Heritage as a motivation for Kiswahili language learning at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa

Rajabu A. Chipila
University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

Abstract

This article explores the role of heritage as a motivation for learning Kiswahili as a foreign language at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa. Since publication of the works of Gardner and Lambert on language motivation in the 1970s, this aspect has dominated the area of second and foreign language learning. While initial studies on language learning motivation were focused on major western languages, such as English and French in Canada, in recent years the focus has shifted towards what in the United States are called less commonly taught languages (LCTLs). Within the context of the US, the LCTLs are generally defined as the low-enrolment and infrequently taught languages and most cited examples are, Chinese, Japanese, and Russian, and in recent years indigenous African languages such as Kiswahili, Amharic, Hausa, Igbo, Akan, IsiZulu, and IsiXhosa. Arabic is also included on the list. The research emphasis has particularly been on the language educators' attempt to establish students' reasons for engaging in learning these languages. It has been well documented that heritage is one of the main reasons students choose to learn the LCTLs in America. Nevertheless, there is lack of information on motivating factors for African students learning other African languages within African universities. This problem might be attributed to the absence of the African language programmes taught in universities of other African countries where the languages are not native. It is only in recent years that Kiswahili has started to be taught in universities of other non-Kiswahili speaking countries, such as at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa, University of Namibia in Namibia, and the University of Zimbabwe, in Zimbabwe. Using the action research approach, the present study shares research findings on the role of heritage as a learning motivation among students studying Kiswahili as a foreign language at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa.

1.0 Introduction

This article sets out to explore the role of heritage as a motivation for learning Kiswahili as a foreign language at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa. Since publication of the works of Gardner and Lambert on language motivation in 1970s, this subject matter has become a dominant topic particularly among the language educators who attempt to establish students' reasons for language learning. While initial studies on language learning motivation were focused on major western languages such as English and French in Canada (Öztürk, 2012; Dörnyei, 2009) in recent years the focus has shifted towards what in the United States are called less commonly taught languages (henceforth LCTLs) (Bao & Lee, 2012). Within the context of the US, the LCTLs are generally defined as the 'low-enrolment and infrequently taught languages' and most cited examples are Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, and Russian (Bao & Lee, 2012, p. 1). However, in recent years indigenous African languages such as Kiswahili, Amharic, Hausa, Igbo, Akan, IsiZulu, and IsiXhosa have also caught interests of the researchers (Dwyer, 2003; Janus, 1998; Marten & Mostert, 2012; Mazrui & Mazrui, 1998; Mbatha, 2013; Moshi, 2006;).

It has been well documented that heritage is one of the main reasons students choose to learn the LCTLs in America (Abuhakema, 2012; Cheng, 2012; ; Dwyer, 2003; Lee, 2005; Qin, 2006; Temples, 2010;). Nevertheless, there is overall lack of studies on heritage learning as a motivating factor for African students learning other African languages within African universities. This problem might be attributed to the absence of African language programmes taught in other African universities. It is only in recent years when Kiswahili has started to be taught in universities of other non-Kiswahili speaking African countries, such as at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa, University of Namibia in Namibia, and the University of Zimbabwe, in Zimbabwe. Previous attempts to teach Kiswahili in other African countries, such as in Nigeria at the University of Ibadan and in Libya at the University of Sebba, proved futile. Using the action research approach, the present study shares research findings on the role of heritage as a learning motivation among students learning Kiswahili as a foreign language at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa.

2.0 Conceptual underpinning of the heritage language learning

(Abuhakema, 2012; Cheng, 2012; ; Dwyer, 2003; Lee, 2005; Qin, 2006; Temples, 2010). The concepts "heritage learning" and "heritage speaker" were initially developed in Canada in the 1970s. However, it gained its prominence in the United States, especially in the 1990s (Montrul, 2010). As a result, it is noted that heritage is one of the widespread motivators for students' choice for language learning in the United States particularly for those whose parents have migratory background (Damron & Forsyth, 2012; Jordan, 2015). This state of affaire has been interpreted as the highlight of the extent of the deep interweave that exists between heritage and identity among the Americans.

