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**RESEARCH ARTICLE**

## **Kiswahili as an Intercultural Communication Tool for Kenya-Uganda Cross-border Trade**

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**ABSTRACT**

Increased contacts with people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds during initial encounters are likely to create high levels of uncertainty. High levels of uncertainty have been shown to increase the chances of misunderstandings and miscommunication. The purpose of this study was to examine the role of Kiswahili as an intercultural communication tool that bridges linguistic differences in polyglossified diverse settings in Busia town. It aims at investigating the status of Kiswahili as a medium of communication in enhancing intercultural interactions and cross-border trade, establishing the limitations Kiswahili faces, and finally, evaluating the communication strategies traders and customers employ to overcome linguistic differences, thereby enhancing intercultural interactions and cross-border trade in the region. Quantitative data were collected through questionnaires and analyzed using the Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS). Qualitative data were collected through observations, a survey of linguistic landscaping and sound recordings, and analyzed through a narrative analytic approach. Through theory triangulation, the study was underpinned by the Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) as the flexible and applicable theory in trader-customer trade interactions. The study revealed that Kiswahili has a significant status in enhancing intercultural interactions among traders and customers in terms of initial encounters, discussions, bargaining, taking instructions, and in advertisements. The study also established that Kiswahili faces limitations, including dialectical differences, colonial influence and mentality, the lack of a uniform status of Kiswahili, negative ethnic attitude, the lack of good political will, religion, age differences, and the lack of exposure. Finally, the study revealed that traders and customers employ different communication accommodation strategies. An approximation strategy was established as the most commonly used strategy. In view of these results, the study recommends Kiswahili use in Busia town for communication accommodation purposes.

**KEYWORDS**

Intercultural Communication, Intercultural Interactions, Kiswahili, Communication Accommodation, Cross-Border Trade.

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### **1. Introduction**

#### **1.1 General Introduction**

The chapter begins with a broad overview of the background of the research topic. The section also provides the statement of the problem, research questions, the underlying objectives, and the research hypotheses. As the chapter unfolds, it offers a description of an overview of the research methodology used in the study, delimitation of the scope, and the structure of the study at the end.

##### *a) Background to the Study*

Kiswahili is regarded as an indigenous African language whose origin can be traced to the East African coast. It is widely spoken by the "Swahili" people predominantly inhabiting the coastal region of both Kenya and Tanzania. It is also considered an East and

Central African countries' lingua franca, including Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) (Choge, 2012:173).

Under the promulgation of Kenya's 2010 constitution, Kiswahili is considered both a national and official language (Official Law Reports of the Republic of Kenya, 2010:22). Its usage in social interaction settings such as education, politics, religion, and trade cannot be overemphasized.

In Uganda, as Masengo (2016:103) puts it, the amendment of Uganda's 1995 constitution leveraged the use of the Kiswahili language as a co-official language with English. Although both English and Kiswahili are used as lingua francas in Uganda, Kaji (2013:1) observes that while English is hardly spoken in rural areas, Kiswahili usage remains partially used despite being understood by a large group of people.

Kenya and Uganda, like many other African countries, comprise multilingual and multicultural societies. In essence, the linguistic diversity of both countries is commonly characterized by many indigenous languages. The complexity of their languages is invariably classified under three dominant groups. Notably the Bantu, Nilotic and Cushitic groups. Kiswahili, in particular, belongs to the Bantu group in the Niger-Congo phylum. All these languages amount to about forty-two spoken in Kenya (Dwivedi, 2014:27) and about forty-one spoken in Uganda (Asiimire, 2017:7-8).

Interestingly, despite this linguistic complexity, both Kenya and Uganda historically have had, and still, have good trade relations at their borders between their neighboring communities. In principle, both countries engage in cross-border trade in two towns (Busia Kenya and Busia Uganda). While cross-border trade is the hallmark of employment and economic opportunities, it faces a myriad of challenges. One significant challenge is communication, which is deemed to affect this type of trade. It arises from the multiplicity of languages that exist in Busia town, creating language barriers (Meagher, 2003) that become laden to effective intercultural interactions and cross-border trade. In this reality, the need for an appropriate trans-border language (Kiswahili) to foster mutuality and minimize communication costs cannot be underestimated.

Ethnographically, the town is a cosmopolitan area located in Busia County in Kenya and Busia District in Uganda. In practice, it is critical to cross-border trade because of its consideration as the doorway to other East and Central Africa landlocked countries, including Uganda, Burundi, Rwanda, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Its pertinence amounts to its involvement in the clearing and forwarding activities that act as an exit and entry point of exports and imports right from Nairobi, Kenya's Capital city, and Mombasa's sea port. As such, there is increased mobility of people from differing cultural backgrounds, including truck drivers who pass along this border to refresh up before proceeding with their journey.

Socially, Busia town (Kenya and Uganda) comprises many languages which represent diverse cultures. The evidence offered by Nahayo (2017:120) shows that there are about ten languages spoken on each side of the Busia border. On the Kenyan side of the border, languages spoken by natives include English, Swahili, Samia of Kenya, Gikuyu, Khayo, Lunyolo, Marachi, and Teso, whereas, on the Ugandan side, they include: English, Lusamia of Uganda, Swahili, Luganda, Lusoga, Ateso, Karamojong, Lugwere, and Lugisu. Profoundly, due to cross-border trade, which involves people (Traders and customers) coming as far as Rwanda, Burundi, and DRC, the use of the French language may need to translate or interpreted to ease communication. The diversity of these languages shows evidently that Busia town is not only a cosmopolitan but a multilingual and multicultural area.

The focus of more recent studies on cross-border trade in connection to linguistic diversity has not been adequately researched. In particular, the use of the Kiswahili language as an inter-ethnic communication tool has not only been mentioned by a few scholars but also little attention has been given in relation to its vitality in enhancing intercultural interactions and cross-border trade, especially in Busia town. Ojwang (2008:343) only mentions the pertinence of Kiswahili as a transactional and socialization language. Similarly, Habwe (2009:2), in his paper, gives a snapshot of how Kiswahili can be used as a tool for enhancing cross-border trade in the East African region. Lugwiri Okombo (2020:1) examined how age determines language variation among ordinary people using Kiswahili in the East African region.

Finally, Luvaga et al. (2021) examined the role of Kiswahili in enhancing intercultural relations and strengthening national ethos in the Rift Valley in Kenya. Even though the study focused on the role of Kiswahili as a unifying language, it fails to examine how the presence of Kiswahili can successfully be used as an effective intercultural communication tool for enhancing intercultural interactions and cross-border trade (retail, wholesale, and transport) in Busia town. Moreover, whilst the study is only limited to a region (Rift Valley) and the country (Kenya), this study delimits itself in two towns in Busia County in Kenya and Busia District in Uganda.

It aims to achieve this by investigating the status it holds in terms of linguistic landscape (LL), advertisement, bargaining, initiating discussions, and giving instructions in Busia town (Kenya and Uganda). It also seeks to investigate whether Kiswahili faces challenges in enhancing intercultural interactions and cross-border trade in a polyglossic situation in Busia town. Finally, it evaluates

some of the communication strategies that traders and customers employ to accommodate each other in overcoming linguistic and cultural impediments.

*b) Statement of the Problem*

The problem statement of this study is, therefore, that the increased contact of people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds during initial encounters (like in cross-border trade) creates a budding ground for high levels of uncertainty. This situation is likely to compromise language choice (because of the polyglossic situation) and communication behaviors between traders and customers to be suspicious, volatile, and complex, resulting in miscommunications, and misunderstandings, thereby affecting cross-border trade in Busia town.

This study, therefore, seeks to answer the following research questions:

*c) Research Questions*

1. What is the status of Kiswahili as a medium of communication in enhancing intercultural interactions and cross-border trade in Busia town?
2. Which limitations does Kiswahili face in enhancing intercultural interactions and cross-border trade among traders and customers in Busia town?
3. What are the communication strategies developed by traders and customers to overcome linguistic challenges in enhancing intercultural interactions and cross-border trade?

*d) Objectives of the Study*

The study aims to:

1. Investigate the status of Kiswahili as a medium of communication in enhancing intercultural interactions and cross-border trade in Busia town.
2. Establish the limitations Kiswahili faces in enhancing intercultural interactions and cross-border trade in Busia town.
3. Evaluate the communication strategies used by traders and customers to overcome linguistic challenges in enhancing intercultural interactions and cross-border trade.

*e) Research Hypotheses*

It is hypothesized in this study that:

1. Kiswahili has a significant status in enhancing intercultural interactions and cross-border trade among traders and customers in Busia town at the Kenya-Uganda border.
2. The language faces challenges in enhancing intercultural interactions and cross-border trade among traders and customers in Busia town.
3. Traders and customers employ different communication strategies to help them overcome linguistic challenges they face during cross-border trade in Busia town.

*f) Overview of the Methodology*

This study employs a cross-sectional survey paradigm, which integrates a mixed research approach to collect data. Qualitative and quantitative data are collected to enhance understanding of the participant's attitudes, perspectives, and experiences on communication and how they create meaning by using a trans-border language (Kiswahili) to augment effective intercultural interactions and cross-border trade in natural and diverse settings.

As the study involves investigating the use of a common language (Kiswahili) by people as they interact socially, a total of 50 respondents are involved in the study to represent the entire population. 30 transport personnel (Bodaboda riders, Cart pushers, and truck drivers) both from the Kenyan side (15) of the border and (15) from the Ugandan side of the border, 8 retail traders (4 Kenyan sides and 4 Ugandan sides), 8 wholesale traders (4 Kenyan sides of the border and 4 Ugandan sides of the border) are purposively selected to provide useful information for the study. Additionally, the snowball sampling procedure is also used to select two (4) key informants (2 from the Kenyan side and 2 from the Ugandan side of the border) and Customs officers to enrich the research justification. In sum, a total of fifty (50) respondents are selected, twenty-five (25) from the Ugandan side; other twenty-five (25) from the Kenyan side.

For data collection and analysis, a triangulation approach is adopted where the researcher uses different approaches, including observations (non-participant), Linguistic Landscaping (LL), and sound recordings. Finally, the use of scheduled interviews (individual) is conducted through structured and semi-structured questionnaires. These data collection methods are utilized to reduce bias and increase the validity of the research findings.

Using the above-stated methods, the data collected is presented in tables and charts and analyzed through thematic content analysis (TCA) by the use of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The deductive approach is thematically used descriptively to present coded narrations (words, sentences, and paragraphs) to facilitate the emergence of themes and sub-themes.

Finally, the discovered themes are analyzed theoretically by the use of two communication and cross-cultural interactions theories. Notably, the Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) propounded by Gallois & Giles (2015), and the Intercultural Adaptation Model (IAM) suggested by Cai & Rodriguez (1997).

*g) Delimitation of the Scope*

Geographically, the study is delimited to Busia town bordering Kenya and Uganda. Specifically, the town is located in the Busia District of Uganda and Busia County of Kenya, which is approximately 195km from Kampala and 450 km from Nairobi. The area under study is suitable since, first, it acts as a gateway to other landlocked (Rwanda, Burundi, and DRC) countries, and second, the area has increased mobility and contacts of people from different cultural backgrounds who crisscross the border for trading purposes.

Conceptually, the proposed investigation focuses on empirical studies conducted in intercultural communication, cross-border trade, and the use of Kiswahili in sociological settings to show how various variables interact and the direction of the outcomes from such interactions. Moreover, the research is conducted for a period of six months.

Yet again, this study targets only a sample size of 50 respondents, which are purposively and snowball selected to represent the entire population based on their ability or inability to speak Kiswahili or English during a bargaining context or other social interactions.

Finally, the theoretical interest of this study is limited to two theories: the Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT), propounded by Gallois & Giles (2015), and the Intercultural Adaptation Model (IAM), suggested by Cai & Rodriguez (1997).

*h) Structure of the Study*

The study under investigation comprises five chapters, including a general introduction, literature review, research methodology, data presentation and analysis, and finally, conclusions and recommendations.

Chapter one introduces the study by focusing on the background to the study, statement of the problem, research questions, research objectives, research hypotheses, an overview of the methodology, delimitation of the scope, and structure of the study at the end.

Chapter two presents a literature review. It entails reviewing scholarly literature central to the study that focuses on conceptual, empirical studies, and theoretical frameworks.

Chapter three focuses on the research methodology. It dwells on the methods used to collect data used in the study. They include research design, the target population, the sample size, sampling techniques, research instruments, their administration procedure, validity and reliability, data presentation and analysis, and their ethical considerations.

Chapter four focuses on data presentation, analysis, and interpretation. It presents the findings of the study collected after the administration of the methodological procedures.

Chapter five provides research conclusions and recommendations and suggests areas for future research.

Succinctly, this chapter encapsulates the background leading to the problem of the study. To attain the overarching objective of this research, the questions and the hypotheses are clearly stated. Additionally, the present chapter also provides the methodological design and the applicable theoretical interest that underpins the study. Thus, the subsequent chapter reviews scholarly literature relevant to this study by focusing on conceptual, empirical studies, and theoretical reviews.

**2. Literature Review**

This chapter is divided into three sections: conceptual review, empirical review, and theoretical review. First, it provides an overview of relevant concepts that guide the research inquiry. It also incorporates a historical perspective of the status of Kiswahili both in Kenya and Uganda by enumerating some of the challenges it may face in its usage. Second, relevant literature is reviewed that informs the study and leads to the filling of the knowledge gap.

Third, it offers an in-depth review of two theories that underpin the study. The first theory (CAT) is used to illustrate the strategies traders and customers from diverse cultures may use to accommodate each other during social interactions. However, due to its

inadequacies in explaining the process by which individuals may culturally adapt during initial encounters, the IAM is used to explain this phenomenon.

#### a) *Conceptual Review*

The section elucidates key concepts from different scholars akin to the study.

Intercultural communication cannot be understood in the absence of culture and communication. Both culture and communication have an inexorable link with intercultural communication. This implies that cultural edifices and communication paradigms greatly influence how people from diverse cultures interact and create shared meaning. Thus, before delving into the meaning of intercultural communication, it is vital to understand the meaning of culture and communication since they are tightly interwoven.

#### i. *Culture*

Culture is a polysemous concept. Over the years, scholars have tried to define culture in its totality, but none of them has given a substantiated meaning to it. As Scollon and Scollon (2001:5) puts it: "culture is simply too broad a concept to be of much use in analyzing communication between two or more people from different groups." Culture connotes various meanings (beliefs, spatial relations, etc.) transmitted from generation to generation through individuals or groups. In essence, understanding culture constructs different meanings according to the context in which it is used.

Understanding the meaning of culture and its significance to communication is defined based on essential approaches posited by Lustig and Koester (1999). Barnett and Lee (2003:261) opine that "culture is a group's shared collective meaning system through which the group's collective values, attitudes, customs, beliefs, and thoughts are understood." This implies that a shared meaning can only be achieved if the target population is able to decode the meaning of their cultural symbols (material and non-material), and if not, it is likely to create miscommunications and misunderstandings.

Contrarily, Gudykusnt and Kim (1997) view culture as an element that affects people's behavior. In practice, non-material cultural elements like belief systems, norms, attitudes, values, taboos, and so on dictate how individuals behave when in an encounter with others. Consequently, these components may have a varying impact on effective intercultural communication.

Another commensurate characteristic of culture is that it involves a large group of people. As Jandt (2004:7) notes, "culture is a community or a group of people large enough to be self-sustaining, that is, large enough to produce new generations of members without relying on outside peoples." From this definition, it may be deduced that both Kenya and Uganda share common cultures due to the proximity of their languages epitomized by Bantuism. The use of Kiswahili, a Bantu language, may help individuals from both sides to view themselves as members of a common group, having collective goals, and with similar cultures.

As the study focuses on intercultural communication with increased people's contact in cross-border trade, this study views culture both as an enabler and a barrier for negotiating a shared meaning between traders and customers in a bargaining context and other social interactions. It also views culture as a construct of attitudes, beliefs, values, assumptions, and norms that are either learned, acquired, or inherited by an individual, group, or society and transmitted from generation to generation through communication.

Moreover, since Busia town (Kenya and Uganda) is endowed with diverse cultures, vendors and customers may find it difficult to interact effectively because of the lack of a common culture which is invariably engraved in language. Since cultural aspects are relatively interpreted, it may result in uncertainty, suspicions, miscommunication, and misunderstanding during the negotiation process.

#### ii. *Communication*

Communication means the exchange of information between two or more speakers. For this reason, communication is a two-way interactive discourse that involves the interlocutor's contribution to the conversation process. According to Littlejohn (1992:378), "communication does not happen without meaning, and people create and use meaning in interpreting events." Lunenberg (2010:1) consents with Littlejohn by asserting that there must be a common understanding between the sender and the receiver of the message in communication. In essence, communication is a transmission process of information and common understanding from one person to another (Keyton, 2011:2).

Lauring (2011:236) denotes that "communication is a mechanism through which groups are created, maintained, and modified." Principally, communication provides a site for interaction between different groups of people and determines their mutual coexistence. It is worth mentioning that the vitality of using a common language with a shared culture among a group of people cannot be underestimated since individuals achieve a common understanding by being able to interpret the signs and symbols used in their language of communication.

From the preceding definitions, communication under this study is observed as a linchpin of cultural elements which facilitate or hinder a common understanding. In other words, both verbal and non-verbal codes are interpreted based on different cultural and contextual elements. In a social interaction situation (like cross-border trade), understanding different cultural elements of people from heterogeneous cultures is crucial to effective communication.

*iii. Intercultural Communication*

Gudykunst (2003:163) defines intercultural communication (IC) as communication between individuals from different national cultures. National cultures, in this sense, mean cultures that exist within a given group of people whose linguistic and cultural perception is similar. This delineates that national cultures go beyond geographical-state borders, and within state boundaries, there can be individual, ethnic group, or regional cultures.

