Signs of language shift in Chindali and the impact of Swahili

Author(s)
Imani Swilla

Abstract

Research was conducted in 2002 to investigate the vitality of Chindali, a Bantu language, among speakers who migrate from Ileje District to Mbozi District in southwestern Tanzania. Data were collected using a questionnaire, interviews and observation. The study revealed the presence of early signs of language shift from Chindali towards Swahili. Monolingualism was rare, while bilingualism in Chindali and Swahili was widespread; borrowing of Swahili terms and code-switching were common and Swahili was increasingly used for communication within the family and community. Swahili's impact on Chindali can be attributed to its prestige as the national and official language. It is the medium of instruction in primary education, the language of the media and official events. Recommendations to ensure the survival of Chindali include conducting research on and documenting the language, collecting and publishing Chindali oral traditions with translations in Swahili and English, organising cultural events using the language, and conducting sensitisation campaigns to promote it.

Keywords:
Chindali,
Language shift,
Language swift code-switching,
Swahili influence,
Tanzania,