Jordan (2015) points out that this situation is a reminiscence of the fact that the majority of American families have existed in the US only for a handful of generations. Therefore, their empathy with their lineage is still robust. Yet, since the speed of integration and socialization of the immigrants into the American mainstream culture is so strong that the majority families find themselves fully linguistically integrated into the English language within just a few generations. This scenario militates against the subsequent generations of the US population to long for reconnections with the similitude of ancestries through languages (Jordan, 2015).

The term 'heritage languages' has been approached both narrowly and broadly. Narrowly, 'heritage languages' are defined as the languages spoken by migrants who moved in an area where a dominant language is spoken while still at tender ages and their subsequent children (Cho, Shin & Krashen as cited in Abuhakema, 2011, p. 75). However, broadly, 'heritage languages' are viewed as the languages spoken by non-societal linguistic minorities or indigenous people (Valdes as cited in Abuhakema, 2011, p. 75). Generally, however, the concepts 'heritage language learning' and 'heritage learners' are broadly applied to refer to languages and individuals who are "members of a linguistic minority, who grew up exposed to their home language and the majority language" (Montrul, 2010, p. 4). The term *heritage language* was firstly used in the Canadian context to refer to any "language other than English and French". The concept was intended to reference the languages spoken by indigenous individuals or by immigrants (Cummins as cited in Abuhakema, 2011, p. 76). In addition, Fishman broadens the definition of heritage learning by suggesting that it can refer to any "language of personal relevance other than English" (Chapelle, 2013). In a summary note, Ann Kelleher suggests that:

> In general, the term "heritage language learner" is used to describe a person studying a language, who has proficiency in or a cultural connection to that language. However, in many classrooms, some students will have a connection to the language of study through their family and some proficiency in it.

2.1 Heritage in the language learning

Valdes (2001, p. 30) points out that 'within the profession of foreign language education, the use of the term *heritage language speaker* is relatively new'. On its essence, heritage learning refers to studying a language with which an individual has profound personal connection (Valdes, 2001, p. 37). It is emphasized in heritage language learning that what is significant is the historic and subjective link to the language and not necessarily the individual speakers' concrete adeptness of the language (Valdes, 2001). This view is supported by López (2008, p. 15) who highlights that a vital aim for learners who study languages for heritage reasons is to understand not only a language but most importantly ethos that connect them to their local communities, kinsfolks and ancestries within their area of current residents and beyond, where they believe they have hold implicit and explicit connections. Consequently, Valdes (2001) highlights that:

> In the case of the teaching of heritage languages as academic subjects to students with some proficiency in the language, challenges include determining the range of proficiencies that these students have already developed in the language and understanding the ways to strengthen these proficiencies (p. 39).

So, what is to be emphasised is that heritage language is the one used to identify languages other than the dominant language or languages in a given social contexts such as English and French.

2.2 Categorization of the heritage language learners

Wiley (2005) notes that, within foreign language learning, there is a considerable controversy with regards to what should be categorized as a heritage language learner. This controversy has raised issues related to identity, inclusion, and exclusion. It is argued that the debate on defining the term 'heritage learner' dwells in the two possibilities which reflect first, affiliation with an ethno-linguistic group, and second proficiency the speaker holds in a heritage language. The scholars interested in this subject area have hitherto not come to terms on what should be of more important in the categorization of a heritage language speaker (Wiley, 2005).

While the debate is still rife, Bardack (2010) considers heritage language as the one that individuals believe to be of their intrinsic, home-based, or ancestral. It is also thought that the heritage language is the one which refers to the forms of linkages which exist between the minority languages such as an indigenous or immigrant languages and the community or speakers of such a language

(Bardack, 2010). In such situations, most African languages, such as Kiswahili taught in the western countries fall under this category. According to Jordan (2015) and Damron and Forsyth (2012), most Americans who had been surveyed indicated that they wanted to learn languages that could place them closer to their ancestral roots and most of the cited languages included African and Asian.