On the other hand, IC, as Lustig & Koester (2006:46) writes: "is a symbolic, interpretative, transactional, contextual process in which people from different cultures create shared meanings." It is not a one-step phenomenon but a negotiation process that involves distinct stages. This negotiation can only be possible if the interlocutors adjust their linguistic and cultural diversity to achieve a common understanding.

Another significant aspect of IC is what individuals do in intercultural encounters. As Zhu (2018:200) succinctly puts it:

"intercultural communication is primarily concerned with how people are set to achieve their communication goals during interactions by negotiating both linguistic and cultural differences that may arise between them... it provides an opportunity to examine what we do when the other party in the interaction, either by ascription or self-orientation or a combination of both, appears, sounds or interacts differently from ourselves."

This definition evokes the concept of multilingual and multicultural situations. It indicates that for communication to occur, individuals should mutually adjust their linguistic and cultural differences. In so doing, it minimizes suspicions and misunderstandings due to differences in attitudes, values, norms, worldviews, paralinguistic cues, and so on, which augments effective interactions.

Incorporating these definitions, this study views IC as an interactive social phenomenon between people from pluralistic cultures whose end goal is to build social capital. In particular, the interactions between traders and customers in a bargaining context and other social settings.

*iv. Intercultural Interaction*

Spencer-Oatey & Franklin (2012:1) posit that intercultural interaction is the behavior that is depicted when members from distinct cultural groups engage in a joint activity that is not limited to verbal and nonverbal communication. In this sense, what makes the understanding of intercultural interaction complex is what then is "intercultural"? According to the authors, interaction only becomes intercultural (rather than intracultural) when the "cultural difference between the participants is significant enough for interlocutors to notice its impact" (2009:3). This notion portrays that "cultural difference" breeds the notion of "us" versus "them" which makes individuals view "others" as "strange" and shapes their worldviews either as positive or negative which greatly affect effective interactions.

Another essential aspect of intercultural interaction, as suggested by Spencer-Oatey & Franklin (2012:1), includes achieving mutual understanding, managing relations, and defining identity and personal growth. According to them, linguistic proficiency is key to developing intercultural skills. However, it is profound to note that intercultural interaction is not only dependent on linguistic proficiency but also on other factors (like trade) being done in different contextual settings.

Moreover, prior studies observe intercultural interaction as a construct of high levels of uncertainty (Gudykunst & Gudykunst, 1988; Chua & Gray, 1987). Ordinarily, first encounters between people breed uncertainty and anxiety since the speakers may not be familiar with the language or culture of the other. Undeniably, it makes them unable to negotiate meaning during interactions hindering effective inter-ethnic communication.

Quite apart, citing Alloport's (1954) "contact hypothesis," Justen (2009:25) argues that effective intercultural interactions may ease negative stereotyping, prejudices, and ethnocentrism that arise during intercultural encounters. This notion underscores the significance of cultural awareness and sensitivity during initial encounters between interlocutors, which canonizes a shared meaning between them.

In this study, intercultural interaction is defined as the meaning-making process between individuals from differing cultural backgrounds during an initial encounter through communication. More specifically, how traders and customers negotiate linguistic and cultural repertoires in a bargaining context ensuring mutuality is achieved.

v. *Language Contact*

Linguistic scholars, over time, have shown interest in the language contact phenomenon. Many agree that this phenomenon cannot exist in isolation but in the convergence of distinct languages in specific settings. For Weinreich (1974:1), “two or more languages are said to be in contact if they are used alternatively by the same persons.” On the other hand, language contact is also seen as an avenue for bilingualism. As Diebold (1964:496) succinctly puts it:

“Contact and convergence between two different languages and cultures result in a sociological situation wherein the same individual learns elements from a linguistic and cultural system other than his native system. Linguistics refers to this learning process and bilingualisation. The individuals who are so involved are bilinguals... when two languages come into contact, speakers of either language may learn elements of the other language. This acquisition of non-native language produces bilingualism.”

This argument extends the understanding of language contact and evokes the concept of multilingualism and multiculturalism. Multilingualism, in this sense, refers to the ‘ability to function in more than one language without reaching the same degree of grammatical perfection in all the languages known by the individual’ (Psaltou-Joyce & Kantaridou, 2009:461). Considerably, Thomason (2001:1) defines language contact simply as “the use of one language in the same place at the same time.” More importantly, her definition describes what happens when languages come into contact. She alludes that this situation results in language change, extreme language mixing (representing pidgins, creoles, and bilingual mixed languages), and finally, language death.

In the more recent study, Yager (2020:15) observes language contact as a phenomenon resulting from the interaction between interlocutors of different languages, which is tied to a contact-induced change in language systems. She adds that to understand the process of language change, it is pertinent to dig into the historical relationships between people and the languages they speak.

From the preceding definitions, this study observes language contact as a confluence of people, the languages they speak, and their cultures. Notably, it limits itself to how traders and customers negotiate meaning by the use of Kiswahili as an effective intercultural communication tool for facilitating trade.

vi. *Trans-border Language*

Trans-border language, synonymously known as ‘cross-border’ language, refers to a language used by people across national and state frontiers. It is also defined as a language commonly used in more than two states and domains across straddling usages (ACALAN, 2009:4). In practice, trans-border language emanates from the previously demarcated colonial boundaries which distinguish one state from another. Kenya and Uganda, for instance, before colonialism, existed as one entity but later were separated artificially by colonial boundaries. Interestingly, the communities living around the border (Busia) have a near common linguistic and cultural composition. Of particular interest is the use of the Kiswahili language, which is used across the border by its dwellers for various cross-border activities.

Primarily, cross-border languages have multifaceted roles in enhancing cross-border activities. Notably: facilitating economic border activities (trade), political mobilization and strategic influence, regional integration between neighboring countries, and finally, facilitating citizenship, granting refugee status, and other related benefits (Feyissa & Hoehne, 2010:1). They are also key to building social capital when used in socioeconomic activities like informal cross-border trade (Ndhlovu, 2013:21).

Related to this research, Kiswahili is considered both a cross-border and inter-ethnic language that is envisaged to mend both linguistic and cultural distance and build viable social networks between traders and customers to enhance intercultural interactions and cross-border trade in Busia town.

vii. *Language Status*

The concept of language status emerged within the praxis of language planning and policy in specific sociolinguistic ecologies. It denotes language origin, its place and position, and the interlocutor’s attitudes towards it in a given speech community. Practically, language status refers to the classification of languages and their speakers from political, academic, socio-cultural, and economic perspectives (Porter, 2018:1). More significantly, it describes the legal use of language within a given territory.

Bichani (2015) avers that language status ‘refers to the linguistic status of the language compared to other languages in society and internationally.’ In essence, languages can be categorized as either low, medium, or high status depending on socio-economic, political, and cultural factors within a given space and time.

This study, therefore, observes language status as the use of language in a specific geographical context such as a region, country, or continent that is influenced by various factors like educational, ethnic, trade, and administrative functions. In particular, how historical factors affect the use and development of Kiswahili in Busia town between Kenya and Uganda.

*a. The Status of Kiswahili: An Historical Perspective*

This section lucidly examines a historical overview of the development of Kiswahili both in Kenya and Uganda. Specifically, it focuses on pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial periods, the underlying obstacles, and how they influence the development and spread of Kiswahili. By looking at the historical development of Kiswahili, it is vital to note that both Kenya and Uganda have a specific history, notwithstanding ethnic and sociolinguistic structures. All these factors have more or less influenced language policies that exist in both countries, and it explains why Kiswahili is more widely used in Kenya than Uganda.

*A. Kiswahili Status in Kenya*

Kiswahili is considered an East and Central African lingua franca (Chebet-Choge, 2012:173); it is the second widely spoken language in Kenya. Kiswahili in Kenya was met with resistance which was largely caused by the geographical, political environment, and colonial language policies. Although Kiswahili's origin is said to be on the coast of Kenya, it took so long to spread from its coast into the hinterland, which was until the 20<sup>th</sup> century with the building of the Kenya- Uganda railway.

It seems plausible to argue that since the British Kenya-Uganda railway was built by the Indians and Pakistan, it led to mass land alienation for its construction that was met with violence and brutality. Kiswahili was seen as foreign by the inland communities. For this reason, it created some negative ethnic attitudes leading to people preferring their native languages.

However, during the struggle for independence, Kiswahili was seen as a multiethnic mobilization tool for political emancipation. As Ogot (1999:120) succinctly puts it: "Kiswahili played a very pertinent role between different nationalities in Kenya during the fight for independence; hence it is a political language." This indicates that Kiswahili was used at the time as a unifying language in Kenya's political landscape among the natives. Interestingly, the British colonial masters saw Kiswahili as a threat to their political expedience, and this explains why they allowed native languages to be used to teach in primary schools as an extension of their "divide and rule " policy (Timmamy & Oduor, 2016:176).

Correspondingly, the British colonial language policy did not agitate for the development and spread of Kiswahili. It, however, favored the use of mother tongues at the earliest stages of schooling and allowed Kiswahili to be used only in the first few classes. English was therefore fronted as a medium of instruction in the Kenyan education system; where possible, Kiswahili was sometimes used, but as a categorized native language (Timmamy & Oduor, 2016:177).

Later, in 1957, when the Ministry of Education established the Nairobi Special Centre to promote English as a medium of instruction, Kiswahili's role as a medium of instruction dwindled (Mazrui & Mazrui 1995:58). From all these, it can be deduced that Kiswahili's status in Kenya was seen as a foreign language, and therefore this created stereotyped attitudes against it, which resulted in its slow development and ultimate spread.

Another challenge that Kiswahili met in Kenya was the negative ethnic attitude among the non-Bantu communities. Ojwang (2008:335) argues that although Kiswahili serves as a lingua franca for trade and social interaction, its acceptance and proficiency remain low in the upcountry, especially among the Luo. He also adds that this situation emanates from the early Swahili caravan traders, who were perceived as cunning in character. As such, this attitude made the Luo reluctant to embrace Kiswahili until now.

Dialectical differences, both regional and sociolects, posed a great challenge among the native Kiswahili speakers. Ki-Mvita, for instance, was seen to be superior to Ki-amu and other dialects; this was especially championed by the Christian missionaries who documented their evangelical events using Ki-Mvita (Ojwang, 2008:335). These hierarchical suppositions undoubtedly were seen as barriers to which dialect was to be embraced in Kenya. However, it is imperative mentioning that "Kiunguja" is the standard Kiswahili dialect.

Today, most people in Kenya affirm most of their ethnic identities more than state nationhood. Even in the political sphere, most coalition realignments are formed based on ethnic loyalty and not manifestos or policies. Consequently, the political imposition of the use of Kiswahili on the political horizon arguably may not suffice to minimize ethnicisation and promotion of nationalism. Even the number of votes a presidential candidate is expected to earn is judged on the ethnic matrix (Ojwang, 2008:337).

Moreover, the rise and spread of *sheng*, which is a blend of English and Kiswahili words and some Kenyan native languages (Attyang, 2000:8), among the youths and adults in urban centers, is seen as a great impediment to the growth of Kiswahili. In particular, it erodes the use of standard Swahili and is sometimes linked to unacceptable morality in the Kenyan social spheres.

Furthermore, even though Kiswahili is regarded as both a national and official language (Official Law Reports of the Republic of Kenya, 2010:22), its use in government affairs is still worrying. Its leverage as an official language alongside English has not made it to be of more use; instead, English is still the most preferred language. Admittedly, despite its promulgation in the 2010 constitution, it still lags behind in the Kenyan education system (Timmamy & Oduor, 2016:179).

From the above-mentioned historical and sociolinguistic facts, it is apparent that all these factors have played critical roles in the current status of Kiswahili in Kenya. It explains why most people still prefer their mother tongues and English to Kiswahili. Undeniably, this situation has resulted in stringent challenges to language policy makers in Kenya to salvage its use adequately

#### *B. Kiswahili Status in Uganda*

Unlike Kenya, Kiswahili took so long to develop and spread in Uganda. Its imposition met a myriad of historical and sociolinguistic challenges. While Kenya had large Kiswahili speakers in their coastal towns before the inception of colonialism, Uganda only had speakers after the First World War. It is argued that even by the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Kiswahili had not extended in Uganda (Mukuthuria, 2006:155).

However, the construction of the Kenya-Uganda railway led to the sprung of industrialized towns, which were key to the development and spread of Kiswahili. Towns built along the railway line right from Malaba to Tororo, Jinja, Kampala, and Kasese encouraged the settlement of many people who were attracted by employment opportunities. In such settlements and work-related activities in various plantations and industries, there was the need to use one language, and in this sense, Kiswahili was adopted. Kiswahili was adopted due to the fact that the railway builders (Indians and Pakistans) had no knowledge of the local languages. However, they had little mastery of Kiswahili.

Additionally, the British colonial language policy of East Africa leveraged Kiswahili as an official language among the security and armed forces. According to Mukuthuria (2006:156): "Kiswahili was used by the colonial forces that fought alongside the British, and it was used to unify, mobilize and propagate war propaganda among the soldiers and other British colonial subjects in East Africa." In principle, Kiswahili was made a prerequisite for people who wanted to join the security forces, resulting in its ultimate development and spread. It may also be argued that during President Iddi Amin's reign, there were some little developments in Kiswahili, following a decree to make it a national language in Uganda in 1971. A more elusive use of the term national language refers to a variety chosen by a nation for purposes of conveying or representing national identity (Taylor & Francis Group, 2021).

Despite the progress of Kiswahili's development, it faced a number of hindrances. For instance, before colonialism, Uganda had autonomous kingdoms (Bunyoro, Kitara, Busoga, and Buganda) which did not want to lose their language, culture, or identity. This attitude was leveled against Kiswahili, particularly by the Buganda Kingdom. Thus, it was not introduced in the kingdom; this situation is still evident today (Mukuthuria, 2006:155). Therefore, Luganda was the only language allowed to be spoken in the Buganda kingdom, and years later, during British imperialism, English was preferred to Kiswahili.

Besides, the coming of Christian missionaries, whose aim was to spread Christianity and counter Islam, perceived Kiswahili to have linked to the Islamic religion. Even when they opened churches and schools, Luganda was the only language permitted to be used. Consequently, when English was introduced in schools, Kiswahili was out- rightly prohibited. As Amidu (1995: 53) surmises, Kiswahili was "a language of slaves and of bondage, and detested it because it was associated with Islam, a possible rival to Christianity." This notion was and still is held among Ugandans.

The historical foci that made Kiswahili face a number of challenges were in post-independence Uganda. There was a perceived negative attitude and animosity towards it. Since Kiswahili was neither taught nor examined in schools like in Kenya, many Ugandans associated it with people of low caliber in the society. Particularly town dwellers, prostitutes, criminals, and illiterates who acquired it along the streets, which connotes cunning behaviors.

Moreover, Kiswahili was also viewed as a language of bloodshed, violence, brutality, and death imposed by the British colonial regime. Its eventual use by the security forces (police and military) between 1970 and 1985 period shattered its image (Asiimire, 2017:5). Mbaabu (1996:106) holds the same notion by arguing that "the harassment of Ugandans who did not speak Kiswahili by Obote's and Amin's army created hatred towards the language." These historical and sociolinguistic situations continue to be impediments to the acceptance of Kiswahili.

Although Kiswahili's status was leveraged (Ojwang, 2008:332) when it was declared in 2005 by an act of parliament as the second official language in Uganda, still, many Ugandans are yet to acknowledge its vitality (Asiimire 2017:6).

#### *viii. Cross-border Trade*

Traditionally, cross-border trade refers to trade relations that exist between people living around state or national frontiers. It downplays the notion of national boundaries to mean the flow of goods and services across international borderlands within a stipulated defined area (Gulte et al., 2016:1). Typically, cross-border trade exists in two forms, both formal and informal. While the former involves following legal trade procedures stipulated by states, the latter involves illegal trade that is unrecorded or unrecognized by respective governments. Besides, the pertinence of these trades cannot be underestimated since they are sources of employment opportunities and regional integration between people living in the neighboring countries.

This phenomenon exists in the present study, and it delimits itself in cross-border trade (retail, wholesale, and transport personnel) between Kenya and Uganda in Busia town. Equally important, the impeccable role of a cohesive language (Kiswahili) in this type of trade cannot be assumed to facilitate the negotiation process during trader-customer relations in a bargaining context.

In conclusion, any human interaction is pre-conditioned for effective intercultural communication. Cross-border trade (like in Busia town) provides a classic example of increased contact between persons from pluralistic cultures and language dissimilarities. Such an intersection is likely to complicate language choice (because of polyglossic problems) and communication behaviors between traders and customers to be suspicious, uncertain, and complex, resulting in miscommunications and misunderstandings. Since effective intercultural communication is deemed to be a pre-understanding of both linguistic and cultural backgrounds of interlocutors, a cross-border language (Kiswahili) cannot be assumed to mitigate these impediments.

*b) Empirical Review*

This section focuses on reviewing related studies that are categorized under three continental case regions, mainly Asia, Europe, and Africa. The chosen case studies provide relevant empirical studies that underpin this research in terms of methodology, scope, and analysis to enunciate the knowledge gap.

*i. Asian Studies*

Previous studies reveal state borders are invariably considered agents of human, economic, cultural, and linguistic contacts, which provide sites for intercultural interactions and communication. Besides, in such a confluence of contacts, the emergence of intercultural (linguistic and cultural) communication problems cannot be assumed.

Fodorova (2012:126) investigated how language, attitudes, and stereotypes on the Russian-Chinese border hindered interethnic communication. In her article, she revealed that attitudes and stereotypes created by state borders created tension in interethnic relations and provoked misunderstandings and sometimes conflicts between contacting ethnic groups. Finally, the author suggests that to understand intercultural contacts in borderlands, it is vital to consider the understanding of attitudes and behavioral strategies (2012:126).

Subsequently, Fedorova (2013:76) sought to investigate how ethnic, social, and linguistic stereotypes influenced people's perceptions and communicative strategies and the way they construct images of others and themselves during interethnic communication. Using the Russia-Chinese border as a case study, qualitative data from in-group interviews, observations, and recordings gathered by the author in 2008-2010, at Zabaikalskii territory of Russia and the Chinese city of Manzhouli, with a combination of linguistic and anthropological approaches, were employed.

