

ANALYZING WAYS OF SPEAKING KIVU SWAHILI: VARIATION AND ETHNIC BELONGING

PAULIN BARAKA BOSE

This paper aims to discuss specific contact-induced features of Kivu Swahili (DR Congo), taking into account variationist patterns of different ways of speaking. Language contact scenarios in the multilingual landscape of Kivu reveal a discrepancy: While the language of North Kivu contains traces of Kinyabwisha and Kinande, in South Kivu Mashi and Kilega have predominantly shaped the site-specific realization of Swahili. Other languages, such as French or Lingala, which have – lexically and structurally – largely contributed to the present form of the language are not bound to one area or any group of speakers. This paper deals with the question of whether different realizations of Kivu Swahili, with differing levels of contact features (such as a major influence of Lingala lexicon, more or less Kinyabwisha/Kinande morphology etc.), can be understood as “ethnic registers”, serving different social purposes. When analyzed against the background of the ongoing conflict in the area, the differing realizations can be seen to create in-group status, intimidation, protection, mockery or deliberate exclusion. By focusing largely on sociolectal and inter-register variation of poorly documented Kiswahili dialects from the western periphery, the contribution aims to contribute to the description of non-standard realizations of the language and their variability.

1. Introduction: How variable is Kivu Swahili?¹

The study of Kiswahili along its western periphery in the Congo, in Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda has long been limited to a few colonial and predominantly prescriptive studies, such as Whitehead & Whitehead (1928) and Hunter (1959). While Katanga Swahili, or Lubumbashi Swahili (*inter alia* Rossé 1977, Schicho 1982, Kapanga 1991, de Rooij 1996 and Ferrari, Kalunga & Mulumbwa 2014) is the best studied Kiswahili variety from DR Congo, other dialects such as Kivu Swahili have only been dealt with in a limited number of studies (Goyvaerts 2007, Goyvaerts & Zembele 1992, Kaji 1982, 1985, 2002, Sandner 2010), mostly focusing on either a single northern (“Goma Swahili”) or southern (“Bukavu Swahili”) variety (for an overview of the area where Kivu Swahili is spoken, see Map 1). More recent studies,

¹ This paper is based on a presentation given at the Swahili Colloquium at Bayreuth University in 2016, held jointly with Nico Nassenstein. I am grateful to the colleagues who were present for their comments. The issue editors are warmly thanked for their suggestions, and the anonymous reviewers for their feedback. I am indebted to Kieran Taylor for proofreading my paper.

ANALYZING WAYS OF SPEAKING KIVU SWAHILI: VARIATION AND ETHNIC BELONGING

however, include a comparison of both (Nassenstein & Bose 2016, Bose & Nassenstein 2016) and display the patterns of morphophonological variation in both.

Map 1: The maximal extent of diffusion of Kivu Swahili in the DR Congo



Other sociolinguistic studies have dealt with young speakers' realizations of Kivu Swahili, and specifically with a youth language practice often called Yabacrâne (Nassenstein 2016, Bose 2018). Such studies have revealed that there is a far greater complexity to the language variety, as the standard, simple, north-south division of dialects.

This discussion's approach to divergent realizations of the language sheds light onto the broader concept of variation: In the Kivu Provinces, variation in Swahili seem to be bound to specific *ways of speaking*; linking in-group status to linguistic representations of ethnicity and the speakers' sense of belonging to a community of practice (Eckert 2000). This group is an aggregate of people who come together, around mutual engagement in some common endeavor, or to social practices of linguistic inclusion or exclusion; expressed through mockery or mimicry.

This paper is organized as follows: Alongside the discussion of some general contact-induced features (Section 2), other features are contextualized in several sociolectal pools of variation (Section 3); for example as regional variants or as forms of stylized adolescent speech (often paired with images of urban criminal youths). Many styles of youthful Kivu

Swahili are recurrently used in the media, such as in online forums or Facebook where more standardized Swahili blends with more specialized regiolectal features. Along with an analysis of social belonging expressed through stylized variants of Kivu Swahili, the paper also discusses the emergence of ethnicized ways of speaking, or “ethnic registers” and speakers’ strategies of mockery and mimicking others (Section 4). The ongoing military conflict in the Kivu Provinces since 1994, the political tension and significant animosities between specific ethnic groups have contributed to the emergence of registers that associate typical phonological or morphological patterns to underlying group membership.

All of the variationist patterns in Kivu Swahili are analyzed in their context as flexible and non-static expressions of social belonging, meaning that one individual can realize the language differently according to his/her changing social status, conversational partners or as a deliberate act of showing sympathy or creating distance.

2. General contact-induced features: An overview

Despite the internal variation within Kivu Swahili (to be discussed in Sections 3-4), there are a range of contact-induced features that are, to a greater extent, universally realized among Swahili speakers in the broader area of the Kivu Provinces. Linguistic changes in nominal and verbal morphology are realized regardless of a speaker’s group affiliation or belonging to a social or ethnic group. Contact with several languages such as Kinyarwanda/Kinyabwisha, Kihavu, Kinande, Kihunde, Mashi has contributed to the lexicon and morphosyntactic frame of the language. Morphophonologically, Kivu Swahili reveals some divergence from the more standardized varieties of Kiswahili, such as Kiunguja (Zanzibar) or the Kenyan coastal dialects. However, different realizations of the language are often associated with specific ethnic groups; as such, in-group status seems to be bound to ‘ethnic register’ parameters, bound to speakers’ identification. In the following sub-sections, some general contact-induced features of Kivu Swahili are discussed.