Dwyer (2003) shares similar perspective regarding categorization of the heritage language learners, especially in the US. He advocates that even though most students who choose to study African languages in the American institutions of higher learning can be classified as heritage language learners or career learners, the majority fall under the former category (Dwyer, 2003). He clarifies that heritage learners' motive to study languages is hinged on their desire to learn more about the languages and cultures of their communities, relatives, or ancestors (Dwyer, 2003). It is further asserted that African heritage learners fall into two categories, the first category being the one involving students whose descendants came to the US between the 16th and 18th centuries (Dwyer, 2003).

Since the particular African origin and ancestral language of this category is mainly indefinite, for such learners virtually any African language meets the heritage function (Dwyer, 2003). So, given the prominence of Kiswahili as an African language in American popular culture, this language is often favoured by these heritage learners (Dwyer, 2003). Because of this, Kiswahili has by far outnumbered other African languages, not only within the United States (Dwyer, 2003; Mazrui & Mazrui, 1998) but also in Europe (Marten & Mostert, 2012).

The second category of the heritage learners, according to Dwyer (2003), is African-heritage students whose families migrated into the US between the 20th and 21st centuries. The origin and the African languages of their parents or grandparents of this group are traceable, thus these new generations of the African Americans have a tendency to inhabit with their relevant ethnicities and specific communities (Dwyer, 2003). As a result, there are many African language programmes that have been established to respond to the heritage language learners by offering courses at the institutions of higher learning and in the wider communities as a measure of their outreach and service missions to cater for the needs of these individuals (Dwyer, 2003). However, the heritage language learners' inherent desire to develop a better internalization of the culture of their parents is often greater than their desire to learn the language (Dwyer, 2003).

A quite similar approach to the categorization of heritage learning is offered by Van Deusen-Scholl as quoted in Glynn (2012, p. 114). According to him, heritage learners can be distinguished between those who possess a certain amount of "bilingualism and learners with heritage motivation who seek to connect to their heritage through learning the target language". It is elaborated that regarding

learners "with heritage motivation' the significance is attached to gratifying individuals' desire for an identity by establishing a connection to 'one's heritage language and culture" (Giangreco as quoted in Glynn, 2012, p. 114). On the other hand, heritage learners who have 'little knowledge of their heritage language often possess the desire to learn about who they are, and the opportunity to formulate their identities is a motivating factor' (Carreira as quoted in Glynn, 2012, p. 114).

3.0 Heritage as a motivation for African language learning

In the context of African language learning in the west, heritage has become one of the main motives for students' choice to study the languages as a result of the students' quest for a revival of their lost identities and heritage (Dwyer, 2003; Mazrui & Mazrui, 1998). Commenting on the reasons for students' choice to study African languages, including Kiswahili, in the US colleges and universities, Mazrui and Mazrui (1998) illuminate that heritage is one of the underlying factors. According to them, an attempt to appease the "bi-focal quest for ethno-linguistic identity among African Americans" (Mazrui & Mazrui, 1998, p. 34), who had lost their identities through different socio-historic events and histories, sparked a massive struggle in the American academia. They elaborate that "the demand for civil rights, thus, sometimes came to include the rights of access to the African linguistic heritage in the corridors of American academic circles" (Mazrui & Mazrui, 1998, p. 34).

To achieve that aspiration, African Americans explicitly wanted to "relink with continental African languages" (Mazrui & Mazrui, 1998, p. 34) through learning the languages of their perceived ancestry. This view is supported by Spolsky (1999, p. 188) who points out that the beginning of teaching and learning of Kiswahili in American institutions of higher learning can fairly be attributed to the result of the "Afro-American ethnic movements" rather than pure interest in the language itself. Consequently, the presence of numerous:

African languages in American educational institutions that now seem to be taken so much for granted, is one of the products of those major battles for civil rights which were fought on American campuses in the 1960s" (Mazrui & Mazrui, 1998, p. 34).