The study revealed that it was the Chinese who made efforts to learn Russian and not vice versa. On the other hand, the findings also showed only a few native Russian speakers, especially young people, tried to learn Chinese as part of their professional training. In addition, the author also confirmed that the Russian language was preferred to the Chinese language to serve as a medium of interethnic communication (2013:76). In essence, the Russian language was predominantly used because most Russians belong to a high social-economic status compared to the Chinese, which predefined their communication.

Moreover, the research also saw that "foreigner talk" was used as a discourse strategy of interethnic communication between the Russians and Chinese. This communication strategy was used by the Russians to adjust their verbal behavior during their initial encounter with the Chinese. The foreigner talk included features like repetitions, paraphrases, slower speech tempo, and increased loudness, but usually employed during communication breakdowns.

Lastly, the Russian-Chinese border asymmetry showed how linguistic strategies and actual communication in discourse mirrored Russian speakers playing a more dominant role and treating their Chinese counterparts as inferior. This communication pattern depicts how language attitudes and stereotypes support, shape, and transmit the existing asymmetry and how they impede effective interethnic communication.

The author's study, therefore, correlates with the present study, especially on some of the communication strategies vendors and customers may use to communicate with each other in diverse settings like Busia town.

The study by Suryani et al. (2010) analyzed Malaysian and Thai students' use of Business English as Lingua Franca (BELF) during cross-border collaboration activities. The study's aim was threefold: to examine the potential of BELF in cross-border communication; to identify the potential of English as Lingua franca among English language users in formal settings, and finally, to identify the potential of English as Lingua franca among English Second Language (ESL) users among English foreign Language (EFL) users in informal settings.

The authors adopted a triangulation methodology and used observations, questionnaires, and interviews to answer the research questions. More than Forty students participated from both Hatyai University (HU) and Universiti Malaysia Perlis (UniMAP). The

study revealed that BELF emerged mostly in informal situations; the ESL users preferred to use Standard English variety. It also found that the EFL users use BELF for both formal and informal situations (2010:97-98).

The findings of the study are linked to the present study in the sense that, just like most students preferred using BEFL in both formal and informal settings, traders and customers too would prefer using a cross-border lingua franca (Kiswahili) to facilitate trans-border communication. This study contributes to the present study methodologically by adopting a triangulation approach by the use of observations, interviews, and questionnaires to achieve the research objectives. However, it negates the present study that uses a mixed research methodology by focusing on the status, limitations, and communication strategies that traders and customers use to make meaning in a market interaction situation.

#### *ii. European Studies*

Studies conducted by Fikken (2017:44) examined how language differences affect cross-border cooperation in the Dutch-German and Dutch-Belgium Interreg cross-border regions. The research qualitatively collected data through participant observation and in-depth interviews. A total of 11 in-depth interviews were conducted with 15 respondents, who were carefully selected based on nationality, thematic focus, and setting. Three themes emerged from observations and interviews conducted. The researcher found that three barriers affected cross-border cooperation: administrative barriers, cultural barriers, and communication barriers reflected in language differences and proficiency.

The study revealed that administrative barriers such as differences in legislation, law, government structures, and organizational identities were the easiest to identify and were seen to show the strongest effect on cross-border cooperation by limiting the possibilities of cooperation. Cultural barriers between partners too though not visible enough, were also mentioned by respondents. The German culture was seen as stern, formal, and precise, unlike the Dutch culture, which was more informal, creative, and chaotic. Additionally, the author also confirmed that language differences at the German-Dutch border compromised cross-border cooperation.

Finally, Fikken (2017:44) concluded that language plays a crucial role in cross-border cooperation. The author pinpoints that where language exists as a barrier, it makes other barriers severe. For instance, when legislation differences exist, and it is written in a different language, it makes it difficult to understand. In this sense, differences in language create the perception that there are differences in administrative and cultural issues. However, the author also confirms that when people are able to speak the same language, the minor differences in administration and culture are minimized. In short, differences in language proficiency excludes certain groups of people. Thus, for cross-border cooperation to be effective, language is a key facilitator since it helps to minimize both administrative and cultural differences that exist (2017:44).

Janczak (2016:2030) aimed to investigate the linguistic behavior and communication strategies used by Polish inhabitants of the German-Polish borderland in Slubice town. In her study, Janczak used a small extract of empirical data collected from her research in eight Polish border locations, where research on inhabitants was conducted in the form of small talks. A total of 50 recordings were made, which focused on greetings from Polish vendors.

Janczak (2016:2030) found that 22% of respondents on communication strategies used by Slubice inhabitants, 36% were under the age of 25, and 55% over 60 years had no German language skills. The author adds that 30% of respondents demonstrated little comprehension of the language. In this regard, she concluded that inhabitants chose Polish as a communication language with a German partner. Such an understanding revealed that this phenomenon is known as the receptive bilingualism strategy of both German and Polish as first languages.

With regard to forms of greeting of Polish vendors from Slubice Bazaar, Janczak also confirmed that most inhabitants used code-switching and mixing both languages as common communication strategies in the linguistic heterogeneous border region. Code-switching can be defined as the inability of interlocutors to express themselves in one language (Ping: 2008:8) and therefore shifts to another language to compensate for their linguistic inadequateness. This investigation, therefore, correlates with the current study since it informs the strategies traders and customers may use to communicate in linguistically diverse situations. However, the researcher's linguistic situation does not mirror the polyglossic situation experienced in Busia town. Moreover, the study under investigation aims to evaluate whether the communication strategies employed may enhance intercultural interactions and cross-border trade.

Underscoring the pertinence of a lingua franca in cross-border business activities, Kroon et al. (2015:26) sought to explore the role of language in cross-border mergers acquisitions and how organization members' language skills, or fluency, in the adopted lingua franca may impact their reactions to a merger. In particular, researchers focused on how language fluency influences the ability of individuals to give meaning to their changing environments. They were also interested in finding out how language fluency indexes social groupings and identities, which may be a driver of perceptions of status inequality and identity politics between employees.

The research adopted an in-depth qualitative analysis of the merger between a French and Dutch airline, where a total of 77 informants were interviewed from the period 2004-2008, representing a cross-section of business, functions, and hierarchical levels. The research found that employees with lower levels of fluency in English corresponded with anxiety about the merger and with perceptions of status inequality between the two merged companies. The study also discovered that when employees in a unit were fluent in English and did not speak other languages at work, it resulted in strong support for the new merged company identity. Contrarily, there was outburst resistance when organizational members' level of fluency in English was low and significantly lower than in other spoken languages.

Moreover, the study recommended the adoption of a lingua franca and language fluency in international business settings, including international Merger Acquisitions, which positively impact the formation of an organization's identity and increase collaboration and coordination alike (ibid.).

This study underpins the present research in the sense that both examine the use of a lingua franca to effect communication. It, however, negates by delimiting itself in communication within an organization, which is contrary to the current study that investigates how the use of a lingua franca (Kiswahili) may be used effectively to foster intercultural interactions and cross-border trade in Busia town between Kenya and Uganda.

*iii. African Studies*

Ndhlovu (2013) explored how various cross-border languages could be positively deployed to enhance regional economic, political and cultural integration. The author pinpoints that little attention has been given in relation to the role cross-border languages play in economic and political integration.

Additionally, he contends that the success of cross-border trade cannot adequately be guaranteed by the use of standardized official languages but rather by the use of cross-border languages. Yet again, Ndhlovu (2013:36) holds that "it is cross-border languages and not official ex-official languages such as English, Portuguese and French that can make voices of the marginalized heard and push their interests forward."

In sum, the author affirms that regional integration should not only be viewed within the lenses of political, economic, or geographical aspects but also in terms of linguistic and cultural diversity. Admittedly, cross-border languages are crucial to trans-border communication and serve as social capital when used in specific settings such as in informal cross-border activities.

To bolster Ndhlovu's (2013) assumption, Nahayo (2017) explored how speakers of cross-border languages constructed different linguistic identities as a result of using different languages in varied communication scenarios.

A total of 50 respondents were purposively selected, 25 from each Samia community on the Kenya-Uganda border. Both individual and focus group interviews, observations, and a survey of the linguistic landscape were administered to collect qualitative data. The researcher found that out of the 50 Samia speakers, 90% reported speaking more than one language. On the Ugandan side of the border, 20 of 25 had knowledge of Luganda, 2 of Lusoga, 20 of Swahili, and only 3 of English. On the Kenyan side, of the 25 participants interviewed reported speaking Swahili, 4 acknowledged having knowledge of English, 10 spoke Luhayo, one (1) had knowledge of Lumataki, and 90% were revealed to have knowledge of the Ugandan Samia (2017:98).

Interestingly, the author also revealed that only a small percentage of respondents from Kenya and Uganda had knowledge of the English language, despite being an official language for both countries. Furthermore, the study confirmed that respondents were multilingual, and in most situations, they used different languages according to their contexts.

Finally, the author revealed that the linguistic differences in terms of accent and word choice constructed distinguishing features between the Samia spoken both in Kenya and Uganda. As a result, the speakers constantly negotiated different linguistic differences.

Additionally, Lugwiri Okombo (2020) examined how age was a motivating factor in the variation in the use of Kiswahili among ordinary citizens as a lived experience. Data was qualitatively and ethnographically collected through observations, interviews, and focus group discussions. The author revealed that youths in Busia town used slang-like Kiswahili; middle-aged citizens, on the other hand, extensively adopted Kiswahili-English code-mixing, whereas the elderly citizens preferred their vernaculars to Kiswahili (2020:13). Drawing from the author's findings, he concluded that Kiswahili was not a homogeneous language as many portrayed it; instead, its use varied considerably based on the age of the speaker and other factors.

Further, the researcher recommended that researchers interested in the use of Kiswahili as a lived practice in East Africa should try to investigate how it is used based on social variables like education, ethnicity, nationality, gender, and so on.

Finally, Luvaga et al. (2021) explored how Kiswahili enhances intercultural relations and strengthens national ethos in the Rift Valley in Kenya. The study employed a mixed research design by the use of questionnaires to collect data. A total of 50 respondents were sampled purposively to enrich the study. The authors revealed that language difference results in tense intercultural relations among the co-cultures, demonstrated by discrimination, intimidation, and social exclusion, among others. The study also established that Kiswahili limits acculturation through assimilation, separation, and marginalization. From the findings, the author concluded by appraising Kiswahili use in the Rift Valley of Kenya that helps people unite and breed a shared understanding during social interactions.

This study contributes to the present research methodologically through the use of a mixed research design. Additionally, it provides literature on how individuals from plural cultures interact within the same environment. However, the study used only one research instrument (questionnaire), but the present study negates by using different research instruments, including questionnaires, observations, linguistic landscaping, and sound recordings.

### c) *Theoretical Review*

This section critically reviews two social science theories that underpin this study. They include communication and cross-cultural theories. Namely: the Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) propounded by Gallois and Giles (2015), and the Intercultural Adaptation Model (IAM) suggested by Cai and Rodriguez (1997). These models act as cardinal points in the study by auguring how language, culture, and communication influence each other.

#### a. *Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) (Gallois & Giles 2015)*

CAT is a theoretical framework that explains how individuals from differing sociolinguistic backgrounds accommodate their differences in communication interactions. CAT, initially known as *Speech Accommodation Theory* (SAT), was propounded by Giles (1971) to explain how to adjust various speech aspects (like language, accent, and dialects) of speech patterns of interpersonal communication (Soliz & Giles, 2014).

Decades later, Giles, in collaboration with colleagues (including Nik & Justin Coupland, Bourhis, Gallois, Thakerar, Gasiorek, Soliz, etc.), broadened the theory to include socio-psychological aspects of language communication and social interactions. For instance, Farzadnia and Giles (2015) observe CAT as “an interface between linguistics, communication, and social psychological framework for understanding the interpersonal and intergroup dynamics of speakers, adjusting their language and nonverbal patterns to each other’s.”

CAT highlights three fundamental aspects that influence communication. Accommodation. Notably, socio-historical context, immediate context, and interpersonal context. In a socio-historical context, it is assumed that every interaction stems from a societal level which determines the flow of interaction (Giles et al. 2006:10). The immediate context, on the other hand, propositions that communication takes place in a specific place, time and space; all these aspects are linked to the norms, values, and traditions. Such an understanding delineates that the choice of words in school, for instance, may differ from the one in the market. Finally, communication is majorly interpersonal-oriented, which includes considering different aspects of intergroup during interactions.

The initial focus of CAT distinguishes the various types of accommodation and non-accommodation strategies, including convergence, divergence, and maintenance. Traditionally, convergence refers to how speakers adjust their communication styles to attune to their interlocutors. This can be through switching to the language of the speaker, using simplified vocabulary, accent, and so on. Unlike convergence, divergence means adopting different verbal and nonverbal cues such as language, accent, jargon, gestures, pace, tone, and so forth. Maintenance, on the other hand, is where individuals deliberately stick to their communication styles (e.g., not changing languages even when bilingual). Arguably, it is worth noting that accommodation behavior (convergence) encourages effective communication, whereas non-accommodative (Divergence and Maintenance) widens the communication distance between interlocutors.

CAT's main tenets that underpin this study are the five sociolinguistic accommodation and non-accommodation strategies that are used in social interaction contexts. They include approximation, interpretability, interpersonal control, discourse management, and emotional expression (Giles, Gasiorek & Soliz, 2015). These strategies reflect the sociolinguistic complexity of Busia town. Thus, they are used to determine whether or not traders and customers employ them to overcome linguistic challenges in a polyglot setting. The subsequent discussion explains these strategies:

#### i. *Approximation*

In approximation strategy, individuals shift their speech and communication styles which are akin or unakin to their counterparts. As seen above, this can take the form of shifting the language (in bilingual and multilingual situations) of communication, using simplified vocabularies and nonverbal cues. This approximation is key to negotiating meaning, thereby galvanising effective intercultural interactions. Contrarily, the lack of adjustment of these strategies may widen communication distance resulting in suspicions, miscommunication, and misunderstanding.

ii. *Interpretability*

This involves strategies that enable individuals to understand the interlocutor's message in a conversation. It specifically allows persons to be accommodative of other conversational participant needs. This may include verbal cues (language, diction, demonstrative words, jargon, topics of discussion, etc.) and nonverbal cues (touch, facial expression, tone of voice, posture, clothing, eye contact, and spatial configuration) and so on. Distinctly, if these aspects are not considered, they may result in non-accommodative scenarios.

iii. *Interpersonal Control*

Are perceived communication accommodation strategies guided by power distance, relations, and status that people hold in a given social interaction setting. To accommodate, individuals may drift away from their strict positions like being referred to with titles (like Prof. or Dr.) to their name. This undoubtedly encourages communication accommodation. Conversely, the opposite impedes it.

iv. *Discourse Management*

It is one of the most salient strategies in any conversation. It entails adjusting the communication structure to fit that of the interlocutor. These strategies may include spoken language discourse strategies like a conversation as a two-way traffic, which means all participants are engaged in the talk, maybe through asking and answering questions. The use of backchannels, having an opening, body, and closure of the conversation, among others. The engagement of these strategies may be more or less crucial to trader-customer interactions.

v. *Emotional Expression*

Expression strategies have to do with how individuals react to the relational or emotional needs of others. Emotions like happiness, sadness, joy, and so on are conventionally interpreted culturally. In a conversation, how individuals respond to such aspects may either facilitate or hinder effective intercultural interactions.

A. *Shortcomings of the Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT)*

CAT has been crucial to a number of studies by previous scholars. For instance, Littlejohn and Foss (2005:147) have considered CAT to be "one of the most influential behavioral communication theories." Considerably, Griffin (2009:397-398), cited in (Farzadnia & Giles, 2015:19), argued that CAT "... has morphed into a communication theory of enormous scope... can be beneficially applied to any situation where people from different groups or cultures contact."

Farzadnia and Giles (2015:29) also have concluded that "CAT is a productive approach to understanding the linguistic as well as socio-psychological aspects of patient-provider interactions." Based on the foregoing CAT's applicability, it is adopted in this study as well to explain how trader-customer interactions occur in a bargaining context and other social interactions in Busia town.

Although CAT has been appraised by many scholars, it fails to explain the process by which individuals may be interculturally competent in cross-cultural interactions. Besides, Giles and Soliz (2015:1653) argue that even though interpersonal motives such as gaining social acceptance and creating social capital drive accommodation, conversely, these communication mechanisms also exist without necessarily applying accommodative strategies.

Based on the approximation strategy, the theory fails to accommodate the speaker and their counterparts when the speaker is not flexible to approximate his speech to the level of their understanding. For instance, when the speaker uses jargon in cases like medicine or law. Moreover, the discourse management strategy may not accommodate all conversational aspects, such as backchannels, questions during extraordinary speeches, and instances of giving commands.

However, this research fills these gaps. In the case of *approximation strategy*, in a business that always is motivated by maximizing profits by traders, in most cases, they hire interpreters to overcome this challenge. In terms of discourse management strategy, in business setups, bargaining is a prevailing stance for any successful trade. This is materialized through question and answer sessions of price negotiations, as the study reveals.

b. *Intercultural Adaptation Model (IAM)*

Intercultural Adaptation Model (IAM), propounded by Cai and Rodriguez (1997), focuses on the process of communication adjustment between people during initial cross-cultural interactions. It explains how people's perceptions and experiences may facilitate or impede effective adaptation during intercultural interactions. The IAM model is unique and reflects the communicative scenario between traders and customers in Busia town. It is akin to this study as it describes trader-customer trade interactions by suggesting salient steps that may be adopted to galvanize unity, negotiate meaning, and enhance trade during first encounters.

According to the model, "positive and negative experiences with cross-cultural adaptation influence the success or failure of the current adaptive efforts...during initial interactions, adaptive strategies are a function of experience and how experience either

facilities or impedes communication clarity". This assumption indicates that experience may be used as a yardstick for effective cultural adaptation. Interestingly, the theory contends that miscommunication and misunderstanding are likely to stem from increased cultural differences.