2.1. Phonology/Morphophonology

The analysis of central phonological and morphophonological features of Kivu Swahili shows a set of realizations, shared across all the different ways of speaking (sociolects, geographically stratified dialects etc.), characterizing Kivu Swahili as a regional continuum. The following sections will provide a broad overview of these features, with specific reference to morphology and lexicon. A range of morphophonological characteristics can also be seen, such as the connective of NC7 whereby the subject marker *ki-* is not palatalized and remains as *kya* (ex. 1) in contrast to the Standard Swahili **cha*. Hypothetically, this variation can be explained as the result of contact with Kinyabwisha, a language that does not palatalize velars followed by *_e* or *_i*. A further example of the morphophonological influence from

ANALYZING WAYS OF SPEAKING KIVU SWAHILI: VARIATION AND ETHNIC BELONGING

Kinyabwisha (2), shows a divergent realization of the first person singular of the future tense, revealing *nda-* instead of **nita-* (as used in ECS).

- (1) *ki-tu kya ba-toto*
NP₇-thing CONN₇ NP₂-child
'the children's thing'
- (2) *n-da-som-a kwa mu-yomba yangu Kigali*
SM_{1SG}-FUT-study-FV at NP₁-maternal_uncle POSS_{1SG} in_Kigali
'I will study at my uncle's place in Kigali'

2.2 Morphology

A range of general morphological deviations from the noun class system of Standard Swahili are recurrent across the Kivu Swahili-speaking area; including the use of the morphological diminutive and augmentative prefixes as part of derivational morphology (see examples 3-6). Across the Kivu Swahili speech area, the singular diminutive is marked with the noun class prefix *ka-*, while the plural either requires a noun class 13 prefix *tu-* (which also serves as a pejorative marker) or a noun class 14 prefix *bu-*, which simply indicates that there are "many small things", without any pejorative connotation. This form of plural marking can be traced back to language contact scenarios with local Bantu languages. Additional, to these common classes, which are also used in Kisangani or Lubumbashi (as reported by speakers²), there is a class 19 *hi-*, which serves as a diminutive collective ('many small birds', 'many small raindrops', 'small amounts of water'). This can be considered a borrowing from the Kinande language and is uniquely used in the Kivu Swahili dialect (see Bose & Nassenstein 2016).

- (3) *mu shamba ya tate yetu ku-ko*
LOC (NP)₉.field CONN₉ (NP)₁.grandparent POSS_{1PL} SM₁₇-COP
ka-nyumba
NP₁₂-house
'in our grandparent's garden there is a small hut'
- (4) *mu camp ku-li-kuw-ak-a tu-nyumba twa*
LOC (NP)₉.military_camp SM₁₇-PST-be-IPFV-FV NP₁₃-house CONN₁₃
ba-refugié
NP₂-refugee
'in the [refugee] camp, there were many very small (shabby) houses of refugees'

² This information stems from qualitative interviews with speakers.

- (5) *ba-li-kuw-a jenga bu-nyumba bw-enye*
 SM₂-PST-be-FV build NP₁₄-house PP₁₄-REL
ba-li-kuw-a na pumuzik-iy-a amo
 SM₂-PST-be-FV PRG rest-APPL-FV LOC
 ‘they used to build small huts in which they used to rest’
- (6) *ni-li-on-ak-a hi-ndege mu pori*
 SM_{1SG}-PST-see-IPFV-FV NP₁₉-bird LOC (NP)₉.forest
 ‘I saw some small birds in the forest’

Moreover, Kivu Swahili makes use of freestanding ‘referential locatives’, in contrast to the bound morphemes used in ECS, which are attached to the finite verb. Depending on context, either *amo* or *ako* are used (7a-7b). This can be acknowledged as having stemmed from Kinyabwisha or Mashi, another Bantu language from South Kivu.

- (7a) *mbone u-ko na funika iki ki-kapo sana,*
 why SM_{2SG}-COP PRG cover DEM₇ NP₇-basket much
mu-ko amo nini?
 SM_{2PL}-COP LOC what
 ‘Why are you covering that basket so much? What is inside?’ (or, more inquisitive: ‘So, what is it that’s inside?’)
- (7b) *ni-li-mu-on-a ginsi a-li-ingiy-a ako*
 SM_{1SG}-PST-OM₁-see-FV how SM₁-PST-enter-FV LOC
 ‘I saw how/the way he/she entered there’

2.3 Lexicon

Along with grammatical features, Kivu Swahili has also incorporated many loanwords, especially from Lingala, including *ndule* (‘popular music’), *boke* (‘alcohol’), *ndumba* (‘prostitute’), *singa* (‘wire’), *madesu* (‘beans’) and *nganda* (‘bar’) (see 8). These loanwords are widespread and used across all sociolects and ethnolects of the language.

- (8) *mu ile nganda yenye i-na-kuw-ak-a amo*
 LOC DEM₉ (NP)₉.bar REL₉ SM₉-PRS-be-IPFV-FV LOC
ba-ndumba bi-ko na ku-nywa amo boke
 NP₂-prostitute SM₂-COP PRG INF-drink LOC (NP)₉.alcohol
 ‘in that bar where there are many prostitutes, they are drinking beer’

ANALYZING WAYS OF SPEAKING KIVU SWAHILI: VARIATION AND ETHNIC BELONGING

Other frequently used loanwords stem from French, such as *bisi* ('bus'), *ville* ('city'), *volcan* ('volcano'), *barrière* ('border'), *bidon* ('jerrycan'). Furthermore, others are also borrowed from local languages such as Kinyabwisha, for instance, *birayi* ('potatoes'), *bijumba* ('sweet potatoes') and *musururu* ('local beer/drink made out of sorghum'). Few lexemes are borrowed from Mashi, with the exceptions including *mashanja* ('fermented milk'), and *mushamuka* ('elder/wise man/spokesperson'), *shaba deux/shababiri* ('father of twins'), *nyaba deux/nyababiri* ('mother of twins') and *chishambo* ('thief').