It is through these movements that currently African languages are taught widely in American universities and in some high schools, with Kiswahili being by far the most popular (Mazrui & Mazrui, 1998, p. 34).

4.0 Studies on heritage learning of other languages

There is a plethora of studies on the role of heritage as a motivation for learning other languages. For example, Belnap (1995) reports that even though in the study he conducted the learners indicated they were learning Arabic mostly to read Arabic literature, to understand Arabic culture, and a desire to travel or live in the Middle East where Arabic varieties are mostly spoken, the most pervasive factor was heritage. In line with the argument that heritage is an important factor for foreign language learning choice, Janus (1998:167) reports commensurate results from the study which involved "sixty LCTLs teachers, who attended the conference hosted by the Centre for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition (CARLA) at the University of Minnesota". The majority of participants cited heritage as the primary reason for their students to enrol in the language programmes (Janus, 1998, p. 167). In the study, majority of teachers revealed that most students who exhibited heritage interest for learning foreign languages were "first or second generation Americans, who wanted to solidify ties with their culture and talk to parents and grandparents, and also those whose ancestry is more distant but who are interested in discovering more about their roots or ethnicity" (Janus, 1998, p. 167).

Akin to this, is Glynn's (2012) contention that some learners in her study stated that they decided to learn languages that were close or reflect their own social and cultural ties. For instance, it was found that most Latino learners indicated that learning and enhancing Spanish made them experience a great deal of "connection to their ethnicity and their families". As a result, heritage became the main incentive for their initial and continued enrolment in the language programmes (Glynn, 2012, p. 114). One particular example was a Latino student who was adopted from Paraguay and possessed an inherent "desire to gain proficiency in Spanish and learn about the language and culture of her birth parents" (Glynn, 2012, p. 114). This student had "adopt-white" parents and she was brought up in white culture, but through learning Spanish she experienced an underlying connection to her heritage (Glynn, 2012, p. 114).

Similarly, there are reports that some Japanese language programme instructors indicated that most Asian-American students showed a strong "desire to learn a language that reflected their Asian heritage" (Glynn, 2012, p. 115). As a result, most basic Japanese classes were mostly attended by Asian-American students, with the exception of an insignificant number of white or Africa-American learners (Glynn, 2012). This is because, since these Asian-American learners were of Japanese descent, the Japanese language offered them a direct reflection and connection with their specific and broader Asian heritage. This situation is different from the one in which, for example, "African-American learners who may choose to learn an African language even if it is not the same African language

of their heritage, but the most important thing is that the students yet get the value of engaging into their perceived identities" (Carreira as quoted in Glynn, 2012, p. 115).

Nonetheless, it is advocated that there is a need to distinguish between "heritage learners and learners with heritage motivation" (Lee, 2005, p. 556). In the study that involved 530 university students in the US, Lee (2003) saw there was obvious "inadequacy of the heritage vs. non-heritage binary distinction". This is because there is a huge variation among students identified as heritage language learners. For instance, it was established that some African-American university students choose to learn Yoruba or Kiswahili to connect to their "heritage" and finding meaning in their ethnicity even though they do not know whether their ancestors ever spoke those specific African languages (Lee, 2005, p. 558). However, Lee's scepticism has been explicated by the Dwyer (2003) in the previous paragraph when he categorized heritage language learners into those who know and those who do not know their ancestral linkages.

Parental influence has been reported to be a major support for heritage language learning among students (Nunn, 2008). The parents' language background influences heritage-language learning and often such parents are identified to be "more involved in their children's language study than non-ethnic parents" (Sung & Padilla as quoted in Nunn, 2008, p. 479). For instance, the statements such as "my parents encourage me to study Japanese" and "my parents feel that I should learn Japanese" were virtually common among participants identified as heritage learners (Nunn, 2008, p 479). This was attributed to the fact that most Asian parents normally possess higher expectations for their children's education (Catsambis & Garland; Eaton & Dembo as quoted in Nunn, 2008, p. 479; Peng & Wright).