IAM model positions experience to play an integral role in the adaptation process. While positive experiences may lead to effective intercultural adaption, negative experiences, on the other hand, may result in ineffective adaptation and sometimes pullout from the interaction. The theory is central to the study as it answers the questions on what process and how it should be followed to ensure suspicions, miscommunication, and misunderstandings are minimized between traders and customers' interactions in polyglosic situations like Busia town.

However, it is imperative to note that how people interpret their cultural experiences is relative. Therefore, the processes of intercultural adaptation based on people's perceptions and experiences during their initial cross-cultural interactions are discussed forth.

*i. Perceptions during First Utterances (Time 1)*

This is the first stage of the intercultural adaption process. It describes how an individual's perception of the "other" during initial contact may either facilitate or impede intercultural interaction. The model assumes, "if there is no perception of foreignness which may contribute to present or potential misunderstanding, then adaptation is not likely to occur." Perceptions like other person's voice quality, paralinguistic cues, and color of the skin (As Ellingsworth mentions) show foreignness within the first thirty-six seconds of a person's encounter.

This implies that prior knowledge of cultural differences of the conversational partners makes it easier for them to adapt more easily than those who are unaware. This situation mirrors Busia town, where the lack of linguistic and cultural background between traders and customers may lead to miscommunications and sometimes conflicts. In other words, miscommunication increases when individuals have relatively little information (e.g., cultural identity and language) about others. Thus, misunderstandings emanate from increased miscommunication.

Finally, perception is summarized in their propositions: (a) as perceived foreignness increases, perceptions of shared knowledge decrease; (b) as shared knowledge decreases, the probability of miscommunication increases; and (c) as miscommunication increases, understanding decreases.

*ii. The Role of Experience (Time 2)*

Previous encounters with other people play a pivotal role in encoding and decoding messages in communication. Encounters mean experiences. The experiences individuals go through are crucial to the adaption process. In particular, if they doubt whether their initial message is understood or not. The experience takes two forms: actual experience or vicarious experience. Actual experience refers to the knowledge about an individual's past cross-cultural contact with persons who have difficulties in comprehending initial messages. It is worthwhile noting that actual experience may be positive or negative. Vicarious experience, on the other hand, may be someone else's experience in a given situation, which may also be positive or negative.

Experience in this context is key to an individual's adaptive process where their cultures and languages are different. As mentioned earlier, experiences may encourage or discourage communication. Negative experiences, for instance, may lead to misunderstanding, while positive experiences result in effective understanding. In so doing, while positive experience breeds effective adaption and reduces miscommunication, negative experience results in ineffective adaptation, which increases miscommunication and ultimate misunderstanding.

These tenets underline the present study in the sense that if a trader or customer has a positive experience with each other, then it may make it easy for them to communicate effectively. Contrarily, negative experiences impede effective intercultural encounters since they create prejudice and stereotypes about the other, which may lead to miscommunication and sometimes misunderstandings in a bargaining context. Hence, adopting an appropriate cross-border or cohesive language (Kiswahili) may help minimize the negative experience, resulting in effective intercultural interactions in Busia town.

*B. Shortcomings of the Intercultural Adaptation Model (IAM)*

Despite the theory being ideal in describing the process by which individuals make communication adjustments during initial cross-cultural encounters like in trader-customer trade interactions, it fails to ascertain whether the prior perceived perception of the other may truly reduce suspicions, prejudices, and stereotypes since they may still materialize in the process of negotiating meaning whether visible or invisible. Moreover, the model also does not specify whether an individual's adaptation is full, partial, permanent, or temporary.

According to Cai & Rogriduez (1997:39), the IAM fails to explain how individuals from the same cultural background may adapt to relational factors like love and intimacy or poverty and riches, which may have overreaching effects on intercultural encounters.

They also add that IAM limits the process of cultural adaptation to goal-driven encounters. This, however, may not be the ultimate view of every interlocutor since some only want to understand the message and not to become culturally adaptive.

Even though IAM holds that experience is crucial to an individual's successful intercultural interactions, it leaves many questions answered. More specifically, the challenge in determining "if the IAM prepositions consent with the behaviors of cross-cultural adapters." (Cai & Rodriguez 1997:39).

As previously mentioned, these two theories underpin this study. The CAT is essential for determining some of the communication accommodation strategies that traders and customers may employ to overcome linguistic and cultural barriers during transactional interactions. The IAM, on the other hand, is adopted to establish ways in which people from differing linguistic and cultural backgrounds may culturally adapt during initial encounters with others.

In a nutshell, the chapter reviews literature relevant to the study. It examines various concepts inherently connected to the research. Inclusive to concepts reviewed, it examines the status of Kiswahili in both Kenya and Uganda from a historical perspective by delving into the obstacles which may still pose a challenge to its use in Busia Kenya and Busia Uganda. Finally, the chapter explicitly explores two theories that predict the outcome of the study. In the next section, the methodology adopted in the study is explained to achieve the research objectives.

### **3. Methodology**

The present chapter focuses on the research methodology applicable to the study. Particularly, it explores the research design, population and sampling, sampling techniques, data collection methods, research instruments, validity and reliability of research instruments, data presentation, and analysis methods, and finally, ethical considerations.

#### *a) Research Design*

The study was conducted along the Kenya-Uganda border (in Busia Kenya and Busia Uganda). The study area was appropriate for the research since it acts as an entry and exit point for import and export goods for landlocked countries (**see section 1.1**). It also offers a classic example of linguistic and cultural diversity typified by people from different cultural backgrounds, including but not limited to nationality, gender, education, occupation, age, and so on. The study was carried out for a period of six months.

The research incorporates a mixed research method where data was collected and analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. Lunenburg and Irby (2008:106) note a mixed research method as "those studies that have engaged quantitative and qualitative research questions and or that have used both probability and purposeful sampling." In practice, the application of both methods reduces data bias and increases its validity and reliability (Panda & Gupta, 2013).

The methods were relevant for this study, where both primary and secondary data were collected quantitatively and qualitatively. Quantitative research can be expressed in terms of quantity (Kothari 2004:17). To find the status of Kiswahili as a medium of communication among traders (retail, wholesale, and transport personnel) and customers, using variables (discussions, bargaining, advertisements, and instructions), useful information was provided through data quantification.

As the study limits itself to understanding people's actions, attitudes, or emotions by the use of an appropriate cross-border language (Kiswahili) and common culture during trader-customer interactions, its influence on cross-border trade in Busia town, qualitative data collection method was also utilized. This approach emphasizes understanding an individual's perceptions, actions, words, attitudes, values, or behaviors in natural settings (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008:89).

#### *b) Study Area*

The research was conducted along the Kenya-Uganda border (in Busia Kenya and Busia Uganda). The area is crucial to the study considering increased contacts of people, languages, and cultures from different countries (Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, and DRC Congo) who crisscross the border on a daily basis for trading purposes. As previously mentioned, Busia acts as an exit and entry point for both export and import goods and services to other landlocked countries

#### *c) Population and Sampling*

This section explores the target population used in the study. It highlights the unique features leading to the selection of the sample. It also explains the different sampling methods utilized in selecting the target respondents and their relevance to the research.

##### *i. Target Population*

A total of 50 respondents were involved in the study to represent the entire population. 30 transport personnel (Bodaboda riders, Cart pushers, and truck drivers), 15 from the Kenyan side of the border, and 15 from the Ugandan side of the border. 8 retail traders (4 from the Kenya side and 4 from the Ugandan side), 8 wholesale traders (4 from the Kenyan side and 4 from the Ugandan side),

and 4 key informants (Customs officers), 2 from the Kenya side of the border and 2 from the Ugandan side of the border were selected to provide useful information for the study. The above target population was selected based on:

- Their ability or inability to speak either Kiswahili or English.
- Persons who own/run a business (retail, wholesale, or transport personnel) in Busia town.
- Location of their shops (wholesale/retail) and parking spaces (transport personnel) at the border.

#### ii. *Sampling and Sampling Techniques*

The research adopted purposive sampling based on Patton's (1990:2002) approach. As Patton (1990:169, 2002:230) succinctly puts it:

The logic and power of purposeful sampling lie in selecting *information-rich cases* for the study. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry, thus the term *purposeful* sampling. Studying information-rich cases yields insights and in-depth understanding rather than empirical generalizations.

The author's notion blends with this study, where a total of 50 respondents are selected purposively to provide an in-depth understanding of the communication scenario in Busia town. *Information richness*, according to Patton, was achieved in this study. For instance, a research assistant, a Busia native, assisted in locating thirty (30) (15 from Kenyan and 15 from the Ugandan side) transport personnel ("Bodaboda" riders, cart pushers, and truck drivers) with the ability to speak Kiswahili, English, or Kiganda during the trade. Truck drivers, for example, were chosen based on the lead by the research assistant, who randomly identified them at their resting places at the border awaiting clearance. Besides, before interviewing them, the research assistant greeted them deliberately in Kiswahili to identify whether they had the ability to speak it. In addition, eight (8) retail traders from both Kenya (4) and Uganda (4) were selected based on the strategic position of their shops.

The eight (8) wholesale traders from both sides of the border (4 Kenyan and 4 Ugandan sides) were selected based on the trading goods in their shops like building and construction materials (cement, iron sheets, etc.), food items, beauty items, shoes, and clothes. Additionally, the researcher, a Busia native, was guided by a research assistant who engaged in cross-border trade on a daily basis in both Kenya and Uganda to identify sampled shops (wholesalers and retailers) who had the ability to speak Kiswahili. These unique features of shops and the target sample were crucial for providing adequate information on how traders and customers negotiate meaning in a polyglossic situation, more significantly, how Kiswahili facilitates cross-border trade and enhances intercultural interactions at the Kenya- Uganda border.

Snowball sampling was also utilized in selecting four (4) key informants (customs officers), each from the Kenyan (2) and Ugandan (2) sides at the Busia border (Patton, 2002:237). It was employed to seek information from various experts or stakeholders (customs officers) who were invariably involved in the respective phenomenon (Siri, 2011:8) to limit research bias. In sum, a total of fifty (50) respondents were selected, twenty-five (25) from the Ugandan side; the other twenty-five (25) from the Kenyan side.

#### d) *Methods of Data Collection*

Both primary and secondary data were collected for the study. For the primary data, interviews were conducted using structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews with respondents. Additionally, in-context observations (non-participant) were also utilized for the data collection.

Unlike primary data, secondary data, synonymously known as documentary review (Creswell, 2003), was used in the study. Notably, information sources like research journals, internet sources, policy papers, books, journals, and reports, periodicals on language, communication, and culture were employed.

#### e) *Research Instruments*

Under this investigation, data was collected quantitatively and qualitatively. Quantitative data was collected using questionnaires containing multiple-choice, open and closed-ended questions, and attitude scales. Qualitative data was collected through an observation (non-participant) survey of linguistic landscaping (LL) by use of a camera. A voice recorder was also used for recording trader-customer interactions for transcription purposes which is vital for data presentation and analysis.

#### a. *Quantitative Research Instruments*

This section focuses on the quantitative research instrument used to collect research data. Particularly the use of questionnaires.

##### A. *Questionnaire*

The collection of a large volume of data invariably is deemed resorting to the use of questionnaires. The questionnaires were handed to the respondents personally, and in some instances, they were administered electronically, especially for the Customs Officers.

The questionnaires were pertinent for answering both questions one and two and sometimes question three of the research. To find the status of Kiswahili in the midst of other languages, communication variables like (initiation, discussion, negotiation, advertisement, and direction) were structured in the questionnaire. Similarly, establishing the limitations affecting the use of Kiswahili in Busia town for facilitating intercultural interactions and cross-border trade was collected through a questionnaire. This allowed a seamless quantification of the data collected, its presentation, and analysis, thus enhancing the study's reliability.

*b. Qualitative Research Instruments*

The section describes qualitative research instruments employed in this study. Notably, observations (non-participant), linguistic landscaping (LL), and sound recordings.

*B. Non-participant Observation*

The researcher listened to how traders and customers negotiated meaning and the communication strategies (code-switching and code-mixing, relational terms, vocabularies used, sentence structure, etc.) they used while bargaining with people from differing linguistic and cultural diversity in natural settings in Busia town (Kothari, 1996). Additionally, the researcher observed both verbal (language, diction, demonstrative words, jargon, etc.) and non-verbal cues (touch, facial expression, posture, tone of voice, eye contact, spatial configuration, etc.) that traders and customers demonstrated during the negotiation process.

Yet again, emotional display by both traders and customers was observed in a serious bargaining context, especially where a customer was in dire need of the product, but the trader stuck to fixed prices. Emotional variables like (sadness, joy, happiness, disgust, or frustration) were observed to determine the mood reflected by both interlocutors at the end of the interaction. An observation guide was designed to collect credible data consistently. This research instrument was crucial for answering the third research question.

*C. Linguistic Landscaping (LL)*

To complement the questionnaire data, the researcher took photographs of language used in public spaces (from both Kenya and Uganda) in order to investigate the status Kiswahili holds in enhancing intercultural interactions and cross-border trade in Busia town (Research question 1). The LL survey of Busia town was done by reading and taking photographs of some writings on buildings, posts, or billboards used in giving directions. Also, the names of retail and wholesale shops were observed, and how language was used in advertisements.

The approach is imperative for investigating how language is used in public spaces (Shohamy, 2010) and in linguistic and culturally diverse urban settings (Pietikäinen & Kelly-Holmes, 2013).

*D. Sound Recordings*

Sound recordings were collected to enrich observational data. Sound recordings were collected when a trader and a customer were in a bargaining context to determine some of the communication strategies traders and customers employed to overcome linguistic and cultural impediments. The sounds were later transcribed, presented, and analyzed to answer the third research question.

*c. Validity and Reliability Criteria*

The study underlines the significance of validity and reliability of a research design. For instance, Terry (1993:61) asserts that a viable research design incorporates both validity and reliability criteria, ensuring consistency in describing the phenomenon under investigation, thus reducing all the possible biases that can impede credible results. The following are the validity and reliability criteria employed in the study.

*i. Reliability of the Instruments*

*A. Pilot Study*

The researcher conducted a pilot study to ensure the research instruments (observation guide, questionnaire, voice recorder, and camera) were appropriate to the objectives of the study. Firstly, the observation guide was tested by doing a physical, linguistic survey by taking photographs of the names of 2 wholesale and 2 retail traders' shops both from Kenya and Uganda. The camera proved to be efficient based on the quality of the captured images. The researcher also listened to how traders and customers negotiated and agreed on a transaction.

Secondly, the questionnaire was also tested; it was administered to 8 respondents (4 from Busia Kenya and 4 from Busia Uganda), which constituted of 2 retailers, 2 wholesalers, and 4 transport personnel. The shops (retail and wholesale) were selected based on the level of busyness in terms of customer influx in a working day, types of goods sold, and ability or inability to speak either Kiswahili/Kiganda or English. From the questionnaire's outcome, it was found that questions on communication strategies used by traders and customers did not provide adequate information to enrich the study. Following this, some questions were refined to answer the research questions.

Thirdly, trader-customer interactions were recorded to test the suitability of the recorder. The sounds recorded were of high quality; thereby, the researcher judged the recorder as an appropriate instrument for data collection.

To sum up, the pilot study conducted, therefore, informed the researcher of the appropriateness of the guides and instruments in the attainment of the research objectives. It is prudent to note that the pilot study data were not included in the final research outcomes.

#### B. Cronbach's Alpha Formula

The reliability of questionnaires was also determined by the use of Cronbach's alpha formula to measure instrument consistency. Moreover, data reliability was also tested based on the adoption of authentic research methods that describe the trustworthiness of the data collection methods, sampling techniques, data presentation, and data analysis.

#### ii. Validity of the findings

##### A. Triangulation

According to Lincoln & Guba (1986) and Woods (2006), the validity of the findings can be achieved through the triangulation approach. It involves the use of various research methods to provide adequate and reliable data for the study. To achieve this, the study employed different data collection methods by use of observations (non-participant), LL, sound recordings, and questionnaires in a bid to reduce information bias.

After making observations of how traders and customers accommodated each other in the absence of a common language during trade, a follow-up of sound recordings was used to enrich the study. Likewise, linguistic landscaping was employed to increase research validity to bolster the questionnaire's data on investigating language use in Busia town.

For the case of an observation guide and questionnaires, they were designed properly and coherently to mirror the study's objectives, empirical studies, and theoretical assumptions. Both instruments were verified before their administration by research experts, especially by the two supervisors. The questionnaires were also administered on an individual basis, which ensured the reliability of the data. These methods were applicable during data collection and data analysis.

##### d. Data Presentation and Analysis

A mixed research method was adopted during data collection, presentation, and analysis in this study. Quantitative data of this study was presented and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) in tables and charts. On the other hand, the qualitative data were presented in figures, tables, and extracts and analyzed using the narrative analytic approach based on the premise of how people use an appropriate common language. The respondent's narratives were coded against the research objectives. A Thematic Content Analysis (TCA) approach propounded by Braun & Clarke (2006:79) was used to identify, analyze, and report themes and sub-themes. The themes identified were used to explain the linguistic barriers faced by traders and customers and how they accommodated each other in polyglossic settings.

Moreover, the selected tenets of the CAT and IAM theories were used to analyze the data collected. Notably, the *discourse strategy* (CAT) as a way of accommodation and non-accommodation communication strategy was employed to determine whether traders and customers used it to ensure negotiation was achieved. Besides, *experience* as an IAM model was also tested to ascertain whether it allowed traders and customers to become interculturally adaptive.

##### e. Ethical Considerations

To ensure ethical considerations are achieved, consent forms were availed to the respondents to sign as an acceptance to participate in the study. Besides, their anonymity was highly considered using the Chatham House rules. An observation guide was used to ensure consistency while gathering information from the participants.