3. Variation in Kivu Swahili: Ways of speaking

Apart from the shared lexicon and grammatical deviations from ECS, there is a considerable degree of variation found within the Kivu language. These different regio-, socio- and ethnolects can be subsumed under the label of 'ways of speaking'; seen by Hymes (1962: 33) to "comprise *speech styles*, on the one hand, and *contexts of discourse*, on the other, together with *relations of appropriateness* obtaining between styles and contexts" (emphasis in original). In the following, I provide an overview of the variation within Kivu Swahili.

3.1 Regional variation

There is a high degree of variation between the southern regions (South Kivu) and northern regions (North Kivu) of the Kivu Province. This divide is most commonly discussed (see 9-10), yet the actual situation is much more complex (and diverse) than this north-south separation implies. In particular, in the northern regions there is a great amount of internal variation found from one city to another (9a-9b). Consequently, along with a brief discussion of north-south generalizations, this paper will focus on more fine-grained (ethnolectal) distinctions in the following sections.

(North Kivu/Goma)

- (9a) *I-ko na ji-arranger a-on-e ule motard*
SM₁-COP PRG REFL-arrange SM₁-see-SBJV DEM₁ motorcyclist

juu a-pat-e nini?
so_that SM₁-get-SBJV what

'Is he/she making sure he/she sees the motorcyclist for any whatsoever reason?'

(North Kivu/Rutshuru)

- (9b) *I-ko na ji-kaza a-on-e ule*
SM₁-COP PRG REFL-exert_oneself SM₁-see-SBJV DEM₁

motard bi-ta-mu-maliz-iy-a nini?
motorcyclist SM₈-FUT-OM₁-finish-APPL-FV what

'Is he/she making sure he/she sees the motorcyclist for any whatsoever reason?'

- (South Kivu)
 (10a) *a-na-end-a* *mu mwabo*
 SM₁-PRS-go-FV LOC their_place
 ‘he/she is going to their place’

- (North Kivu)
 (10b) *a-na-end-a* *mwabo*
 SM₁-PRS-go-FV their_place
 ‘he/she is going to their place’

Apart from these phrasal or structural differences, pitch range and pace of speech can also differ³, although this will not be discussed in this overview study (due to its limited extent).

3.2 Sociolectal variation

Along with geographical or dialectal variation, there is also a considerable degree of sociolectal variation in Kivu Swahili, especially when analyzing the speech used among groups of adolescents or children. Two specific language styles are regularly seen in the Swahili communication of Kivu youths. Firstly, they more commonly use terms originating from other languages within the country, such as Lingala, Mashi, Kinande, or from across the borders, such as Kinyarwanda and Kirundi. Furthermore, their language is defined by terms that are coined/self-created by themselves; this is what some youths call *Yabacrâne*, to mean ‘the wise ones/clever ones’ (from *ya ba-crâne* ‘of the skulls’).

While *Yabacrâne* (see examples 11-12) is usually seen as a Kiswahili-based youth language practice, it is used by youths in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, specifically in Goma, North Kivu (see also Nassenstein 2016, Bose 2018). Goyvaerts (1988) worked on youth languages from Bukavu, South Kivu, which he labelled as *Indoubil*. This term, *Indoubil/Hindubill*, was also used to label the predecessor of today’s Lingala ya Bayankee (long ago) and, arguably as a consequence, Goyvaert’s (1988) study and the language label *Indoubil* was no longer known to Kivu Swahili-speaking youth from Bukavu.

- (Yabacrâne)
 (11) *mi-na-end-a* *Bibon*
 SM_{1SG}-PRS-go-FV Butembo
 ‘I go to Butembo’

³ Pitch and pace differences in Kivu Swahili will be dealt with in more detail elsewhere.

ANALYZING WAYS OF SPEAKING KIVU SWAHILI: VARIATION AND ETHNIC BELONGING

- (Yabacrâne)
- (12) *u-ni-saidiy-e* *u-ni-patiy-e* *zile*
 SM2SG-OM1SG-help-SBJV SM2SG-OM1SG-give-SBJV DEM.
ma-mbee *zangu*
 NP6-money POSS1SG
 ‘help me and give me that money of mine’

Another creative style of Kivu Swahili is mainly used by small children, who employ this as a popular language game, and is commonly known as *Kinyume* (cf. Storch [2011] for similar syllable modifications in other languages). This language game came into existence around the year 2000, originating mainly from the Birere, Office and Virunga quarters; as a youth language practice it is based on reversing the syllables of Kivu Swahili words (Bose 2018).

- (Kinyume)
- (13) *sitarudiya leo* → *sitayadiru ole*
 ‘I will not come back today’
- (14) *Est-ce que atauzisha samaki?*
 → *Est-ce que atashaziu kimasa?*
 ‘Will he/she sell fish?’