The parents influence and support of their children's education has been stressed. For example, it is assumed that "the pressure to please parents corresponds with a greater fear of low academic performance", which, as a result, pushes students to attain higher academic success (Nunn, 2008, p. 479). In reiterating the significance of the parental influence on children' decision making, Meece, Glienke and Askew (2009) have this to say:

> Parents are important sources of information children draw on to form their ability and value perceptions. Parents also provide and encourage different recreational and learning activities that can support the development of specific skills and interests. Additionally, parents are important role models. They communicate information about their own abilities and skills, and what is valued and important, through their choice of work and leisure activities.

All that said, it is noted that in most cases the study of any second or foreign language is thought to be professional enhancement, a way of self-advancement, and a cause for familiarization of the new social ideals (Dwyer, 2003). Lee (2005) resonates that heritage learners are often interested to study a language so as to "develop and define their ethnic and cultural identity" (Lee, 2005, p. 556).

Ueno (2005) studied dynamics and changing nature of motivation among 24 beginner leaners of Chinese, Japanese, and Russian at a major U.S. university. At the interval of a semester apart between questionnaire administration and follow-up interviews, she found that the majority of the learners were initially learning less commonly taught languages (LCTLs) out of a desire to study something unique; however, by the second semester, many learners felt motivated to learn because they were feeling a sense of accomplishment, which is more of intrinsic than initial motivation.

5.0 Methodology

This study was hinged within the qualitative research framework, both in data collection and analysis. The research findings were thematically discerned and discussed. The data was collected for two years spread over the four semesters, from January 2013 to December 2014. The participants were beginner and intermediate level Kiswahili learners. The participants' age was between 18 and 23 years old. All the participants were undergraduate students, except one postgraduate. The participants were randomly selected based on their availability and possession of key information. Therefore, purposive sampling was the main technique used to select individuals to participate in the study. This means that all students who were enrolled in the Kiswahili modules were asked to participate in the study. However, only those who agreed to participate through signing the consent forms were asked to fill in the questionnaire and be subjected to the follow-up in-depth interviews. The main method of data collection was questionnaire. This method was supplemented by follow-up in-depth interviews and observation. Questionnaires were administered to students whose origins were non-South African. As a result, a total of sixteen students were identified to have foreign origins. The countries of origins were Burundi, DR Congo, Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania, and Zambia. The following Table 2.1 indicates the distribution of the participants based on their origins.

S/N	Country of origin	Number of learners
1.	Tanzania	1
2.	Tanzania	1
3.	Kenya	1
4.	Uganda	2
5.	Burundi	2
6.	Congo DR	6
7.	Malawi	2
8.	Zambia	1
9.	**Total**	**16**

Table 2.1 Number of participants by their country of origin

6.0 Data presentation and discussion of the research findings

Analysis of the data gathered through questionnaires, follow-up in-depth interviews, and observation rendered various research findings. The findings were themed as family connection; improvised heritage and identity; and the language of refuge, and family ties. These themes were derived from the list of statements the participants selected as the reasons for decision to learn Kiswahili as an elective module. These themes are discussed in the following subsections.

6.1 Family connection

As established by Glynn's (2012, p. 114) that most Latino learners indicated that learning and enhancing Spanish made them experience a great deal of "connection to their ethnicity and their families", in this study it was found that some participants learned Kiswahili to be able to properly connect with their family members particularly parents and relatives at their homes. This was mostly associated by the desire to understand and connect better with their parents who mostly spoke Kiswahili when at home. These participants were living in areas where the dominant languages were English and isiZulu so they grew up learning these languages. However, when they returned home, their parents still spoke Kiswahili and the participants felt the need to understand better the language so that they can freer interact and engage in conversation with their parents. One of the participants had this to say:

> *You know my dad is a Tanzanian and my mom is a Nigerian. But I mostly visit Tanzania. I have not been to Nigeria. So, every time I go there, especially in Moshi my cousins don't speak English. They only speak Kiswahili. So I feel like embarrassment. I would like to talk to them in Kiswahili but I can't. My dad and mom speak Kiswahili at home here in South Africa. But I can't pick it up because I don't spend home too long. Even when I am at home my siblings also don't speak Kiswahili. So,*

> *when I knew there was Kiswahili here at UKZN I said I must learn it. Fortunately my dad and mom supported it.*

Similar experience was shared by another participant who was born in Tanzania but he migrated to Canada at a tender age to accompany his parents. According to him, most of the times his parents spoke Kiswahili at home. So, even though he could understand he lacked confidence and therefore he was not able to engage in a prolonged conversation with them. In addition, when they visited Tanzania for holidays he struggled to mingle with his cousins because they were only speaking Kiswahili and his Kiswahili was not good enough. For him that was some sort of an embarrassment. When he and his father migrated to South Africa and found the UKZN was offering the Kiswahili course he decided to join on it so that he can strengthen his proficiency and subsequently up his confidence in the language. In his words, the participant had this to contend:

> *I am Tanzanian but I grew up in Canada where my parents moved to when I was still four. Because my parents only speak Kiswahili at home I managed to maintain some Kiswahili. But I can't converse in freely and my confidence is law. We often visit Tanzania for holidays. And when we are there things become a little bit complicated. My cousins, uncles, aunts and grannies only speak Kiswahili. Now when I speak Kiswahili I could see I was embarrassing them. They were regarding me as I was play acting. That was very weird, you know. So, I decided to have formal teaching in Kiswahili so that I can hopefully be able to converse freely but most importantly raise up my confidence in this language. I know I can speak a good deal of Kiswahili but I don't know why I lose confidence when I am confronted with native Kiswahili speakers.*

This scenario was echoed by another participant whose origin was Kenya. He narrated that even though he was born in Kenya, but he later migrated to South Africa with his parents and siblings. While his parents still speak Kiswahili at home, his siblings and he only speak English at schools and at home. They try to understand Kiswahili but it is not good enough. Things become even worse when they visit Kenya during holidays where their cousins see them as play acting by not speaking Kiswahili and instead speak English only. This experience poses a serious challenge to him that he badly wanted to lean Kiswahili so that he can freely interact with his cousins when he visits Kenya. To justify his words, this participant had this to say:

> *I am Kenyan but I have grown up here in South Africa. I came here when I was just six. Unfortunately my Kiswahili has been eroded. My parents speak Kiswahili at home but my siblings and I only speak English. Last time when I went to Kenya my siblings were mocking me with my patchy*

patchy Kiswahili. I was very uncomfortable. I couldn't be able to engage in conversations with them. I ended up avoiding them. My parents emphasize the importance of us learning this language. So, this year I saw a notice advising Kiswahili course here at the UKZN. And I was like wow this is the chance for me to learn this language. I told my dad and he was happy for it. So, that is how I came to this class.

6.2 Improvised heritage and identity

Some participants indicated that they learned Kiswahili not because they have direct connection with it but just because they thought the language was closer to their identities and heritage. These findings commensurate with the suggestion by Janus (1998) and Mazrui and Mazrui (1998) that popularity of Kiswahili in higher learning in the US is the result of loss of identity among Afro-Americans. As a result, the Afro-American students find themselves learning any African language they think represents their ancestral identities. While in the present study the students had clear knowledge of their ancestral identities, they still opted to learn Kiswahili not because it was the language of their direct lineages but it represented some sort of connection with their cultural ties back in their native lands. One participant who had Zambian origin but grew up in Swaziland confessed that she thought it was more convenient for her to learn Kiswahili rather than other languages offered at the UKZN such as IsiZulu, Afrikaans, French, and Germany. In her words, she had this to say:

I live in Swaziland but my parents are from Zambia. When I came here at UKZN I was required to learn one language as requirement for my degree. When I looked at the languages available I thought the one next to me was Kiswahili. I know a couple of people who speak Kiswahili. When I visit Zambia I meet a number of people who speak it. So I thought it was better for me to learn Kiswahili rather than other languages such as Zulu or Afrikaans. I thought Kiswahili will connect me with people who we share many cultural and socials aspects.