Prior to administering the questionnaires to key informants, a cover letter was addressed to them to request their participation. Flick (2007:126) pinpoints that it is vital for the researcher to clearly spell out the research's intentions to the participants. Consequently, all the objectives, time, and types of information required were highlighted in the letter. A relevant document like an authorization letter for research from the school was attached to allow the collection of data.

In regards to personal information collected (age, gender, education level, nationality, and languages spoken), none of the information is connected to an identifiable respondent. Following this, the respondent's privacy is not compromised.

For ethical guidelines pertaining to the COVID-19 pandemic, the researcher observed all the health protocols. Before administering the questionnaires to the respondents on a face-to-face basis, the investigator wore a mask, sanitized, and observed social distance.

More importantly, curfew time was also observed from both sides of the border (Kenya and Uganda) to avert the spread of the pandemic.

This materialized when the researcher collected data within the stipulated working times and before curfew hours both from Kenya (7:00 pm) and Uganda (5:00 pm). Lastly, the researcher was vaccinated against the COVID-19 pandemic. However, for the case of respondents, it was not easy to ask them whether they had been vaccinated or not. Nevertheless, most of the respondents wore masks.

Conclusively, this chapter has detailed the research methodology process and the research design adopted in the study. It also presents the study area, population, and sampling, sampling and sampling techniques, data collection methods, research instruments, validity and reliability criteria, data presentation, and analysis. Finally, the ethical considerations for the study are presented at the end.

In the next chapter, both quantitative and qualitative data are presented and analyzed against the existing theory from the literature.

**4. Data Analysis and Discussion of Findings**

The purpose of this study is to examine the role Kiswahili plays in enhancing intercultural interactions and cross-border trade (retail, wholesale, and transport) in Busia town between Kenya and Uganda. For this purpose, the chapter details quantitative data findings from the questionnaire, followed by qualitative data from observations, linguistic landscaping, and sound recordings. The data are presented and analyzed in tables, charts, photographs, and extracts to answer the research questions.

**A. Findings from the Questionnaire**

The following section presents the data obtained from the questionnaire administered to the respondents of the study. The questions were a blend of multiple-choice, ranked questions and the Likert scale. More importantly, the questions were designed to establish the attitudes and perceptions of vendors and customers toward language (Kiswahili) and some communication strategies they employed to overcome linguistic and cultural barriers using Gallois & Giles (2015) Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) and the Intercultural Adaption Model propounded by Cai & Rodriguez (1997).

Thus, first, the section details the demographic features of the sample. Next, it illustrates the descriptive statistics of the responses by providing a summary of the data. Finally, it provides a succinct description of the findings obtained from the questionnaire to answer the research questions.

*a) Demographic Characteristics of the Sample*

The ensuing sub-sections present the demographic information of the sample to describe the research questions in this study. Each section summarizes the demographic data for the fifty (50) respondents. Their frequencies are presented by demographic category in the following order: gender, age, languages spoken, nationality, education level, and occupation within Busia town.

*i. Gender*

Fifty (50) respondents described themselves as either male or female. However, it is noteworthy that individuals who neither categorized themselves as 'male' nor 'female' were allowed to classify themselves under the 'others' option.

**Table 1** shows gender frequencies in the sample for the transport personnel (cart pushers, "bodaboda" riders, and truck drivers), wholesalers, retailers, and customs officers. It indicates their description as either male, female, or 'other.'

**Table 1: Gender Frequencies**

Gender		Frequency	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Male	38	76.0	76.0
	Female	12	24.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	
Grand Total		50	100	

In table 1, the majority of the respondents (76%) were male compared to (24%) who were female. This was a consequence of opening up the age categories and the willingness to participate in the study without restricting the gender categories.

ii. *Age*

Respondents were asked to categorize themselves in their respective age brackets—the question aimed at establishing their differences in language attitudes and language (s) variations. The results are shown in the table below.

**Table 2: Age Frequencies**

Age Bracket		Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	18-25	9	18.0	18.0
	25-33	18	36.0	54.0
	34-41	19	38.0	92.0
	42 and over	4	8.0	100.0
	Total	50.0	100.0	
Missing System		0		
Total		50.0		

As shown in table 2, most of the respondents (38%) belong to the age bracket 34-41. Another (36%) belongs in the age bracket 25-33, while (18%) are in the age bracket 18-25, and the last (8%) are in the age bracket 42 and over.

iii. *Languages Spoken*

This question aimed at establishing the number of languages respondents speak, reflecting the polyglosic situation of Busia town.

Table 3 shows the language spoken frequencies of the participants.

**Table 3: Languages Spoken Frequencies**

Languages that Respondents Speak.		Frequency	Valid Percentage
Valid	Kiswahili	50	100
	Kiganda	20	40
	English	30	60
	Other	23	46

From the table above, all of the respondents (100%) reported that they speak Kiswahili, (40%) reported that they speak Kiganda, the greatest number of them speak English (60%), while (46%) speak other languages.

iv. *Individual Languages Respondents Speak*

Understanding individual languages that respondents speak helps to determine the polyglosic nature of Busia town. Thus, apart from Kiswahili, English, and Kiganda that they speak, the table below indicates the individual languages the respondents speak.

**Table 4: Individual Language Representation Frequencies**

Individual Language Spoken		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Kiswahili	50	100
	Kiganda	20	40
	English	30	60
	OTHERS		
	Lusoga	1	4.3
	Kinyarwanda	1	4.3
	Kidama	1	4.3
	Japadhola	1	4.3

	Samia	4	17.4
	Kigisu	3	13.0
	Kikhayo	2	8.7
	Iteso	2	8.7
	Luhya	3	13.0
	Kijaluo	1	4.3
	Kikisii	1	4.3
	Kikuyu	2	8.7
	Kikongo	1	4.3

Among other languages spoken within Busia town, the majority of the respondents speak Samia (17.4%), and (13.0%) speak Luhya and Kigisu, respectively. Followed by Kikhayo, Iteso and Kikuyu with a tie of (8.7%), while Lusoga, Kinyarwanda, Kidama, Japadhola, Kijaluo, Kikisii and Kikongo are the least spoken (4.3%).

v. *Nationality*

To establish whether Busia town had people from different nationalities engaging in cross-border trade, the respondents were asked to indicate their countries of origin.

**Table 5: Nationality Frequencies**

Nationality		Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percentage
<b>Valid</b>	Kenya	31	62.0	62.0
	Uganda	17	34.0	96.0
	Others	2	4.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	
<b>Missing System</b>		0		
<b>Grand Total</b>		50	100	100

As **table 5** indicates, the majority of the respondents (62%) were Kenyan nationalists, followed by Ugandan nationalists (34%). The remaining (4%) represents other nationalists (Rwandan and Congolese).

vi. *Education Level*

The participants were asked to indicate their level of education to establish how it relates to the languages they speak. As such, **table 6** below shows the frequencies for the highest level of education achieved.

**Table 6: Frequencies for Highest Level of Education**

Level of Education		Frequency	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Less than secondary school	16	32.0	32.0
	Secondary school	25	50.0	82.0
	Technical/Vocational training	0	0.0	82.0
	College	5	10.0	92.0
	Tertiary (Bachelors/post-graduate)	4	8.0	100.0
Total		50	100.0	

The largest proportion of the respondents (50%) reported having attained the secondary school level of education, while (32%) had not attained this level. While (10%) reported having college merit, the rest (8%) were in the tertiary level category.

vii. *Occupation*

Participants were asked to indicate their professions in order to understand how their occupation is related to language use and attitude in Busia town. For this reason, **table 7** illustrates the frequencies of the occupation held by respondents.

**Table 7: Occupation Frequencies**

Occupation		Frequency	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Wholesale trader	8	16.0	16.0
	Retail trader	8	16.0	32.0
	Transport personnel	30	60.0	92.0
	Customs officer	4	8.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	

The occupation data indicates that the majority of the respondents (60%) were from the Transport sector. The Retail and Wholesale industries were represented by (16%) each, whereas the Custom Officers were represented by (8%).

In sum, all the demographic frequencies, including nationality, languages spoken, education level, gender, age, and occupation, were expected due to the study being conducted in Busia (Kenya) and Busia (Uganda). Since the study involves trade, there are high chances of increased contact of people from various countries, which determines these frequencies and how they influence intercultural interactions and cross-border trade. Besides, of the 50 respondents, all of them accepted to speak Kiswahili in Busia town, reflecting the status it holds.

b) *Descriptive Statistics*

The next section offers a summary of the data collected from the respondents. The data are described quantitatively by providing a summary of the responses given by the respondents to answer the research questions.

c) *Kiswahili Status within Busia town (Kenya and Uganda)*

This section focuses on the use of Kiswahili both in formal and informal contexts within Busia town. The data presented in this section is delimited to communication variables such as initial encounters, discussion, bargaining, taking instructions, and advertisements.

i. *The use of Kiswahili during Initial Encounters*

Respondents were to give the frequency of the language they preferred, especially when in an initial encounter with others. Table 8 below illustrates the frequencies of initial encounters.

**Table 8: Frequencies in Initial Encounters**

Initial Encounter		Frequency	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Kiswahili	47	94.0	94.0
	Kiganda	0	0.0	94.0
	English	3	6.0	100.0
	Other	0	0.0	100.0
<b>Total</b>		50	100.0	

According to **table 8** above, the majority (94%) of the respondents reported that they preferred speaking Kiswahili most during an initial encounter. A minority of (6%) reported speaking English.

ii. *The use of Kiswahili during Discussion*

Participants were asked to indicate the language they used when discussing. **Table 9** shows the outcomes of their responses.

**Table 9: Discussion Frequencies**

Discussion		Frequency	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Kiswahili	45	90.0	90.0
	Kiganda	1	2.0	92.0
	English	4	8.0	100.0
	Other	0	0.0	100.0
<b>Total</b>		50	100.0	

According to the data in the table above, while discussing, the majority (90%) of the respondents reported that they speak Kiswahili. English is used in discussion (8%) of the respondents, whereas Kiganda is the least used by (2%) of the respondents.

iii. *The Use of Kiswahili during Bargaining*

**Table 10: Bargaining Frequencies**

Bargaining		Frequency	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Kiswahili	46	92.0	92.0
	Kiganda	1	2.0	94.0
	English	3	6.0	100.0
	Other	0	0.0	100.0
<b>Total</b>		50	100.0	

**Table 10** above indicates that during the bargaining time, the majority (92%) of the respondents reported that they speak Kiswahili. English is used by (6%), while Kiganda is the least used by (2%) of the respondents.

iv. *The Use of Kiswahili while Taking Instructions*

Understanding how Kiswahili is used in formal contexts, respondents were asked to choose the language they mostly use when taking instructions.

**Table 11: Frequencies while Taking Instructions**

Instructions		Frequency	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Kiswahili	45	90.0	90.0
	Kiganda	2	4.0	94.0
	English	3	6.0	100.0
	Other	0	0.0	100.0
Total		50	100.0	

As illustrated in **table 11** above, the majority (90%) reported that the language used in instruction is majorly Kiswahili, compared to the minority (6%) who speak English. The remaining (4%) reported speaking Kiganda.

v. *The Use of Kiswahili in Advertisements*

Advertisements in Busia are majorly done in Kiswahili (92%) of the respondents reported this. English is used at a rate of (6%) to do advertisements, while Kiganda is the least used to advertise (2%).

**Table 12: Advertisement Frequencies**

Advertisement		Frequency	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Kiswahili	46	92.0	92.0
	Kiganda	1	2.0	94.0
	English	3	6.0	100.0
	Other	0	0.0	100.0
Total		50	100.0	

Overall, the results in this section show that most of the respondents, or inhabitants of Busia town, use Kiswahili as their main communication language, both informally and formally. The informal settings herein include marketplaces for initial encounters, discussions, and bargaining. The formal settings are instructional grounds like the customs offices. Additionally, the results indicate that Kiswahili is commonly used for official communication, such as advertisements, more than English, which is also one of Kenya's and Uganda's official languages.

The next section provides a vivid description of the obstacles that Kiswahili faces in enhancing intercultural interactions and cross-border trade.

d) *Obstacles to the Use of Kiswahili*

This section focuses on the responses given by the study participants to establish some of the possible obstacles that may impede the use of Kiswahili within Busia town to enhance effective intercultural interactions and cross-border trade.

i. *Obstacles to Kiswahili Use*

One of the research questions posed in **section 1.4** was to establish the obstacles that Kiswahili faces in enhancing intercultural interactions and cross-border trade in Busia town. Admittedly, language faces obstacles both in use and development, which can emanate from social challenges and other vices in society.

**Table 13: Frequencies of the Obstacles to the use of Kiswahili**

Obstacles to Kiswahili		Frequency	Valid Percentage
Valid	Dialectical differences	46	92
	Negative ethnic attitude	17	34
	Colonial influence and mentality	36	72
	Lack of uniformity of Kiswahili status	27	54
	Lack of good political will	9	18
	Religion	3	6

In view of this, **table 13** above indicates that most of the residents (92%) cited dialectical differences as the major obstacle to Kiswahili. Another (72%) reported that the colonial influence and mentality is a challenge to Kiswahili. The lack of a uniform status of Kiswahili inhibits Kiswahili at a rate of (54%), not forgetting the negative ethnic attitude that hinders it, as cited by (34%) of the respondents. Furthermore, the lack of good political will limits the development of Kiswahili, as reported by (18%) of the respondents. Finally, religion is cited to be the least inhibitor to Kiswahili (6%).

*ii. Other Cited Obstacles to Kiswahili*

Participants were asked to mention some other obstacles they thought affected the use of Kiswahili in Busia town. The results are illustrated in the table below.

**Table 14: Frequencies of Other Cited Obstacles to Kiswahili**

Other obstacles to Kiswahili		Frequency	Valid Percentage
Valid	Lack of customer Exposure	1	2
	Age	1	2
	Level of Education	3	6

The respondents cited other obstacles to Kiswahili in Busia. The level of education is reported to be the leading 'other factor' that limits Kiswahili development in Busia, as reported by (6%) of the respondents. More so, lack of exposure and the age of individuals were reported at (2%) each.

In general, the above findings indicate that despite Kiswahili being used for communication purposes in Busia town, it faces several challenges both in formal and informal situations.

*e) Communication Strategies Used to Overcome Linguistic and Cultural Barriers*

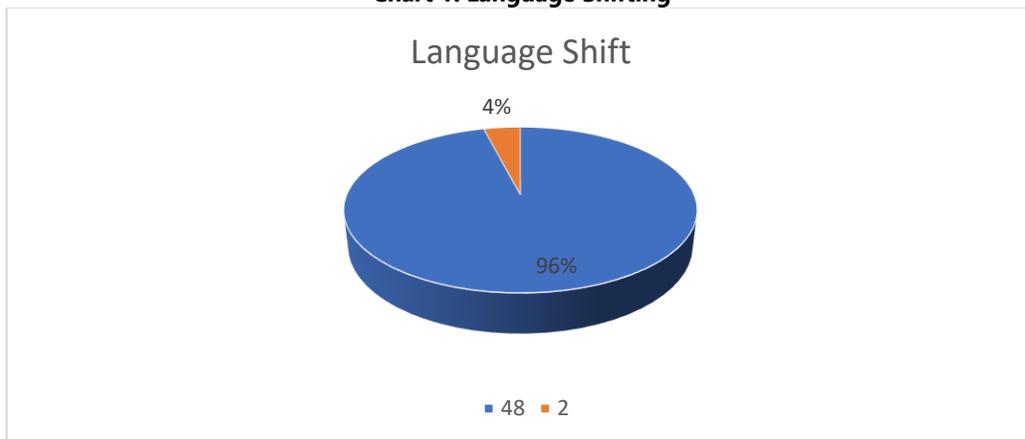
This section delimits itself by evaluating some of the communication strategies that the respondents use to overcome linguistic barriers when in an encounter. The questionnaire answered part of this question. However, a larger part of the question was answered by data from observations and sound recordings. It is imperative to note that the communication strategies are analyzed using Gallois & Gile's (2015) CAT five sociolinguistic tenets- *approximation, interpretability, discourse management, interpersonal control, and emotional expression*. In addition, the communication strategies are also analyzed based on the IAM model Cai & Rodriguez (1997) tenets – *perceptions and experience*.

The following key is crucial for analyzing the data. When codes are switched= approximation, use of relational words (e.g. customer, bro, aunty) = interpersonal control, use of emotional terms (e.g. pleading-please) =emotional expression, asking/answering questions

*i. Language Shifting*

Language shifting necessitates communication in case the speaker and the receiver of the message are unable to understand one another. **Chart 1** below shows that (96%) of the respondents agreed that they shifted languages during conversations, while (4%) disagreed with the same.

**Chart 1: Language Shifting**



i. *Language Shifted to*

The languages people shift to have a directional influence on how they interact. For this reason, the table below shows the frequencies of the languages participants shifted to.

**Table 15: Language Shifting Frequencies**

Language Shifted to		Frequency	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Kiswahili	4	8	8
	Kiganda	15	30	38
	English	24	48	86
	Other	7	14	100
Total		50	100	

In **table 15** above, the majority of the respondents (48%) shift to English during communication, followed by (30%) who shift to Kiganda, (14%) shift to other languages, while (8%) shift to Kiswahili.

