

Abstract

The study examined the experience of Iraqw people on the acquisition of the new language which is the second language. It was evident that the majority of Iraqw used Kiswahili in domains such as religion, schools, hospitals, markets and village meetings. Iraqw language was maintained in homes with friends, relatives, working places and in ritual practices as the causal communication language. Many people are interested on using their native language as medium of instruction. On the same, some factors are associated by language shift from using Iraqw to Swahili.

Thus, this study

- Examined the use of Iraqw language in various domains
- Examined Iraqw members attitudes towards their native language
- Investigated the factors influencing language shift from Iraqw to Kiswahili

The study was conducted in Hanang district at Measkron ward where three villages of Measkron, Getaghul and Mara were selected. This study was guided by Gaelic Arvanitika Model under Causality based perspective. Qualitative research approach was adopted. Quantitative data were collected through questionnaires from 135 respondents while qualitative data were collected through interviews from 5 participants. Quantitative data were refined and categorized into groups and assigned meaning and interpretation while the qualitative data were transcribed, summarized and described.

After systematic data collection and analysis, the study revealed the following; -

- Examined the use of Iraqw language in various domains

The majority of the people who responded had the opinion that Iraqw is used as a language that they use in their communication with family members and other community members in communicating their needs in their daily lives. Iraqw has been maintained in homes because of the presence of the old people such as grandparents and parents who still use their Iraqw language in homes for giving different instructions in whole process of upbringing and taking care of the new generation. The language used by grandparents and parents have influence on language choice and use by children. The children grew in the environments where Iraqw is used as a language of instruction and communication in homes. This situation helps children to acquire, learn and maintain their language.

- Iraqw members attitudes towards their native language

The study further discovered that the percentage of respondents who use Iraqw language in homes increases with increase in age groups. The attitude on the use of native language was quantifiable according to the age a group. It was indicated that old age uses native language for 100% while youth use native language by 76% to 92 %. This is contradictory with 4 % who use Swahili compared with 2 % of adult who use Swahili. In The

adult group there are no any reported percent of respondents who reported that adults do use or seldom use Swahili.

Further findings revealed that, Iraqw language is maintained in homes, it is expected for its speakers to shift to Swahili in the future because the percentage of respondents who use Swahili in homes decreases with increase in age groups. The increased percentage of respondents who use Swahili among the youths is because they consider themselves as more educated and civilized compared by others who use Iraqw only.

- Factors influencing language shift from Iraqw to Kiswahili

The data collected through interviews revealed that the presence of more than one language in the Iraqw speaking community which is referred as Bilingualism or Multilingualism. More people prefer using language that will help them in social economic- needs. Kiswahili is confirmed to be widely spread in Tanzania and many people can afford properly and it is a prestigious language. The study indicated that the use of both languages has the significant impacts on language shifts among Iraq communities.

The study also examined the influence of migration of people who coming in Iraq communities because of the different economic activities such as employment, trade and marriage. Furthermore, the study findings added that, the use of Kiswahili along with Iraqw language in the community. The use of Kiswahili is because of internal migration that enabled the presence of non-native health workers and middle traders among Iraqw speaking community. During the course of provision of services to people, Kiswahili is adopted as a language of communication that facilitates interaction and understanding.

The results about language use in religious domain revealed that Swahili is mainly preferred by the majority of the respondents who were involved in this study. Swahili is used in religious activities because of the presence of non-native speakers like pastors, priests and other religious workers. The presence of people from other ethnic groups influences Iraqw speakers to use Swahili in religious functions in order to have effective communication with people from other ethnic groups. Additionally, religious books such as bibles are written in Swahili also influence Iraqw speakers to use Swahili in religious domain. The study indicated that there are few religious books that are translated into Iraqw language.

The study indicated that education system does force student to adopt the use of Swahili as a language used in schools. The students stated that they are allowed to use Swahili only in schools. This is because the education and training policy prescribes Swahili as a language of use in teaching and learning activities in primary schools. The choice of Swahili is due to the fact that it is a lingua franca. As a lingua franca, it is used to unite many people from different linguistic backgrounds within the country. In this case, it unites students and teachers in schools and facilitates teaching and

learning activities. Therefore, students from Iraqw speaking community have no choice to use their mother tongue rather than learning Swahili as a language of communication in schools.

Conclusion

The results revealed that the knowledge of Iraqw language is useful in informal domains while Swahili is used in public and official domains. If the knowledge of one's language is not used in formal domains, that language will experience maintenance challenges because the use of the language will be limited to some domains. Iraqw language is currently experiencing speakers shift to Swahili because it is only used in informal domains. Swahili as a language of wider communication has influence over Iraqw to be used in public and official domains because it is a language that is known to the majority of Tanzanians. In public and official domains, Iraqw speakers interact with people from others.

Recommendations

Iraqw native speakers should value and increase the use of their language in the domains in which the use of language has declined such as in village meetings, markets and religious domain. This will help them to maintain and use their language for a long period. There is also a need for them to promote and develop its use in the domains in which the language is maintained so as to rescue it from dying or shifting.

Language scholars should document more of ethnic community languages like Iraqw so as to rescue them from shifting and dying. Language is used to transmit community's culture to the next generation. This means that, if a language dies, its culture will also disappear. The government and other language stakeholders should establish various campaigns that will motivate ethnic community members like Iraqw speakers to love, use and preserve their indigenous language as a symbol of national cultural heritage.