This sentiment was shared by another participant from Malawi. She indicated that even though Kiswahili was not commonly spoken in Malawi but she thought it was the language closer to her and her environment. She indicated that there was frequent interaction between Malawians and Tanzanians. So, for her learning Kiswahili was more to her personality that any other languages which were on offer at the UKZN. To justify her contention, the participant had this to say:

I am Malawian. I only came here to do my bachelor. There is a language requirement for my degree. So, when checked into the module booklet

and saw there was Kiswahili I decided to opt for it. I didn't see why I should learn IsiZulu or French, or Afrikaans, or Germany or even English. I don't see myself utilizing these other languages. Afrikaans and IsiZulu are only spoken here in South Africa. So, why should I spend my money, time and energy on them? About English I already know it. I am a language expert. So, I thought Kiswahili was more convenient for me. Many people in our country speak Kiswahili. We interact with Tanzanians a lot. So, for me Kiswahili is more useful than these other languages.

6.3 Language of refuge and family ties

The city of Durban in the KwaZulu-Natal Province in South Africa is one of the places that is a home to many immigrants from DR Congo. Most of these people speak various Congolese languages such as Kikongo, Tchiluba, Lingala, Kiswahili, and French but mostly are connected by French and Kiswahili. Majority of participants confessed that their parents speak Kiswahili at home. So, they would like to have a good command of Kiswahili so that they can manage to seamlessly communicate with their families at home but also with other Congolese in streets. One participant had this to say:

I am from Congo. When I am at home here in Durban I speak Kiswahili with my family. Also I speak Kiswahili with most people from Congo who don't speak French. You know here in Durban there are so many people from Congo. Also there are so many people from Burundi, Tanzania, and Kenya who speak Kiswahili. Sometimes Tanzanian and Kenyan Kiswahili is different from Congo Kiswahili. So, I want to learn this variety of Kiswahili so that when I speak with anyone I can understand and they can understand me as well.

Kiswahili as the language of both refuge and heritage was also evident through the narration of the participant whose origin was Burundi. She indicated that even though she was born in Durban and she knows little about Kiswahili, her parents speak Kiswahili all the time at home and among other Burundians. She indicated that she found it hard to talk to relatives when they visit home because of her lack of Kiswahili. Also, she was afraid that when she would visit Burundi she would not be able to mingle with the cousins and other relatives such as grannies, aunties, and uncles. She confessed that her motivation to learn Kiswahili was mostly heritage because she knew that Kiswahili was closer to her personality than other languages which she can only speak with people she does not share any kinship connections. This participant had this to say in her own words:

I was born here in Durban. My parents are from Burundi. They mostly speak Kiswahili at home. I speak a little bit of Kiswahili but I am not confident. But I feel like I need to master this language. I have not been

to Burundi but my parents tell me and my siblings that we will go there one day. So we must know to speak Kiswahili because that is the language spoken there. They tell us that if we don't speak Kiswahili we won't be able to communicate with our relatives there like our grandparents, uncles, aunties, and cousins. Sometimes my mum callsthem on phone and they want to speak with us but we can hold extended conversations. This irritates me sometimes.

7.0 Conclusion

This study examined the role of heritage as a motivation for learning Kiswahili as a foreign language at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa. The study involved students who were studying Kiswahili as a foreign language at the beginner and intermediate levels. A total of sixteen students were involved in the study. The study used qualitative approach to establish whether the students' decision to learn Kiswahili as a foreign language had any correlation with heritage. The study indicated that most participants whose origin was non-South Africa chose to learn Kiswahili for heritage factors. The factors were mainly a desire to communicate with their parents at home in the foreign country of stay. Also, some participants indicated that they wanted to learn Kiswahili so that they could communicate with their relatives when they visited their countries of origins.

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