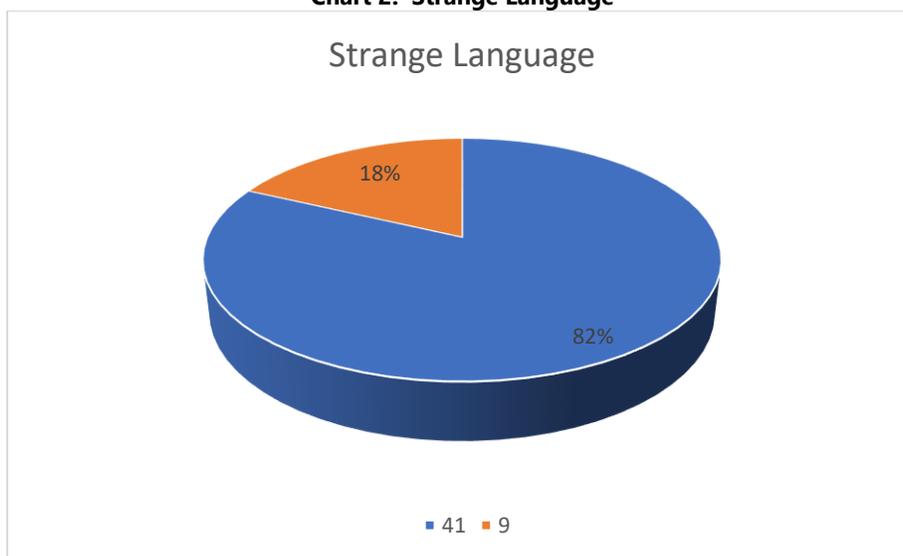
Conclusively, as shown in **chart 1** and **table 15 above**, the majority of the respondents agreed to shift their languages to others. English is the most preferred language to switch to.

ii. *Experience*

This section focuses on how an individual’s experience can be helpful to adapt interculturally when in an encounter with people who speak strange languages.

iii. *Strange Language*

**Chart 2: Strange Language**



Human interaction might, at times, result in meeting strangers who come along with strange languages. In this research, (82%) of the respondents agreed they have encountered languages they are not conversant with, (and 18%) have never encountered a language they are not aware of.

iv. *Alternative to Strange Language*

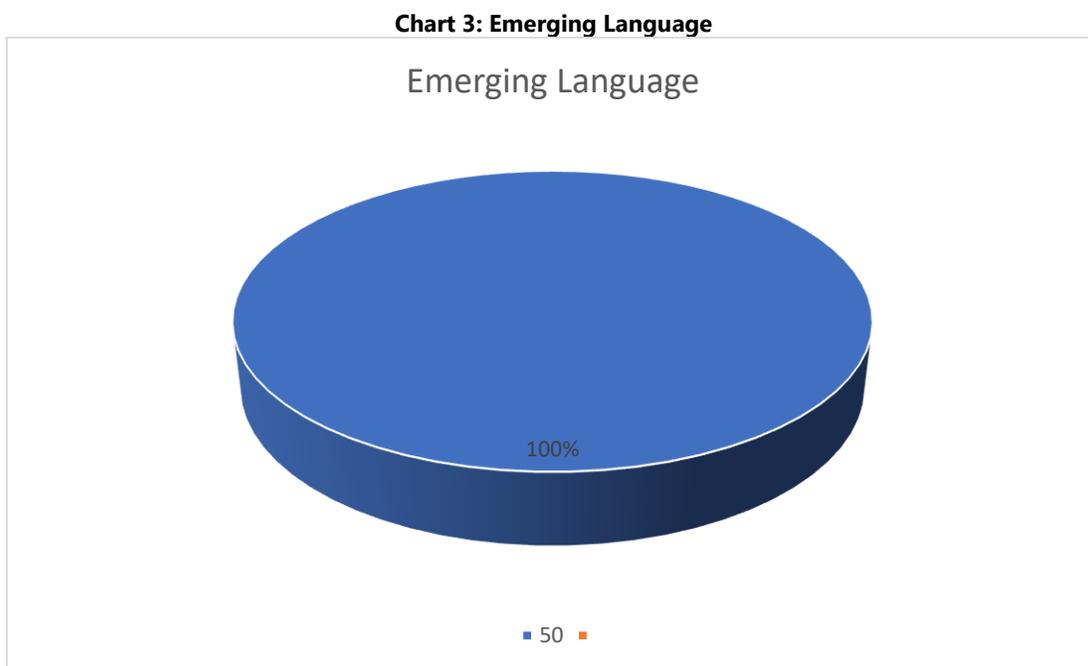
**Table 16: Alternative to Strange Language Frequencies**

Alternative		Frequency	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Used an interpreter	41	82	82
	Used sign language	7	14	96
	Ignored the customer	2	4	100
Total		50	100	

The majority of the respondents use interpreters when they encounter strange languages (82%), another (14%) use sign language as an alternative for communication, while (4%) ignore the customer due to the language barrier.

*f) Emerging Language within Busia Town*

To determine whether there was an emerging language used within Busia town (in Kenya and Uganda) due to increased contacts, **chart 3 below** indicates that all the respondents (100%) agreed that there is no emerging language in Busia town.



*g) Solutions to Linguistic and Cultural Barriers*

This section focuses on possible solutions to linguistic and cultural barriers to affect intercultural interactions in Busia town.

**Table 17: Frequencies of the Solutions to Linguistic and Cultural Barriers**

Solutions to Language and Cultural Barriers		Frequency	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
<b>Valid</b>	Learn and use Kiswahili to ensure mutual understanding.	46	92	92
	Learn and use other languages that relate to them.	4	8	100
<b>Total</b>		50	100	

According to the table above, most of the respondents (92%) agreed that people in Busia should learn and use Kiswahili to ensure mutual understanding. Another (8%) suggested that people in Busia should learn and use other languages that relate to them as a solution to language and cultural barriers.

In short, the results in this section indicate that there is a positive attitude towards Kiswahili. However, the interest seems to increase if the language is used together with other languages. Conclusively, there is no outright preference for Kiswahili more than other languages and vice versa.

*h) Language Use, Attitudes, and Communication in Intercultural Settings*

The following sub-sections illustrate the frequencies of agreement and disagreement either as strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, or strongly agree.

*i. Using Kiswahili with Customers*

**Table 18: Frequencies of using Kiswahili with Customers**

Using Kiswahili with Customers		Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	0	0.0	0.0
	Disagree	0	0.0	0.0
	Neutral	1	2.0	2.0
	Agree	19	38.0	40.0
	Strongly Agree	30	60.0	100.0
<b>Total</b>		50	100	

The respondents were asked about their personal perceptions of different encounters in relation to language encounters/situations in Busia. The majority of the respondents (60%) strongly agree that they prefer using Kiswahili to speak to customers. Another (38%) agreed on the same, while (2%) were neutral.

ii. *Existence of many Languages Limiting Trade Activities*

**Table 19: Frequencies of the Existence of many Languages limiting Trade**

Many Languages Inhibiting Trade activities		Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	0	0.0	0.0
	Disagree	12	24.0	24.0
	Neutral	32	64.0	88.0
	Agree	6	12.0	100.0
	Strongly Agree	0	0.0	100.0
<b>Total</b>		50	100.0	

The majority of the respondents (64%) remained neutral that the existence of many languages limits trade in Busia. Another (24%) disagreed with the same, while (12%) agreed with the statement.

iii. *Existence of many Languages Boosting Trade*

**Table 20: Frequencies of the Existence of many Languages boosting Trade**

Many Languages boost Trade activities		Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	0	0.0	0.0
	Disagree	1	2.0	2.0
	Neutral	5	10.0	12.0
	Agree	30	60.0	72.0
	Strongly Agree	14	28.0	100.0
<b>Total</b>		50	100.0	

Many languages boost trading activities, as agreed by (60%) of the respondents; this is boosted by (28%) who strongly agree on the same. However, (10%) of Busia people are neutral on whether many languages boost trade, while (2%) disagree.

iv. *Shifting Languages*

The majority of the respondents agreed that they shift languages for communication (52%), accompanied by (46%) of the respondents who strongly agreed on the same; the other (2%) were neutral, as illustrated in **table 21** below;

**Table 21: Frequencies of Shifting Languages**

Shifting Languages		Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	0	0.0	0.0
	Disagree	0	0.0	0.0
	Neutral	1	2.0	2.0
	Agree	26	52.0	54.0
	Strongly Agree	23	46.0	100.0
<b>Total</b>		50	100.0	

v. *Strange Languages*

**Table 22: Frequencies of Strange Languages**

Strange Languages		Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	0	0.0	0.0
	Disagree	13	26.0	26.0
	Neutral	13	26.0	52.0
	Agree	23	46.0	98.0
	Strongly Agree	1	2.0	100.0
<b>Total</b>		50	100.0	

In accordance with **table 22** above, the majority of the respondents agreed that they had encountered a language they do not understand (46%) equally, (2%) strongly agreed, those who were neutral, and those that disagreed (26%) respectively.

vi. *Learning of Kiswahili*

**Table 23: Frequencies of Learning Kiswahili**

Learning of Kiswahili		Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	0	0.0	0.0
	Disagree	1	2.0	2.0
	Neutral	4	8.0	10.0
	Agree	14	28.0	38.0
	Strongly Agree	31	62.0	100.0
<b>Total</b>		50	100.0	

In line with the table above, the majority of the respondents have a strong agreement with Learning Kiswahili to communicate effectively (62%), another (28%) agreed on the same, (8%) were neutral, while (2%) had a contrary opinion.

vii. Learning Other Languages

**Table 24: Frequencies of Learning Other Languages**

Learning other languages		Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
<b>Valid</b>	Strongly disagree	0	0.0	0.0
	Disagree	1	2.0	2.0
	Neutral	6	12.0	14.0
	Agree	22	44.0	58.0
	Strongly Agree	21	42.0	100.0
<b>Total</b>		50	100.0	

Learning other languages makes communication easy, (44%) of the respondents agree with this, more so, (42%) of the respondents had a strong agreement with learning other languages, (12%) were neutral while (2%) disagreed.

To summarize, there is a positive attitude towards the use of Kiswahili, as the majority of the respondents have indicated. Significantly, the respondents preferred the need to learn Kiswahili to communicate with those who might not understand other languages.

i) Language Policy and Implementation for Clearing and Forwarding

This section focuses on determining whether there are existing language policies that guide communication at the Busia border.

i. Language for Clearing and Forwarding

**Table 25: Frequencies for Language for Clearing and Forwarding**

Clearing and forwarding		Frequency	Valid Percentage
<b>Valid</b>	Kiswahili	3	75.0
	Kiganda	1	25.0
	English	4	100.0
	Other	0	0.0

English is much preferred in official settings, evident by how it is used (100%) during clearing and forwarding. Kiswahili comes second (75%), while Kiganda is the least used (25%).

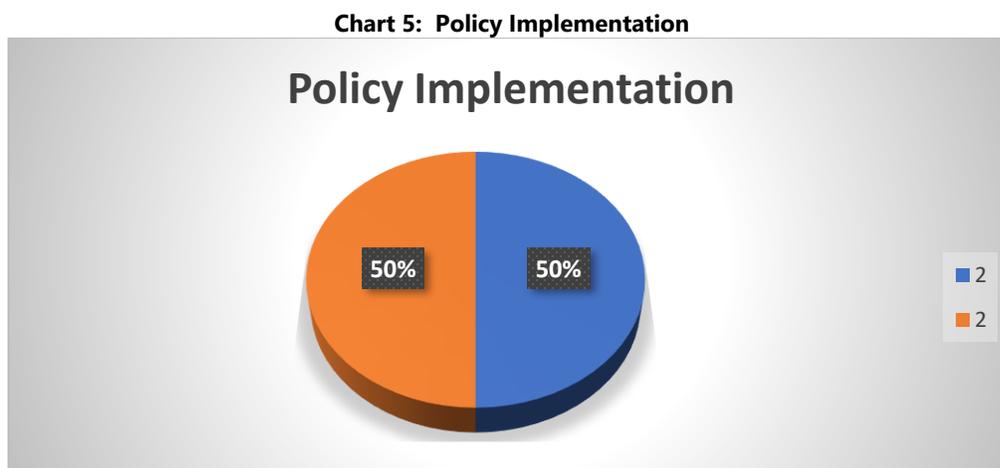
ii. Language Policy

**Chart 4: Language Policy**



100% of the respondents agreed that there is no language policy at Busia.

iii. Language Policy Implementation



At the level of policy language policy implementation, (50%) of the respondents agreed, while the other (50%) disagreed that language policies are implemented at Busia.

The preceding section has presented quantitative research findings addressing part of the three research questions of the study. Significant outcomes were identified and explored through statistical analysis (SPSS). In the next section, qualitative data obtained from observations (including Linguistic landscaping) and sound recordings will be presented and analyzed thematically.

**B. Findings from Observations**

The section presents the data obtained by the researcher through participant and non-participant observations. It presents how language is used in public settings (on shops, customs, and road signs) in Busia town (both from the Kenyan & Ugandan sides of the border). Likewise, it presents some observable features of social interactions that traders and customers showcase in a market interaction situation. In short, the findings from the observations complement the questionnaire results to answer the research questions.

*a) Language Use in Public Spaces at Busia town*

To determine the status Kiswahili holds in Busia town, it was significant to observe how language is used in public spaces by reading written posts, signposts, and so on. In view of this, subsequent figures demonstrate how languages are used in formal and informal ways both from the Kenyan side of the border and the Ugandan side of the border.

*i. Language Use on the Kenyan Side of the Border*

The figures below show how language is used in Kenyan public spaces. The signpost in **figure 1** below is displayed on the door of a retail shop (beauty) in Swahili only. The information given is about the measures against the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic and the new way of life. Seemingly, the signpost is used to create awareness to the public to take health protocols seriously against the pandemic.



**Figure 1: Signpost of an NGO on a Retail Shop in Swahili**

The signpost reads **BILA BARAKOA HAKUNA KUNINGIA** in Swahili, which translates into 'No Mask, No entry' and **NDIO HALI MPYA** in Swahili to mean 'it's the new norm' in English.

In yet another signpost used in Kenya, **figure 2** below is written in both Swahili and English. It displays advertisement information to the public about services related to phone repairs and accessories. For instance, on the signpost, **FUNDI WA SIMU** in Swahili is translated as 'phone technician.' Phone accessories and repaired advertisements are displayed in English.



**Figure 2: Signpost of a Retail shop in Kiswahili and English**

The use of both Kiswahili and English in the above signposts is due to the fact that both languages are used for official purposes (Official Law Reports of the Republic of Kenya, 2010:22). Additionally, their use in official matters is because the languages are taught and examined in schools. Kiswahili, for instance, is taught and examined as a compulsory subject at both primary and secondary levels; and at tertiary for specific courses. Contrarily, English is regarded as a medium of instruction in Kenya's education system.

*ii. Language Use on the Ugandan Side of the Border*

The use of language on Uganda's side of the border is illustrated in the figure below.



**Figure 3: Signpost of a Retail Shop in English and Swahili**

According to **figure 3** above, the information is displayed on the post as observed on the Ugandan side of the border; it reads **BARIDI MAJI NA KADHALIKA** in Swahili, which is translated as 'Coldwater and etcetera' in English. Besides, English is also used on the signpost, and it reads "SHOP". The use of both English and Kiswahili in the above figure in Uganda implies that both languages are used for both official and unofficial situations; however, Swahili is minimally used compared to English.

The use of language on the Ugandan side is quite different from the Kenyan side. As mentioned earlier, both English and Kiswahili are official languages in Kenya. Whereas in Uganda, English is regarded as an official language and Luganda a national language. However, Kiswahili usage in Uganda remains low, and even when used, its grammar is usually incorrect.

As seen in **figure 3**, **BARIDI MAJI** is grammatically incorrect. Instead, it should be '**MAJI BARIDI**.' These variations in Swahili use, especially in Uganda, arise from the fact that the majority of the people learn it along the streets. It is noteworthy that although Swahili is taught in some schools in Uganda, it is rarely examined.

*iii. Language Use at Customs/Road Signs*

Language use in formal settings like customs and road signs is crucial when giving directions. The signpost below shows that an individual bids Kenya farewell and is now entering Uganda. As such, the figure below shows the languages used at Busia One-Stop Border Post (OSBP).



**Figure 4: Signpost of Customs/Roadsign in Kiswahili and English**

The information seen in **figure 4** above is displayed at the normans land at the border between Kenya and Uganda. It reads **KWAHERI KENYA** (Swahili) to mean 'goodbye Kenya' in English and 'Welcome to Uganda' in English. The above figure shows that the writings on the signpost using different languages for specific countries (Kenya and Uganda) were intentional or unintentional.

It seems plausible that Swahili has a greater status in Kenya compared to Uganda. As seen above, "Kwaheri Kenya" and 'Welcome to Uganda' suggest that Swahili has a predominant role in Kenya compared to Uganda. Conversely, Uganda seems to use more English; this can be because of its use in their education system.

Generally speaking, this section has presented the findings showing how language is used in public spaces on both Kenyan and Ugandan sides of the border. In the forthcoming section, sound recordings obtained during trader-customer interactions are presented.

**C. Findings from Sound Recordings**

The section presents recordings (transcription notes) of trader-customer interactions in a bargaining context in Busia town. The immediate context in terms of place, space, and commodities traders sell are outlined. The results obtained from the recordings are crucial for answering part of question three (see section 1.4) of the study. The presentation of the findings is in extracts and tables. Thereafter, they are analyzed using Gallois & Gile (2015), the CAT, and Cai & Rodriquez (1997) Intercultural Adaptation Model (IAM).

*a) Language in Trade and Intercultural Communication*

Effective communication in intercultural settings like business is vital for enhancing satisfaction for the customers' needs and maximization of profits for the trader. The nexus between trade and communication is language. Admittedly, language use varies in relation to its contextual use.

To determine whether or not traders and customers accommodate each other in a bargaining context in Busia town, five sociolinguistics aspects (including approximation, interpretability, interpersonal control, discourse management, and emotional expression) by Giles, Gasiorek & Soliz (2015) are examined from the recordings.

b) *Trader-Customer Business Interactions*

**Extract 1**

**Context:** This conversation happened on the Kenya side of the border. It is in a retail shop where the trader sells shoes. In this conversation, both the seller and the buyer are in the negotiation process. As a result, their communication accommodation strategies are unleashed.

