not have a problem with that, while the other 50% had a problem with such a situation. Among the older residents, 58.70% did not mind the use of other mother tongues in their presence while 41.30% did not like it. For the younger residents, 41.67% had no problem with other people using the mother tongues in their presence while 58.33% disliked it.

Considering the argument by Branch (2014), that diversity of languages, especially in the Kenyan situation was a catalyst for conflicts, this study intended to find out how true this was. From the findings of the study, there was no evidence enough to support this argument. However, the argument may not be fully ruled out as the data did not return a clear support for accommodation of other languages. Fifty percent of the respondents indicated that they were uncomfortable with speakers of other local languages using their mother tongues in their presence.

4.12 Conclusion

In this chapter the results of the study were discussed from the analyses of the data collected. The results showed that the residents of Makongeni Estate had a strong positive attitude towards their mother tongues and Kiswahili. Even in the most unexpected places like the market place or the local kiosk or shop, some residents still found it fit to use their mother tongues.

In the next chapter, the study discusses the findings of study carried out based on the data collected and analysed in the just concluded chapter. It is those findings that led to the conclusions and recommendations made in the last chapter of this research work.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

Having collected and analysed the data for this study, which produced the foregoing findings, I came up with the following summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study.

5.2 Summary

The study had set out to achieve the following objectives:

- i) To examine the attitude that the people of Makongeni Estate in Thika Town have towards local languages.
- ii) To find out the language(s) of preference for the people of Makongeni Estate in Thika Town in different situations.
- iii) To find out if the residents of Makongeni Estate in Thika Town were loyal to their mother tongues.
- iv) To find out if diversity of language was a source of conflict (social or political) within Makongeni Estate.

In summary, the study found out the following:

- i) The residents of Makongeni Estate have a general positive attitude towards their mother tongues. This includes the young and the old in the community.
- ii) The residents of Makongeni Estate prefer Kiswahili to *Sheng*. Kiswahili therefore has a more honourable position than *Sheng*, even among the youth.
- iii) Generally, the use of the various mother tongues within the estate does not bother many of the residents within the estate. They actually appreciate them.

- iv) Even though other languages such as English and *Sheng* are in use within the estate, their use is minimal and restricted to very specific and limited situations.
- v) It is important to note that many young persons within the estate can actually speak their respective mother tongues despite being brought up in this urban setting. For most of them, the home setting was their school for their mother tongue languages.

5.3 Conclusions

The study showed that the family unit and the interactions that ensued within the family unit played an important part in promoting the use of mother tongue within Makongeni Estate. We can therefore conclude that the family units within Makongeni Estate in Thika Town provided a conducive atmosphere for learning mother tongue languages. This is emphasized by the fact that over 90% of the residents who can use their mother tongues indicated that they learnt the languages at their homes.

The study showed a strong positive attitude towards mother tongue languages. This means that the residents had a general positive attitude towards their mother tongues. This was shown by their preference for their mother tongues in any setting that allowed them to use the languages.

The residents also had a strong positive attitude towards Kiswahili. It was the preferred language for most of the transactions where members of two or more ethnic groups were involved. Unlike the situation established by Abdulaziz and Osinde (1997) where many youth in urban settings mostly used *Sheng* for their communication, many of those who responded to the question on which language they used while with their friends, less than 10% indicated that they used *Sheng*. The study, therefore, concluded that the residents did not have a positive attitude towards *Sheng* as a language of choice.

The use of different mother tongues, which have also been referred to as local languages in this study, did not indicate to cause any friction among residents. Some of the

residents even indicated that they could use other local languages besides their mother tongues. Therefore, despite the presence and use of local languages more freely within the estate, there was a general harmony among the residents. This means that the use of local languages or mother tongues was not a cause of disagreements or disharmony among the residents of Makongeni Estate in Thika Town.

5.4 Recommendations

People of all walks of life should be encouraged to use their mother tongues, irrespective of where they live, in order to preserve the Mother Tongues for posterity, and to ensure the languages continue existing. This is part of linguistic pride and loyalty. This study recommends that studies on further research on language attitude be carried out as this research could not have exhausted this area.