3.3 Kivu Swahili in the media

Kivu Swahili in social media and news broadcasts is often tentatively adapted to ECS (due to reasons of higher social prestige), however regularly maintains some of its structural elements. In an archive of a Member of Parliament from the Lubero territory, entitled “Somo kuhusu politique na maendeleo”, Kivu Swahili is constantly adapted throughout: The agreement patterns (*vikundi vya...* instead of *bikundi bya/ya...*) and noun class 2 morphology (*ba* → *wa*; *bakulima* → *wakulima* etc.) are reworked, while the lexical characteristics (loanwords from French etc.) remain largely unchanged. The few small lexical changes are mainly emblematic, such as *muhimu* ‘important’ which references ECS. In the following, I provide an excerpt of the document.

SOCIÉTÉ CIVILE, VIKUNDI VYA WAKULIMA NA POLITIQUE

Société civile, na **vikundi vya wakulima viko** mbalimbali na partis politiques. Lakini **mkulima** anaweza kuwa mwanamemba wa shirika la maendeleo na pia wa parti politique; kila ngambo ikiwa na ukomo wake; Lazimashirika za **wakulima** zijue kufaa “alliance stratégique” ama urafiki ulio na shabaa na partis politiques ikiwa utasaidia kwaku endelesha **mlimo** na maisha vijijini.

Ex: 1. ANC kama parti politique Ya Afrika Kusini (Afrique du Sud) na syndicat KOSATU (ya wafundi) vinaungana kwaku endelesha siasa ya inchi mwao.

2. Pia Ulaya, kuna shirika za société civile ambazo zinagawa mawazo ya kisiasa yakushoto (socialiste) ao ya kuume (libéraux conservateurs). Ni ya **muhimu wakulima wa Congo wajue** pande ya parti gani **wanaweza** jiunga ili **watetee** pamoja miradi ya kuendelesha kilimo kwa maendeleo vijijini. (MP of Lubero’s private archive) (my emphasis)

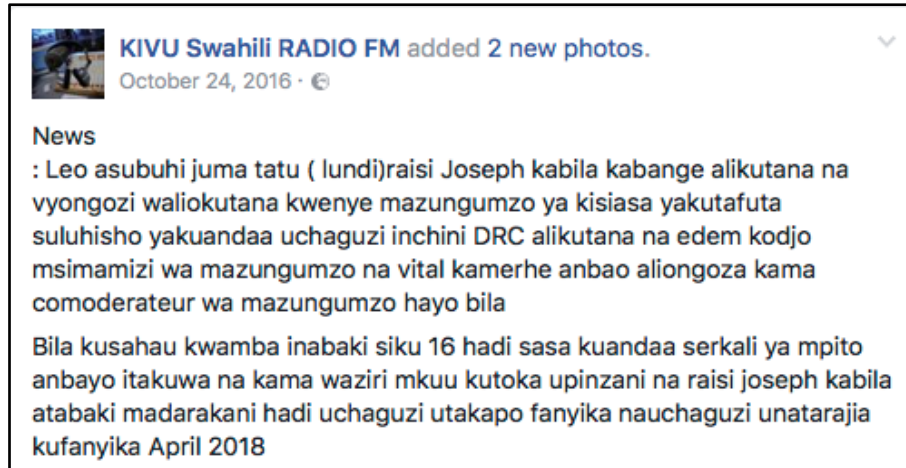
The author of the official text intends to adapt or standardize his Kivu Swahili to make it sound like ECS but at the same time due to his target audience, he chooses to leave some words in French for the readers’ understanding. Commonly, even when speakers of Kivu Swahili try to standardize for the international audience, they have difficulties because they have seldom mastered ECS. Although it is a subject taught in schools, the low degree of literacy in Swahili leads to their adaptation attempts remaining “free style”. This example of grassroots standardization includes words being derived from mostly local languages, and some from vehicular languages such as French, which are rarely replaced with lexemes from Arabic origins.

In a similar way, across social media, one can identify numerous examples in which Kivu Swahili is used and partially adapted to ECS. In the following (Fig. 1), an example from the “KIVU Swahili RADIO FM” Facebook page⁴ shows a post uploaded on 24 October 2016, attempting to adapt Kivu Swahili to ECS: In the post, some lexemes from ECS are surprisingly inserted to substitute French words. However, the French terms are also included in brackets (such as *lundi* for *jumatatu*): This is done with the aim of comprehension, to afford further clarification to all Kivu Swahili speakers who are not familiar with more standardized varieties of Swahili.

⁴ Even though the Kivu Swahili RADIO FM Facebook page may be part of a ‘unifying’ project, putting out a neutral, standard-like Swahili may not be necessarily expected since the targeted audience is the population of the Kivus. The Facebook post is currently no longer available.

ANALYZING WAYS OF SPEAKING KIVU SWAHILI: VARIATION AND ETHNIC BELONGING

Figure 1: Excerpt of a post on Facebook in adapted Kivu Swahili



3.4 On the variability of Swahili “on the road” (within the East African Community)

The adaptability of Kivu Swahili to ECS is most commonly witnessed in encounters between speakers of Kivu Swahili and ECS, whether within Kivu or in regions where Kivu Swahili is not spoken. In such situations, most Kivu speakers try to adapt their way of speaking to what they perceive to be much closer to Standard Swahili, or ECS. The intention behind this adjustment is firstly to make themselves understood by others, however it is potentially also applied to blend in and avoid experiences of exclusion due to their different-sounding dialect. Cited below is a recorded example of a Kivu Swahili speaker trying to adapt his Swahili when talking to a taxi driver in Nairobi, Kenya (15).

(Adapting to ECS)

- (15a) *Na-tak-a elek-ey-a airport.*
SM₁SG-want-FV pass-APPL-FV (NP)₉.airport
U-na-lip-ish-a ngapi?
SM₂SG-PRG-pay-CAUS-FV how_much
‘I would like to go to the airport. How much is it?’