**Buyer:** Niaje! Hii ni ngapi? (*Hi! How much is this?*)

**Seller:** Hii ni elfu mbili mia saba. (*This is two thousand, seven hundred.*)

**Buyer:** Elfu mbili mia saba? (*Two thousand, seven hundred?*)

**Seller:** Eeh! (*Yes!*)

**Buyer:** Hakuna kubargain? (*There is no bargaining?*)

**Seller:** Mmmh! Fanya mbili mia tano. Hii ni ngozi yenyewe, hata si we unaona.

(*Mmmh! Make it two thousand five hundred. This is real leather; you can see it.*)

**Buyer:** Mmmh! Sawa wacha nii, unajua ukitembea na upate kitu mzuri lakini itabidi uende ndo ukuje na hiyo pesa. (*Mmm! It is ok. Let me... you know when You bump into something good; you have to go and get the money.*)

**Seller:** We ulikua na ngapi? (*How much did you have?*)

**Buyer:** Nilikua nataka tu kujua bei ndo nirudi. (*I just wanted to know how much it costs so that I can come back.*)

**Seller:** Sawasawa. (*it is ok.*)

**Buyer:** Lakini tutaongea hii bei irudi **down** kidogo. (*But we will have to talk so that the price goes down a little.*)

**Seller:** Aah! tutakuja tuangalie. (*Aah! You'll come, and we shall see.*)

**Buyer:** Nitakueleza. (*I'll let you know.*)

**Seller:** Sawa, **bro**. (*It is fine, bro.*)

**Extract 2:**

**Context:** This conversation took place on the Kenyan side of the border. The vendor engaged in fruit selling, especially pineapples. Interestingly, most fruits sold at Busia come from Uganda, and Kenyans, in particular, prefer them because of their affordable pricing. The extract below is an interaction between a seller and a buyer, where both reveal their communication strategies.

**Seller:** Karibia **Kastama**. (*welcome customer.*)

**Customer:** Pineapple? (*Pineapple?*)

**Seller:** Iko ya mia, iko ya mia hamsini. (*There's for fifty and for one hundred shillings.*)

**Buyer:** Aai! Tumeseme matunda imepotea. (*Aaa! Does it mean there are no fruits?*)

**Seller:** Matunda akuna. (*There are no fruits.*)

**Buyer:** Enhe! Nilikua nmezoea kuja hapa. Sasa hii waling'oa wenye walikuanga hapa walienda wapi? (*Eeh! I used to come here. So they removed stands that were here, sellers who were here, where did they go to?*)

**Seller:** Na si ndio sisi ndo tulisonga hapa. (*it's us who moved here.*)

**Buyer:** eeh! (*Eee!*)

**Seller:** Wengine wako **posta**, wengine uko chini. (*Others are at Posta, and others are down there.*)

**Buyer:** Inaogopesha mtu. Maembe ni mia ivoivo tu? (*It turns away someone. Are mangoes the same price?*)

**Seller:** Maembe ni **forty** moja, tatu mia. (*mangoes are forty shillings each, three at a hundred shillings.*)

**Buyer:** Forty moja? (*a mango at forty shillings?*)

**Seller:** Tatu mia unachukua. (*You can pick three with 1,00 shillings.*)

**Buyer:** Wacha niangalie mwenyewe alikuwa amenituma. (*Let me reach out to the one who sent me.*)

**Seller:** Pale nyuma mbili hamsini, nne mia. (*Those at the back cost 50 shillings for 2 and 100 shillings for 4.*)

**Extract 3:**

**Context:** With the increased demand for phone accessories like screen protectors, charging cables, and phone covers, has made a business boom in Busia town. The extract below took place at a phone accessory shop on the Ugandan side of the border.

**Buyer:** Hii unauzaje hii? Hii pesa ngapi hii? (*How much do you sell this?*)

**Seller:** **Two fifty**.

**Buyer:** *Two fifty?*

**Seller:** mmh! (mmh)

**Buyer:** iyo ndo mwisho kabisa? (*is that the final price?*)

**Seller:** eeh iyo tu. (*Yes, that it is*).

**Buyer:** Hakuna **kubargain**? (*No bargaining?*)

**Seller:** Hakuna **kubargain**. (*No bargaining*).

**Buyer:** Punguza tafadhali. (*reduce, please*).

**Seller:** Bei niyo tu. (*that's the price*).

**Buyer:** Sawa, acha acha nita... tembeetembeee kidogo. (*It is ok, let me, let me... walk around*).

In general, the above extracts reveal some of the communication strategies buyers and sellers use to accommodate each other while in a bargaining context. In the next subsection, a brief presentation of these strategies is described in relation to the CAT.

*i. Intercultural Approximation Strategies in Relation to Business*

As mentioned in section 2.1.1.1, approximation strategy pertains to individuals shifting their language to suit that of their interlocutors. This adjustment, as Giles Coupland & Coupland (1991) observe, can be in terms of lexical, phonetic, morphological features, and so on. This reality happens especially in bilingual and multilingual situations. It may also involve code-switching and code-mixing.

In light of **extract 3** above, the findings show that traders and customers accommodate each other. For example, the buyer shifts his language from Swahili to English to suit the seller's language. When the buyer asks about a phone cover in Swahili, "**Hii unauzaje?**", "**Hii ni pesa ngapi?**" The seller answers in English 'Two fifty'. Correspondingly, the buyer shifts to English lexis immediately by insisting on 'two fifty?'. In other words, this approximation strategy is known as *code-switching*. The switching from both English to Kiswahili and vice versa is because both languages are used in Kenya and Uganda at varying levels.

*ii. Intercultural Interpretability Strategies in relation to Business*

In intercultural settings, the ability to interpret one's message is of great importance. For this reason, in trader-customer interactions like in the bargaining context, cultural and linguistic aspects are pertinent to examine in order to attune to the other for mutuality. It is worthwhile that during the interaction process, interpretability, as Giles et al. (1991) contends, can change as interlocutors continuously assess each other's understanding. Understanding cultural differences, both verbal and non-verbal, helps to create possible negotiations. Conversely, if not considered, it hinders bargaining.

The findings from **extract 3** above reveal that the seller's non-accommodative stance may be based on preconceived stereotypes and prejudices regarding the buyer's nationality. When the trader asks "**hakuna kubargain?**" translated as 'there is no bargaining?' in English, the seller insists "**hakuna kubargain.**" In this context (in Uganda), it seems it is a conversation between a Ugandan seller and a Kenyan buyer. Quite often, Kenyans are negatively perceived by Ugandans to be stubborn and who like bargaining so much, unlike Ugandans who buy items with more or less bargaining.

*iii. Intercultural Interpersonal Control strategies in Relations to Business*

As mentioned earlier, this strategy involves interlocutors attuning to each other's hierarchical positions. In trader-customer interactions like in Busia town, this reality is evident through the use of relational terms. These terms are crucial for both traders and customers to connect and accommodate each other.

In **extracts 1 and 2 above**, *relational terms* are used by traders and customers to allow inclusivity. In **extract 1**, for instance, the use of the term "**bro**" by a seller referring to a buyer reveal that the buyer is ready to allow the buyer to feel comfortable bargaining. Similarly, in **extract 2**, the seller invites the buyer by saying '**karibu Kastama.**' Here, the use of the term "**kastama**" is a relational term that allows the buyer to feel welcomed, and thus, it breaks the power distance barrier between them, which may be in terms of age, gender, or occupation. The use of relational terms in this context is for purposes of accommodation.

*iv. Intercultural Discourse Management Strategies in relation to Business*

One of the salient strategies for accommodation in communication is a discourse management strategy. Since trade involves bargaining, this strategy allows both vendors and buyers to accommodate each other by negotiating the prices. That is why all the three **extracts above** (1,2 &3) show that both sellers and buyers engage in a negotiation process. This happens in *turn-taking*—the buyer bargains when the seller quotes the price (see extracts 1, 2 &3). Moreover, the conversations seem to have opening, body, and closing remarks.

From the above examples, it means that discourse management strategy is applicable to trader-customer interactions in a bargaining context.

v. *Intercultural Emotions in Relation to Business*

In intercultural encounters, especially in business, emotional needs are usually portrayed by both traders and customers. Emotions like sadness, disgust, frustration, or joy are usually shown by both buyers and sellers in a bargaining context. The table below shows observed indicators (emotions) and audio recording extracts that buyers and sellers displayed in a bargaining context in Busia town. As summarized below:

**Table 26: Observed Emotional cues in relation to Business**

Extracts	General emotions	Observed indicators	Outcome
1. ( <a href="https://we.tl/t-CrkQShgVCT">https://we.tl/t-CrkQShgVCT</a> )	Disappointment	Frustration, turning away	Non-accommodation
	Happiness	Smile, nodding,	Accommodation
2 ( <a href="https://we.tl/t-LatWkQ0NTG">https://we.tl/t-LatWkQ0NTG</a> )	Happiness	Smiling	Accommodation
	Disappointment	Turning away	Non-accommodation
	Surprise	Mouth opening & wrinkles moving up	Non-accommodation
3 ( <a href="https://we.tl/t-522mAS3AFo">https://we.tl/t-522mAS3AFo</a> )	Disappointment	Turning away	Non-accommodation
	Surprise	Wrinkles moving up, mouth opening	Non-accommodation

**D. Discussion and Interpretation of Results**

This study examines the role Kiswahili plays in enhancing intercultural interactions and cross-border trade among traders and customers in Busia town (both in Kenya and Uganda). The aims of this study were: first, *to investigate the status Kiswahili holds in Busia town in terms of linguistic landscape, advertisement, bargaining, initiating discussions, and giving directions*. Next, *to establish the limitations Kiswahili faces in enhancing intercultural interactions and cross-border trade*. Finally, *to evaluate communicative strategies used by traders and customers to overcome linguistic and cultural barriers in enhancing intercultural interactions and cross-border trade*. The objective of this section is to discuss the findings of this study while linking them to previous research and theory.

a) *Kiswahili Status Enhancing Intercultural Interactions and Cross-border Trade in Busia town*

The first research question: *what is the status of Kiswahili as a medium of communication in enhancing intercultural interactions and cross-border trade in Busia town?*

The results strongly imply that Kiswahili has a significant status in enhancing intercultural interactions and cross-border trade in Busia town. It augments communication between individuals from differing linguistic and cultural backgrounds in trade and other social interactions. Practically, it is used both in formal and informal situations. Informally, quantitative data suggests that Kiswahili is the most preferred language by the majority of respondents (94%) during an *initial encounter*. On the other hand, a minority (6%) reported speaking English, as indicated in **table 8**.

During the *discussion*, the largest portion of respondents (90%) reported speaking Kiswahili. (8%) of the respondents reported speaking English, while (2%) speak Kiganda (table 4.9). Yet again, while *bargaining*, the majority (92%) of the respondents reported speaking Kiswahili. English is used by (6%), while Kiganda is the least used by (2%) of the respondents (Table 4.10).

The findings also indicate that Kiswahili is used in formal settings like at customs within Busia town. **Table 11** shows that the majority (90%) reported Kiswahili as the major language used in *instruction*, compared to the minority (6%) who speak English, while the remaining (4%) reported speaking Kiganda. Moreover, (92%) of the respondents reported Kiswahili is majorly used in terms of advertisement. English is used at a rate of (6%), while Kiganda is the least used to advertise (2%), as shown in **table 12**.

Furthermore, qualitative data also suggest that Kiswahili use in Busia town (Kenya and Uganda) has a pertinent role in enhancing intercultural interactions and cross-border trade. Its use in formal and informal settings bridges the communication gap between traders and customers as used in public spaces. It is profound to note that the use of Kiswahili varies both on the Kenyan side of the border and the Ugandan side of the border. This is congruent with Nahayo (2017), who found that Kiswahili is used minimally from the Ugandan side compared to the Kenyan side. Contrarily, this study reveals that although Kiswahili is used for interactions and trade, it is vital to acknowledge that its use by most traders and customers is usually linguistically incorrect.

The linguistically incorrect use of Kiswahili implies that the majority of people in Busia town, especially from the Ugandan side of the border, learn Kiswahili along the streets. As mentioned earlier, despite Kiswahili being used as an official language in Uganda, its teaching in schools remains low, and sometimes when taught, it is rarely examined.

One interpretation of these findings is that Kiswahili is used as a unifying language in conducting intercultural interactions among traders and customers and cross-border trade both formally and informally in a culturally diversified Busia town between Kenya and Uganda. This pattern of results is consistent with the previous literature (Igboanusi, 2008) that the use of a common language in diverse settings has a significant role in social transactions. The implication here is that traders and customers, by virtue of Kiswahili use as a unifying language help them to create mutual understanding when in a bargaining context. In addition, Kiswahili may have achieved this status in Busia town because of the mutual intelligibility it has with local languages, especially the 'Bantuism' aspect. It seems plausible that Kiswahili use in Busia town is for purposes of accommodation during cross-cultural communication.

To sum up, Kiswahili's status in Busia town is an indicator of fostering mutual understanding between people from pluralistic cultures and linguistic dissimilarities. Importantly, it accentuates regional integration between bordering East Africa Community countries like Kenya and Uganda. This is congruent with Ndhlovu's (2013) study that suggested cross-border languages (like Kiswahili) are crucial for regional integration since it is through them that the voices of the marginalized can be heard and not the use of ex-official languages. Such a cross-border language is used as a unifying factor between the East African Community and provides a budding ground for social capital among traders and customers across the border during the trade.

*b) Obstacles to the Use of Kiswahili Enhancing Intercultural Interactions and Cross-border Trade*

The second research question reads: *Which limitations does Kiswahili face in enhancing intercultural interactions and cross-border trade among traders and customers in Busia town?*

The findings resulting from research question two indicate that Kiswahili use in Busia town faces a number of challenges. Notably, dialectical differences, negative ethnic attitude, colonial influence and mentality, lack of uniformity of Kiswahili status, and lack of good political will and religion. The study also reveals that other obstacles that limit the use of Kiswahili, as cited by respondents, include the lack of customer exposure, age differences, and education level.

In light of the evidence in **table 13**, dialectical differences were the top barrier for the majority (92%) of the respondents, which is equivalent to (75%) cited by (Ojwang 2008). The data also reveal that colonial influence and mentality is an important challenge to Kiswahili, as cited by (72%) of the respondents. Another (54%) reported that the lack of uniform status of Kiswahili inhibits Kiswahili use, notwithstanding the negative ethnic attitude as cited by (34%) of the respondents. Contrary to (34%) as cited by the respondents, Asimiree (2017), Mukuthuria (2006) & Mbaabu (1996) cited ethnic negative attitudes as the main barrier affecting the use and development of Kiswahili, which is equivalent to (85%). Additionally, the lack of good political will limits the development of Kiswahili, as reported by (18%) of the respondents. Finally, the obtained evidence shows that religion is cited to be the least inhibitor to Kiswahili (6%), which is equivalent to (2%) cited by Amidu (1995).

Yet, the respondents cited other obstacles to Kiswahili in Busia. Education level is reported to be the leading other factor that limit Kiswahili development in Busia, as reported by (6%) of the respondents. Interestingly, age and the lack of exposure were reported at (2%) each to impede the use and development of Kiswahili. Contrary to age being cited (2%) by respondents to be a hindrance to the use and development of Kiswahili, research by Lugwiri Okombo (2020) revealed that age was an essential factor determining the variation of Kiswahili use.

Two results from this study merit comment. First, dialectical differences are cited as the major obstacle to Kiswahili. The study suggests that this limitation may be due to the lack of teaching and examining standardized Kiswahili. Also, because of the influence of contact between Kiswahili, colonial languages like English and French and other local languages. In other words, since language is embedded in culture and culture is the environment, the need to communicate with others pre-conditions human beings to coin words to use arising from their surrounding environment.

Second, colonial influence and mentality are ranked as the second main obstacle to the use of Kiswahili. Such an obstacle as the study reveals suggests that this influence arises from the influence of a 'metaphysical empire' that views African indigenous languages (like Kiswahili) to be less important at the expense of using colonial languages like English. Both Kenya and Uganda are countries born out of British colonial rule, in which English is regarded as the language of the elites. These results strongly imply that despite the use of Kiswahili as a medium of communication, its use is limited by obstacles, as discussed above.

*c) Communication Strategies used by traders and Customers to Overcome Linguistic and Cultural Barriers*

The third question of this research reads: *What are the communicative strategies developed by traders and customers to overcome linguistic challenges in enhancing intercultural interactions and cross-border trade?*

As evidenced by the literature review, the communication strategies identified in this study, like *approximation* (code-switching and code-mixing), are crucial for trans-border communication (Janczak, 2016:2031). This pattern of results is congruent with the previous study (Fedorova, 2012:108), which observed that mutual adjustment of linguistic features between natives and non-native speakers might have a positive impact on effective intercultural, inter-ethnic, and inter-group communication. The implication here is that traders and customers, when bargaining, shift languages to accommodate each other. This accommodation allows them to negotiate meaning seamlessly and enables traders to maximize profits and customers to satisfy their needs.

In addition, the findings of this study also suggest that traders and customers employ the *discourse management* strategy. In particular, the use of turn-taking during asking and answering questions sessions in a bargaining context is evident in extracts 1, 2, and 3. A further interpretation of this strategy is that discourse management is for accommodation purposes to effect transactional interactions.

Both quantitative and qualitative data suggest the following communication strategies used by traders and customers: code-switching and code-mixing, use of interpreters, and use of sign language. In addition, CAT's sociolinguistic strategies - interpretability, approximation, emotional expression, interpersonal control, and discourse management strategy are examined. Correspondingly, evidence suggests that experience was used for intercultural adaptation, as Rodriguez (1997) suggested.

Quantitative data show that the majority (96%) of the respondents agreed to shift languages during conversations to suit others when in intercultural settings. Distinctly, (2%) of the sample disagreed on the same as indicated in **chart 1**. Besides, when respondents were asked to cite languages they shifted to during communication, a large portion (48) shifted to English, followed by (30%) who shifted to Kiganda, (14%) shifted to other languages, and (8%) shifted to Kiswahili (**table 15**). Consistent with these findings is research done by Janczak (2016), who found code-switching and mixing as common communication strategies between vendors and customers.