Speakers of every language should teach their young ones, as well as speakers of other languages, to use their Mother Tongues in order to ensure the languages continue to exist. Thus, this study recommends that languages in danger of extinction be revitalised through the youthful generation from their ethnic communities learning their mother tongue languages.

People should be encouraged to have a positive attitude and perception of their Mother Tongue and to develop a sense of pride for their Mother Tongues. Thus, further studies on attitudes towards mother tongue languages need to be encouraged so that where they are negative, ways and means of changing them can be sought in order to prevent the death of mother tongues.

Thika Town may not be quite representative of the whole country. This means that the results of this study may not therefore be very representative of the language behaviour in other towns in Kenya. This study, therefore, recommends that comparative studies be carried out in other towns in Kenya to compare and contrast with the results of this study.

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Appendix

RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

Kindly answer the following questions as truthfully as possible. This questionnaire is purely for academic work and will not be used for other reasons whatsoever.

Part One – Personal Information (Please tick the appropriate option)

1. What is your gender?
Male { } female { }
2. What is your age?
14 – 20 { } 21 – 30 { } 31 – 40 { } 41 – 50 { } above 50 { }
3. What is your highest level of education?
Primary { } Secondary { } College { } University { }
Other (specify)
4. What is your occupation?
.....
5. Were you born and brought up in Makongeni Estate or within Thika Town?
Yes { } No { }
If your answer in 5 is **No**, answer numbers 6 and 7 below. If it is **Yes**, skip and go number 8.
6. Did you move to Makongeni Estate from an estate in another town?
Yes { } No { }
7. How long have you lived in Makongeni Estate?
0 – 3yrs { } 4 – 7yrs { } 8 – 11yrs{ } 12 – 15yrs{ }

more than 15yrs{ }
8. What is your mother tongue?
.....

Part Two – Language Attitudes

1. How many languages can you speak fluently?
1 { } 2 { } 3 { } 4 { } more than 4 { }

Indicate the languages you can speak here:

.....
.....
.....

2. Which language do you speak at home?

English { } Kiswahili { } Mother Tongue { }

Other (specify)

.....

3. Which language do you prefer to speak at the market place?

English { } Kiswahili { } Mother Tongue { }

Other (specify)

.....

4. Which language do you prefer to speak at your local kiosk?

English { } Kiswahili { } Mother Tongue { }

Other (specify)

.....

5. Which language do you prefer or find it easy to use in official or formal situations including chief's office, court and / or school?

English { } Kiswahili { } Mother Tongue { }

Other (specify)

.....

6. Which other languages are spoken in your neighbourhood?

.....
.....
.....

7. Do you speak any of them?

Yes { } No { }

If Yes, specify

.....

8. a) If the answer to No. 7 is **Yes**, how did you learn the language(s)? If your answer to No. 7 is **No**, go to No 9.

.....
.....

b) Do you speak the language(s) fluently?

Yes { } No { }

9. Which is your strongest language?

.....

Part Three – Language Loyalty

1. Do you ever speak in your mother tongue

Yes { } No { }

2. If the answer to (1) is Yes, how often do you speak in your mother tongue?

Almost always { } Often { } Not Often { } Rarely { }

3. Where did you learn to use your mother tongue?

In school { } At home { } At the church { } At social gatherings { }

Other (specify)

4. How do you feel when people converse in your presence in a language you do not understand?

Very good { } Good { } Nothing { } Bad { } Very bad { }

5. Do you have friends from other ethnic groups apart from your own?

Yes { } No { }

If your answer to No. 5 is Yes, please answer the next question. If your answer is No, go to No.7.

6. Which language do you use when you are with them?

English { } Kiswahili { } Sheng { } English { }

Other (specify)

.....

7. Which language do you prefer speaking and why?

.....

.....

.....

.....

Thank you for your cooperation.