(Kivu Swahili)

- (15b) *Ni-ko na taka enda ku aéroport, ni ngapi?*
SM₁SG-COP PRG want go LOC (NP)₉.airport COP how_much
‘I would like to go to the airport. How much is it?’

A tour guide, J. Kibanja, describes the following experience with guests from Tanzania who were visiting the Nyirangongo Volcano (North Kivu) in 2017.

Wakati ku Ohservatoire Volcanologique de Goma (OVG) tunapataka bavisiteurs ba kutokeya Tanzanie, bacheefs betu banaonaka mwenye anaweza jikaza wala mwenye anapimaka sema Swahili ya batanzaniens njo mwenye banatiyaka mbele aende nabo juu ya kusikilizana muzuri. Par exemple miye minasemaka Swahili sawa batanzaniens njo kwa maana sa tunapata batanzaniens mara mingi, miye njo minaendaka nabo. Ngoya nikupatiye kaexample ya ginsi minasemaka nabo: *Mimi jina yangu Jackson Kibanja minatumikaka ku OVG sawa guide ya watouristes wote wenye wanakuyaka apa Goma kuvisiter volcan.* (J. Kibanja, p.c., May 2017)

[When at OVG, we get guests from Tanzania, our bosses try to get someone from among us who can try to adapt his way of speaking to ECS and that person becomes the one to be selected and who has to guide those Tanzanian tourists for easy and better communication. For example I, I can adapt my way of speaking to ECS/I can speak Swahili which is close to those of Tanzanians. Let me give you a small example the way I speak to them. *I am Jackson Kibanja, I work at OVG as a guide for all tourists who come here in Goma to visit the Volcano.*]

In the presented example, reference to the noun class 2 agreement patterns in ECS is again visible. This highlights it as a very emblematic feature as perceived by Kivu Swahili speakers, which is very commonly used when intending to sound like Tanzanians, for example. Other morphological realizations that are very typical of Kivu Swahili (such as the imperfective/habitual *-ak* suffix) remain untouched.

4. Ethnicity, ethnic registers and discourses of belonging

Ethnolectal variation also occurs in Kivu Swahili. In a surrounding largely influenced by ethnic tensions and a long-lasting war (1996-2003, with numerous rebellions between 2009-2013, and a constant level of insecurity), speakers are very aware of the dynamics of group differentiation and categorization, as well as of “ethnic accents” as markers of difference.

According to Barth (1969: 11), ethnic groups are “largely biologically self-perpetuating”, defined as sharing fundamental cultural values. They determine speakers’ “field[s] of communication and interaction” and have “a membership which identifies itself, and is identified by others, as constituting a category distinguishable from other categories of the same order”. Zelinsky (2001: 44) writes that “[t]he ethnic group is a modern social construct, (...) persons who are perceived by themselves and/or others to share a unique set of cultural and historical commonalities”. Moreover, he states that “it comes into being by reasons of its relationships with other social entities, usually by experiencing some degree of friction with other groups”. Tajfel (1978), in contrast, defines “[e]thnic distinctions [as] based on criteria

ANALYZING WAYS OF SPEAKING KIVU SWAHILI: VARIATION AND ETHNIC BELONGING

such as physical traits, notions of ancestry, area of origin, cultural heritage, language, and, of course, the criterion of self-identification”. Kivu Swahili is characterized through many different styles and ways of speaking, with a broad range of social and ethnic registers. This facilitates progression and the emergence of many “new” words, mostly deriving from local languages but also occasionally from vehicular languages such as French. Moreover, the subtleties of how specific ethnic groups use Kivu Swahili slightly differently, can contrastingly mitigate and intensify (ethnic) tensions. The interconnectedness of ethnicity and language in the Kivus is not arbitrary. As is almost universally seen in dense conflict areas, language has an emblematic value – as is significantly the case in the ongoing conflict in the Kivus since the Rwandan genocide in 1994.

Specific ways of speaking Kivu Swahili are commonly associated with speakers’ ethnic backgrounds and can serve as self-representation; either in order to show one’s own belonging, or as a means of putting distance between a speaker and those addressed on a metalevel. Ethnic registers play a role in many different multilingual and dynamic settings where Swahili is spoken; Kioko (2015) describes the Sheng varieties (“Shengnized Kamba”, “Engsh” etc.) in Nairobi; local languages and tourist languages interact along the Kenyan coast; and many different realizations of Swahili are spoken in Kisangani.

Storch (2011: 43) speaks of ‘ethnoregisters’, stating that “extreme multilingualism (...) may involve the spread of specific types of ritual language. Here, common patterns of riddles, jokes, and comments on discourse have developed, and such ritualistic forms help to organize the interactions between the linguistically and culturally diverse participants in this area of contact and convergence.” Ethnic registers in Kivu Swahili not only play a role in different *chefferies* of the Kivu Provinces, where the languages were originally spoken, but also in the larger cities, such as Goma. Here, specific neighborhoods reveal a majority of ethnic Nande (in Deux Lampes), Hunde (in Himbi II), Shi (in Carmel), or Banyarwanda/Banyabwisha speakers (in Nyabushongo). The meaning of different Kivu Swahili accents is especially important in (post)conflict settings where ethnic(ized) identities are fluently re-negotiated and subject to political debates. According to the different communities of practice, the following groups the kinds of variation that are recurrent in Kivu Swahili into subsections.