To determine whether experience could be used as a communication strategy for culturally adaptativeness as espoused by (Cai & Rodriguez,1997), the majority (82%) of the respondents agreed that they encountered speakers of languages they did not recognize, while (18%) disagreed on the same as indicated in **chart 2**. One point to note is that those who agreed reveal that they used alternative languages. For instance, a large proportion (82%) of the respondents agreed to use interpreters when they encounter strange languages, another (14%) use sign languages as an alternative for communication, while (4%) ignored the customer due to the language barrier (**Table 16**)

The findings imply that experience is crucial for augmenting communication with persons from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. While the majority of the respondents agreed to use interpreters, this communication strategy may be more or less expensive for the vendors. For this reason, learning and using Kiswahili as the majority (92%) in **table 17** agreed that it was important for people to learn and use Kiswahili for communication purposes compared to (8%) who suggested that people should learn and use other languages.

As the majority (92%) suggested learning Kiswahili for mutual understanding (accommodation), as compared to (8%) who suggested learning and using other languages (non-accommodation); This is in line with CAT propounded by Gallois & Giles (2015), evidenced by (96%) of individuals who agreed that they shifted languages during conversations. This pattern of results is in agreement with the *approximation strategy* suggested by Gallois & Giles (2015). Contrary to the IAM propounded by Cai & Rodriguez (1997), human interaction might result in meeting strange people and languages, which is in relation to the aspect of the *experience* suggested by Cai & Rodriguez (1997). Evidently, (82%) of respondents agreed to have experience in strange languages.

In general, according to the data provided, CAT is favored to be more applicable to this study as compared to the IAM. As summarized in the table below:

**Table 27: Adapted from CAT by Gallois and Giles (2015)**

Strategy Determiner		Resulting Outcome		Resulting Strategy
		Yes	No	
Variable	Learning a language for mutual understanding.	Accommodation	Non-accommodation	Convergence
	Learning a language for individual understanding.	Non-accommodation	Accommodation	Divergence
	Deliberate sticking to one's language.	Non-accommodation	Accommodation	Maintenance

The table above is derived from CAT propounded by Gallois & Giles (2015).

*d) Cronbach's Test*

Cronbach's alpha has been described as 'one of the most important statistics in research involving test construction and uses' (Cortina, 1993:98) to the extent that its use in research measurements is considered routine (Schmitt, 1996:350). Alpha is commonly reported for the development of scales intended to measure attitudes and other affective constructs. Also, the literature includes reports of the development of tests of student knowledge and understanding that cite Cronbach's alpha as an indicator of instrument quality. In this research, the alpha test is used to test the standard deviation to determine the correlation of the variable.

**Table 28: Standard Deviation**

	N	Std. Deviation	Variance
Language (s) do you Speak?	L	1.664	2.769
Other languages Spoken	50	.465	.216
Valid N (listwise)	50		

The standard deviation of the value label of what languages one speaks is 1.664, while its variance is 2.769. for the value label of other languages in relation to Kiswahili, the variance is 0.216 while the standard deviation is 0.465. Indicatively, there is no relationship between Kiswahili and the other languages that one speaks.

This chapter has presented and analyzed quantitative and qualitative research findings addressing the three research questions. The main objective of the study was to examine the role Kiswahili plays in enhancing intercultural interactions and cross-border trade in Busia town. Significant results have been identified in relation to the status Kiswahili holds in Busia town. Also, the obstacles to the use of Kiswahili have been established; finally, the communication strategies that traders and customers employ to overcome linguistic and cultural barriers have been evaluated to enhance intercultural interactions and cross-border trade.

Furthermore, the chapter has also discussed the major findings of the study by linking to the previous literature and the applicable theories. Finally, the Cronbach test for instrument consistency has been presented.

Chapter five presents conclusions, verify the hypotheses of the study, and announces the applicable theory and recommendations for future research.

**5. General Conclusion**

Chapter five provides general conclusions based on the research findings from data collected to answer the research questions. First, it summarizes the research findings as well as verifies the hypothesis. Second, the chapter then outlines the theoretical contribution, challenges encountered, study limitations, and significance of the study. Finally, it suggests recommendations and pointers for future research.

*a) Summary of the Study*

The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of how Kiswahili was an appropriate communication tool for enhancing intercultural interactions and cross-border trade in Busia town. Increased contacts of people typified by plural cultures in intercultural settings like trade (cross-border) invariably call for intercultural communication competence. In such encounters, the use of an appropriate trans-border language, especially a lingua franca, is of great importance. The use of a common language is crucial for fostering mutual understanding among traders and customers and creates sites for the construction of social capital.

The multiplicity of languages in intercultural situations creates a polyglosic problem. Besides, the existence of people from heterogenous cultures, nationalities, education levels, linguistic repertoires, gender, inter alia, and age differences complicate effective communication, resulting in miscommunications and misunderstandings that compromise intercultural interactions and cross-border trade. These problems informed the study and called for the need to examine the role Kiswahili plays in enhancing intercultural interactions and cross-border trade in Busia town (Kenya and Uganda).

Both quantitative (use of questionnaires) and qualitative data (observations, linguistic landscaping & sound recordings) were collected to answer the research questions. Quantitative data are analyzed by the use of SPSS and presented in tables and charts. Distinctly, qualitative data, on the other hand, are analyzed through narrative and theory triangulation to achieve the research objectives.

### b) *Attainment of Research Objectives*

There are three key objectives of the present study. The first is to *investigate the status of Kiswahili as a medium of communication in enhancing intercultural interactions and cross-border trade in Busia town*. This objective has been achieved. Evidence from quantitative data reveals that Kiswahili has a significant status during initial encounters (94%), discussion (90%), bargaining (92%), taking instructions (90%), and (92%) in advertisements in Busia town cited by the sampled population. This consents with qualitative data from the linguistic landscape, which is equivalent to (80%) in advertisements and giving directions on both Kenyan and Ugandan sides of the border.

One interpretation of these findings is that Kiswahili acts as a panacea to cultural and linguistic differences that exist among traders and customers in Busia town, thereby conducting effective intercultural interactions while impacting positively on cross-border trade.

The second is to *establish the limitations Kiswahili faces in enhancing intercultural interactions and cross-border trade in Busia town*. This aim has also been attained. Quantitative results suggest that dialectical differences (92%), colonial influence and mentality (72%), the lack of uniform status of Kiswahili (54%), negative ethnic attitude (34%), the lack of good political will (18%) and religion (6%) respectively are cited by respondents as obstacles to the use of Kiswahili in Busia town. The findings of the study further reveal that other hindrances to the use of Kiswahili include: the level of education (6%), lack of exposure, and age each at (2%). Indeed, these impediments directly affect the use of Kiswahili, which may negatively impact effective intercultural interactions and cross-border trade.

The third is to *evaluate communicative strategies used by traders and customers to overcome linguistic challenges in enhancing intercultural interactions and cross-border trade*. Evidence provided by quantitative and qualitative data shows that the objective has been achieved. *Approximation strategy* is revealed as commonly used by traders and customers in a bargaining context. This involves switching languages to attune to the other conversational needs.

Yet again, from the findings, the use of interpreters as an accommodation strategy is seemingly expensive for the case of vendors. As such, it is imperative to note that to bridge the communication gap that exists between traders from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, learning Kiswahili is pivotal to reducing these communication costs.

### c) *Theory Application*

This research applied Giles & Gallois's (2015) CAT and Cai & Rodriguez's (1997) IAM to understand how traders and customers accommodated each other to enhance intercultural interactions and cross-border in a polyglossified Busia town. In addition, because of the failure of CAT to explain how individuals may become culturally adaptive in cross-cultural settings, IAM is applied to fill the gap.

The CAT proposes six key sociolinguistic strategies – approximation, interpretability, interpersonal control, discourse management, and emotional expression that can be used to facilitate the interaction process. Although the theory does not limit its use in specific settings, this study applied the theory to trader-customer interactions in Busia town to determine the communication strategies they use to effect their interactions.

The observation arising from this research reveals that the CAT is an ideal theory that describes how to remain afloat of the evolving challenges of intercultural interactions, especially during trader-customer interactions. To bridge the linguistic challenge that incubates miscommunication and misunderstandings, and sometimes internal conflicts within Busia town, (92%) of the sampled population agreed to learn and use Kiswahili to overcome them.

The CAT approximation strategy is the first key sociolinguistic strategy for communication accommodation, emphasizing the reciprocity of shifting languages to attune to the conversational partner. It is, therefore, the commonly used strategy during trader-customer interactions. This is followed by discourse management, interpersonal control, and emotional expression. Other strategies used in communication accommodation include using interpreters and sign language. However, it is profound to note that these strategies may not be effective. For the case of using interpreters, it may be more costly and time-consuming. Using sign language, on the other hand, may result in misunderstandings because signs are interpreted culturally.

### d) *Verification of Research Hypotheses*

The research focuses on three hypotheses which are verified through the achievement of the study objectives.

The first hypothesis states that Kiswahili has a significant status in enhancing intercultural interactions and cross-border trade among traders and customers in Busia town. This hypothesis was verified through questions that required the respondents to determine Kiswahili's status in terms of its use during initial encounters (94%), during discussion (90%), bargaining (92%), taking instructions (90%), and in advertisement (92%). Similarly, linguistic landscaping was done, which is congruent with the quantitative

findings that show Kiswahili's status in Busia town, which is equivalent to (80%). These findings perceive Kiswahili as an effective intercultural communication tool for enhancing intercultural interactions and cross-border trade in Busia town, thereby downplaying miscommunications, misunderstandings, and sometimes internal conflicts.

The second hypothesis states that the language faces challenges in enhancing intercultural interactions and cross-border trade in Busia town. In light of the evidence provided, this hypothesis has been verified. Dialectical differences are rated as the major obstacle (92%) to the use of Kiswahili, followed by colonial influence and mentality (72%), the lack of uniform status of Kiswahili (54%), negative ethnic attitude (34%), the lack of good political will (18%) and finally religion at (6%). Yet again, the level of education (6%), lack of exposure, and age each at (2%) are also mentioned as part of the limitations that impede the use and development of Kiswahili. In view of these obstacles, they may compromise the interaction process among traders and customers due to the lack of an appropriate common and unifying language.

The third hypothesis states that traders and customers employ different communicative strategies to overcome linguistic challenges they face during cross-border trade in Busia town. This hypothesis is attained in the present research. Using the CAT propounded by Giles and Gallois (2015), five sociolinguistic accommodation strategies were assessed. The findings indicate that *approximation* is the most preferred communication strategy that traders and customers employ during interactions. This is followed by discourse management, interpersonal control, and emotional expression, respectively. Other strategies include the use of interpreters and sign language.

*e) Challenges*

Although the present results clearly support the hypotheses of the study, it is appropriate to recognize some potential challenges met during the data collection process. Firstly, because of COVID-19 restrictions, it was difficult to conduct interviews with some respondents. However, the researcher ensured masks were worn, and social distancing was observed, which helped to collect rich data.

Secondly, there was a prohibition on taking pictures in restricted areas. Because of the security measures at the border, it was a challenge to take pictures that could be used for analysis in this study. Despite this challenge, the researcher sought permission from the border management and took some pictures, as shown in section (4.2.1).

Thirdly, the lack of respondents' cooperation in giving data was another potential challenge. The researcher had no other option but to find other samples, keeping in mind the demographic features. Finally, border regulations to cross to Uganda were also another potential challenge. Despite this challenge, the researcher had official documents like a national identity card and a passport, facilitating moving into Uganda.

Despite these challenges, the present study has enhanced our understanding of the relationship between the use of a common language/ lingua franca (Kiswahili) and cross-border trade. The current study is envisaged to stimulate further investigation in this important area.

*f) Limitations of the Study*

There are at least three potential limitations concerning the results of this research. The first limitation concerns the scope of the study. The data collected are limited to only 50 respondents and not a large population sample. The small sample is unable to generalize results to a broader population.

A second potential limitation is that of generalisability. Being exploratory in nature, the study focused on traders and customers at the Busia border, and therefore the findings cannot necessarily be assumed to apply to other borders or countries. The results can only be generalized within the context of the present study (Bryman & Bell 2011).

Finally, the demographic characteristics of the sample were not equally distributed. For this reason, the findings of this research cannot be used conclusively to represent the perceptions and attitudes of each respondent. Despite these limitations, the study findings have value for borders that have similar socio-linguistic and socio-cultural features.

*g) Relevance of the Study*

This study has both policy and academic significance. The findings of this research have both direct and indirect pertinence to the research group.

At hand, the study helps in sensitizing traders, customers, and communities living around Busia town on the importance of language choice and its effect on intercultural interactions and cross-border trade. Besides, it opens up new horizons of the significant role of language as a veritable tool for trade and regional integration among East African member states and Africa at large.

Furthermore, outcomes unveiled from this study provide crucial information to the governments of both Kenya and Uganda and East African countries at large, including agencies like the East African Community (EAC) parliament, to forge effective language policies and programs to expedite cross-border trade.

Finally, the results of this study provide academic pertinence by adding empirical evidence in the field of intercultural communication. More importantly, it serves as a call to interdisciplinary research on the role of cross-border languages, especially from a sociolinguistic background in relation to intercultural communication. Thus, it offers a basis for future research.

#### *h) Recommendations of the Study*

Based on the research findings of this study, the following recommendations would be critical for informing policy and practical application for both Kenya and Uganda and the East African Community (EAC).

#### *i. Recommendations to Language Users*

Firstly, people should develop an interest in learning and using Kiswahili in addition to the international and native languages they speak. It will enable the people to communicate easily and accommodate those who do not speak English or other local languages.

Next, to address the main obstacle of dialectical differences to the use of Kiswahili at the border, it is recommended that people should learn all the dialects that exist so that in case one shifts, it should enhance understanding.

On religion, it is recommended that people at the local churches at the border should embrace interpreting services into Kiswahili, which in turn will encourage Kiswahili use.

#### *ii. Recommendations to the Governments of Kenya and Uganda*

Firstly, as the study reveals that accommodation should be the prevailing stance, it is recommended that both Kenya and Ugandan governments should establish language policies at the customs office to encourage Kiswahili use to accommodate those people who do not understand English.

The government of both Kenya and Uganda should consider formulating policies to sensitize the community living around Busia town to embrace the diversity that comes along with different languages. This would be crucial in addressing the negative ethnic attitude leveled against Kiswahili use. Thus, it would be viewed as a unifying language to foster mutual coexistence.

To ease communication at the border, it is recommended that both governments should set aside funds to finance the translation of documents from English into Kiswahili as part of a communication tool for customs for those who do not understand English.

It is recommended that both governments should set up policies that encourage Kiswahili use for advertisements, especially on posters and billboards on both the Kenyan side of the border and the Ugandan side of the border. This would help sensitize the use of language, thereby reducing the lack of uniformity of Kiswahili's status.

Regarding the lack of good political will to the use of Kiswahili, it is recommended that both governments should encourage formulations and implementation of policies with the flexible political will to allow the use of Kiswahili at the border.

Finally, to bridge the challenge of the lack of exposure, benchmarking workshops should be set up in Kiswahili-speaking zones (in both Kenya and Uganda) so that people can visit and be immersed in the language.

#### *iii. Recommendations to the EAC*

The EAC should formulate policies that offer scholarships with grants that encourage learning Kiswahili which would, in turn, help minimize colonial influence and mentality towards it.

The EAC should set up policies to encourage media houses in the region to use simple Swahili vocabularies to publish weekly newspapers and broadcast some programs along the border, which would, in turn, expose people to learn and use Kiswahili.

The EAC should consider encouraging member states to invest in teaching and learning Kiswahili within their countries. This would be critical to fostering effective communication and cross-border trade in the region.

#### *i) Suggestions for Future Research*

As the present research suggests that Kiswahili has a significant role in enhancing intercultural interactions among traders and customers and cross-border trade, it would be useful to extend the current findings by examining the influence of Kiganda, another dominant language used at the Busia border on cross-border trade. It would be interesting to establish the extent it is used and strike a balance between which language should be given more effort for trans-border communication.

In light of the limitations of the current study, it opens up more research opportunities. Since the demographic features were not equally distributed, one possible research opportunity would be repeating the present study with more equally distributed demographic differences.

Finally, CAT is deemed an appropriate, flexible, and adaptive approach to understanding linguistic and socio-psychological aspects of trader-customer interactions. Following this, future studies could examine how traders and customers accommodate each other, considering influencing factors like the place and time of the day communication took place. Additionally, it would be profound to explore the underlying motives for the accommodation stance between traders and customers using the CAT.

To conclude, the findings of this study suggest that the bordering communities between Kenya and Uganda are in constant interaction with each other. These interactions are prompted by economic, political, and social activities along the border. In such activities, the need for communication is one important ingredient in fostering mutuality.

However, it is worth noting that the colonial boundary that exists between Kenya and Uganda perceives the communities living across the border as different. These differences can be influenced by the languages they speak, nationalities, political systems, education systems, inter alia, and socio-cultural practices. Such a complex situation invariably calls for effective trans-border communication. This communication can be materialized using a unifying language that binds all their differences to see themselves as one, thereby effecting intercultural interactions. In particular, Kiswahili, in this context, acts as an essential tool to forge effective intercultural interactions among traders and customers during cross-border encounters in Busia town.

Despite the limitations to the use of Kiswahili in Busia town, the present study has established that Kiswahili plays a significant role in enhancing intercultural interactions and cross-border trade. In view of this reality, it is crucial for the communities around the border to learn and use Kiswahili which downplays their differences, thereby acting as a verifiable tool for negotiating meaning and mutual understanding between them. The study has achieved its aim by providing awareness of the role of a unifying cross-cultural language in trader-customer interactions during trade-in Busia town between Kenya and Uganda.

#### **List of Abbreviations**

ACALAN:	African Academy of Languages
CAT:	Communication Accommodation Theory
COVID-19:	Coronavirus Disease of 2019
CS:	Code-Switching
DRC:	Democratic Republic of Congo
EAC:	East African Community
IAM:	Intercultural Adaptation Model
IC:	Intercultural Communication
ICC:	Intercultural Communication Competence
LL:	Linguistic Landscaping
OSBP:	One Stop Border Post
SAT:	Speech Accommodation Theory
SPSS:	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

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