4.1 Swahili ya Banande

Swahili ya Banande was mainly introduced by the ‘Nande’, an ethnic group from the northern part of North Kivu, commonly referred to as *Le Grand Nord*. This ethnic group occupies the majority of the area around the cities of Lubero, Butembo and Beni, among a wider region. Nande people speak Kinande, which is a Bantu language, and the influence of this on their Swahili becomes evident on a phonological, morphopragmatic and lexical level. Among the most salient phonological features is the replacement of the postalveolar fricative with the

alveolar voiceless fricative, e.g. in the applicative suffix *-ish/-esh* [is]/[es], or PRF *-lisha-* [lisa] (16a-16b).

- (16a) *ba-na-som-es-a* *ba-toto*
 SM₂-PRS-study-CAUS-FV NP₂-child
 ‘they are teaching the children’

- (16b) *ni-lisa-tok-a* *ku* *ma-somo*
 SM_{1SG}-PRF-come-from-FV LOC NP₆-school
 ‘I have already left school/come out of school’

Moreover, the voiced labiodental fricative is replaced with a voiced bilabial fricative, for instance in lexemes such as *vita* [βita], or names such as *Viviane* [βiβjan]. Morphologically, a double prefix of class 1 *mu-* appears before specific honorific terms, such as *mubaba* (‘Sir’), *mumama* (‘lady’) (17-18). Another specific feature of the Banande people’s Swahili is the use of an intensifying particle *di*, from the French ‘dis’? (Gysels 1992) especially at the end of a question (18).

- (17) *leo* *apa* *ku-li-fik-a* *mu-mama* *moya* *ivi*
 today here SM₁₇-PST-arrive-FV NP₁-mother INDEF DEM
 ‘today some (unspecified) lady arrived here’

- (18) *ule* *mu-baba* *a-li-on-a* *mu-toto* *wake* *di?*
 DEM₁ NP₁-father SM₁-PST-see-FV NP₁-child POSS_{3SG} INTENS
 ‘Did that man see his child (eventually/at all)?’

4.2 Swahili ya Banyarwanda (Banyabwisha/Banyamasisi)

There is a large number of Congolese citizens in the eastern part of the country, bordering Rwanda, who are sometimes also referred to as ‘Banyarwanda’ (Rwandans). They speak a dialect of Kinyarwanda called ‘Kinyabwisha’ or ‘Kinyamasisi’ depending on whether they come from Bwisha or Masisi respectively in North Kivu. Swahili ya Banyarwanda is also spoken by some Rwandans from the neighboring city ‘Gisenyi’, where the number of Swahili speakers is higher than in other parts of Rwanda. Hence, the dialects of ‘Kinyabwisha/Kinyamasisi’, spoken in two territories of DR Congo, have an impact on Kivu Swahili on several levels:

The major phonological feature is a realization of the lateral [l] as a tap [ɾ], such as in *pale* [pare] ‘over there’, *kuikala* [kuikara] ‘to stay, to live’, PRF *lisha-* [ɾiʃa] as in *Ulishamaliza kula?* [uriʃamaliza kula]? ‘Have you finished eating?’. The realization of complex velarized consonants in Kinyarwanda, <sw> [skɰ] and <bw> [bg], also occurs in their realization of

ANALYZING WAYS OF SPEAKING KIVU SWAHILI: VARIATION AND ETHNIC BELONGING

Kivu Swahili; which they refer to as [skmahiri]. For example, the connective of noun class 14 is often realized by ethnic Banyarwanda (or, Banyabwisha and Banyamasisi) as *bwa* [bga].

Grammatical retention can be ascertained in calques such as *ujiendeye* ('go for yourself') which display the reflexive morpheme *-ji-* from Kinyarwanda/Kinyabwisha *wigendere* (with REFL *-i-*). Terms of address, such as endearment terms, are also often calqued from Kinyarwanda/Kinyabwisha, such as in (19).

- (19) *mu-toto wa mama u-ji-endeley-e*
 NP₁-child CONN₁ (NP)₁.mother SM₂SG-REFL-continue-SBJV
ha-ki-ta-ku-maliz-iy-a ki-tu
 NEG-SM₇-FUT-OM₂SG-end-APPL-FV NP₇-thing
 'Mother's child, go for yourself/on your own, it's nothing/not important'

This sentence is calqued from Kinyarwanda/Kinyabwisha *umwana wa maama wigendere ndacyo birakumarira*.⁵

4.3 Swahili ya Bashi

The Bashi are an ethnic group found in South Kivu who speak Mashi. Commonly referred to in North Kivu as street hawkers, they are well-known for their business strategies of selling small items like jewelry and second hand clothes to passersby. Bashi speak their own kind of Kivu Swahili, which can be easily recognized. Among the most salient phonological features are aspirated voiceless stops and final devoicing (after an aspirated stop) such as in (20). These aspirated stops can be seen as a phonological feature retained from Mashi.

- (20) *b-iko na tafuta [tʰafutʰa] mu-tu [mutʰu] mw-enye*
 SM₂-COP PRG search NP₁-person NP₁-REL
a-na-tesek-a [anathesekʰa]
 SM₁-PRS-suffer-FV
 'they are looking for someone who is suffering'

4.4 Crossing, mocking and mimicking: Social implications of shifting accents

Mimicry of accents and the adaptation of speakers to their interlocutors are common examples of the variability of Kivu Swahili. Speakers' linguistic accommodations may assure

⁵ The Swahili spoken in Gisenyi (the western part of Rwanda bordering the eastern part of DR Congo) is also included in this category, despite being diffused outside the DR Congo.

their security, prevent ethnicized tension and conflict, or promise economic advantages in petty trade transactions. Moreover, the ludic employment of accents is used for mockery and play in heterogeneous groups; according to speakers' age, regional and ethnic background or level of education (e.g., those who studied Standard Swahili vs. those who have learnt Swahili informally). Rampton (1995: 3) describes the stylization of English (for instance in mixed groups with speakers of Creole or Asian background), as adolescents actively rework negative ethno-linguistic stereotypes that circulate in the dominant ideology, improving their multi-ethnic lives together in complex group constellations. The situation among groups of youths in England, as described by Rampton, can be compared to the situation of negatively perceived accents in Goma. According to Bhabha (1994: 86), mimicry can be defined as a sign of "double articulation"; it can highlight the intention to appropriate the other or may be used as a sign of power. In Kivu Swahili, mimicry is also commonly used among speakers with divergent ethnic backgrounds (and among students) as a strategy of negotiating power relations. This example can also be referred to as crossing, despite deviating from Rampton's concept in several ways, as it still focuses on inclusion and exclusion among communities of speakers. An interlocutor, C. Havugimana, shared an experience while he was still attending high school at Institut Lukanga.

In September 2007, when I went to Institut Lukanga – a boarding school – for studies, suddenly when I reached the place, I was so shocked to find out that they used to tease new students and especially those who did not come from the northern area ('Grand Nord') ...this was the hard way to be welcomed by fellow students. For my own safety and since I had a clue on how "Swahili ya Banande" is spoken, I decided to use it so that they might be deceived and think I am from their community, even though I was coming from another area, one they could just think I spent some time at [if they were aware of my accent]. After noticing that there could not be another way for me to be safe, I decided to employ this ethnic register 'Swahili ya Banande' from the beginning on and throughout all my stay there. At that moment, there were some ethnic clashes between groups in North Kivu and mainly between 'Banande' and 'Banyabwisha'... It all started with greetings and registration into the different offices of the school then I was taken to dormitories where I got to know students who wanted by all means to know about my identity, what my name was, where I was from, which ethnic group and so on, just to try to get to know if I was not one of the Banyarwanda [or Banyabwisha] who they were assuming I was. While I responded to them in French, some started shouting, "why are you not speaking in Swahili though you are from Goma?", "Maybe you are not even Congolese and instead you are a Rwandese who is pretending to be a Congolese" etc. Hearing this forced me to use my skills and try to twist my way of speaking Swahili to make sure I fit in that place. I started afresh by introducing myself to others and also to deceive them that I was one of them in order to avoid to be beaten or teased:

'Badii, eeh, miiye [mí:je↓] jina yangu Kolee [kóle↓], minatokeya [minatokeja] Goma alakini niko na miye wa uuku [ú:ku↓], mama yangw'eh ni wa Lubero

ANALYZING WAYS OF SPEAKING KIVU SWAHILI: VARIATION AND ETHNIC BELONGING

alakini tunaishi Goma juu ya kazi ya mubaaba [mubá:ba↓], anatumikaka ku CBK, ivi musiwaze niko murondo, na sijuwe kinande muzuri juu nilizaliwaka Kisangany'eh, na gisii munaa juuwa kuule habasemaake Kinaandee, basii musinikamate sawa mutu wa fasi yengiine juu ata kamaa sijuuwe Kinaandee niko weenu tuu'

[Buddies, my name is Collin, I am from Goma but I am also from this area, my mother comes from Lubero but we live in Goma because of my father's job, he works at CBK (Communauté Baptiste au Kivu), so please do not think I am a Munyarwanda, and one more thing is I really do not know well Kinande as I was born in Kisangani where Kinande is rarely spoken, please do not treat me like an intruder and feel for me because even if I do not know Kinande, I am still one of yours.] (my translation from French to English, my transcription)

Immediately after the strategic adaptation of Kivu Swahili for his fellow students (especially on the phonological level with tonal shifts, downdrift and vowel adaptation), the interlocutor stated that he was accepted to their community and everyone became hospitable. Other sources have confirmed that the skills of “quickly twisting someone's accent” or showing a high degree of linguistic accommodation represent a legitimate way of changing one's Swahili in order to gain group access. Fig. (2) shows the practices of mockery and humiliation among a group of students from the Institut Lukanga, representative of the common practices of ethnic/ethnolinguistic exclusion in multilingual schools.

Figure 2: Mockery, humiliation and stigmatization of fellow students at Institute Lukanga (photograph by the author)



5. Conclusion and future outlook

In this paper, an overview of the different styles and registers of Kivu Swahili has been presented (for another study on Kivu Swahili/Congo Swahili, see Kaji, this volume); advocating that there is no specific dialect of Kivu Swahili, but rather that its realizations often depend upon situational language use, the individual relationships between speakers, or also upon questions of prestige (as in more formal contexts of speech).

In other cases, variation can be based on speakers' patterns of mimicry or playful language (as is the case in youth languages and ludlings) or on the exclusion of other speakers due to their ethnic background. The study of the registers of Kivu Swahili has shown that further research on variation in Kiswahili dialects and their soci(ologic)al implications is needed in future academic works. For example, a focus on registers and ethnicized language in conflict settings is, arguably, a necessity (as also to be elaborated for the Kenyan conflict in 2007, general conflict settings within DRC, or Burundi since 2015 etc.; for Burundian Swahili, see Nassenstein, this volume). Moreover, this preliminary study of the ethnic registers in Kivu Swahili could not only serve as a starting point for phonological or morphological divergence, but also highlight pragmatic variation, such as politeness, honorifics or taboos. This consideration of Kivu Swahili and its multitude of realizations (geographically/regionally based, ethnically motivated, differing according to status or situation) could also lead to a general acknowledgement of the fluidity of Swahili styles and registers beyond the well-researched fields of study. Thus, the broad variability in the Kivus could bring a new perspective to the considerations of variation in Swahili.

Abbreviations

-	morpheme boundary	LOC	locative
1	noun class 1	NC	noun class (running text)
APPL	applicative	NP	nominal prefix
CAUS	causative	OM	object marker
COP	copula	PL	plural
COM	comitative	PP	pronominal prefix
CONN	connective	PRG	progressive aspect
CONS	consecutive	PRF	perfect
DEM	demonstrative	PRS	present tense
ECS	East Coast (Standard) Swahili	PST	past
FUT	future tense	REFL	reflexive
FV	final vowel	REL	relative marker
INDEF	indefinite	SM	subject marker
INF	infinitive	SG	singular
INTENS	intensifier	SM	subject marker
IPFV	imperfective	SBJV	subjunctive

ANALYZING WAYS OF SPEAKING KIVU SWAHILI:
VARIATION AND ETHNIC BELONGING

References

- Barth, Fredrik (ed.). 1969. *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference*. Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press.
- Bose, Paulin Baraka. 2018. More than youth language: The multiple meanings of Yabacrâne (DR Congo). *The Mouth* 3: 199-205.
- Bhabha, Homi K. 1994. *The Location of Culture*. London/New York: Routledge.
- Bose, Paulin Baraka & Nico Nassenstein. 2016. Morphosyntactic core features of Kivu Swahili: A synopsis. *Afrikanistik & Ägyptologie Online (AÄeO)* 2016. [<https://www.afrikanistik-aegyptologie-online.de/archiv/2016/4479/>] (last accessed on 17-05-2017).
- de Rooij, Vincent A. 1996. *Cohesion through Contrast: Discourse Structure in Shaba Swahili/French Conversations*. Amsterdam: Ifott.
- Eckert, Penelope. 2000. *Linguistic Variation as Social Practice*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Ferrari, Aurélia, Marcel Kalunga & Georges Mulumbwa. 2014. *Le Swahili de Lubumbashi. Grammaire, textes, lexique*. Paris: Karthala.
- Goyvaerts, Didier. 1988. Indoubil: A Swahili hybrid in Bukavu (with comments on Indu Bill by K. Kabongo-Mianda). *Language in Society* 17: 231-242.
- Goyvaerts, Didier. 2007. Bukavu Swahili. Tense, aspect and blurry history. *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 74: 5-33.
- Goyvaerts, Didier & Tembue Zembele. 1992. Codeswitching in Bukavu. *Codeswitching*, ed. by C. M. Eastman. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters. pp. 71-82.
- Gysels, Marjolein. 1992. French in urban Lubumbashi Swahili: Codeswitching, borrowing, or both? *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 13(1-2): 41-55.
- Hunter, William F. 1959. *A Manual of Congo Swahili Grammar*. Goma: La Mission Baptiste du Kivu.
- Hymes, Dell. 1962. The ethnography of speaking. *Anthropology and Human Behavior*, ed. by Thomas Gladwin & William C. Sturtevant. Washington, D.C.: Anthropological Society of Washington. pp. 13-53.
- Kaji, Shigeki. 1982. Enquête préliminaire sur la phrase Swahili du Zaïre. *Multilingualism in Swahili-speaking Area*, ed. by Y. Wazaki. Toyama: University of Toyama. pp. 75-120.

- Kaji, Shigeki. 1985. *Deux mille phrases de Swahili tel qu'il se parle au Zaïre*. Tokyo: Institute for the Study of Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa (ILCAA).
- Kaji, Shigeki. 2002. How was it possible for Swahili to spread as far as Zaïre? Search from its structure. *Social Changes in Contemporary Africa: Dynamic Observations on Languages and Cultures*, ed. by M. Miyamoto & M. Matsuda. Kyoto: Jimbun Shoin. pp. 134-149. [original title in Japanese]
- Kapanga, André M. 1991. Language Variation and Change: A Case Study of Shaba Swahili. PhD thesis, University of Illinois.
- Kioko, Eric M. 2015. Regional varieties and “ethnic” registers of Sheng. *Youth Language Practices in Africa and Beyond*, ed. by Nico Nassenstein & Andrea Hollington. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter. pp. 119-148.
- Nassenstein, Nico. 2016. The new urban youth language Yabacrâne in Goma (DR Congo). *Sociolinguistic Studies* 10(1-2): 233-258.
- Nassenstein, Nico & Paulin Baraka Bose. 2016. *Kivu Swahili Texts and Grammar Notes*. Munich: LINCOM.
- Rampton, Ben. 1995. *Crossing: Language and Ethnicity among Adolescents*. London/New York: Routledge.
- Rossé, René. 1977. Le Swahili populaire de Lubumbashi. PhD thesis, Université de Nice.
- Sandner, Philipp. 2010. Nani ni bwana wa salama? MA Thesis, University of Cologne.
- Schicho, Walter. 1982. *Syntax des Swahili von Lubumbashi*. Wien: Afro-Pub.
- Storch, Anne. 2011. *Secret Manipulations*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Tajfel, Henri. 1978. *Differentiation between Social Groups: Studies in the Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations*. Oxford: Academic.
- Whitehead, John & L. F. Whitehead. 1928. *Manuel de Kingwana. Le dialecte occidental de Swahili*. Lualaba: La Mission de et à Wayika.
- Zelinsky, Wilbur. 2001. *The Enigma of Ethnicity: Another American Dilemma*. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press.