



## **SOCIAL FACTORS INFLUENCING LANGUAGE CHANGE: A CASE OF KIBENA TO KIMASWITULE IN NJOMBE DISTRICT, TANZANIA**

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### **Abstract:**

The aim of the study was to examine the Language change from Kibena to Kimaswitule, specifically the study ought to identify social factors of Language change from Kibena to Kimaswitule; also to explore the impact of language change to the society. The study was done in Njombe District. The targeted population was the youth; the middle age and the elders (men and women) from Njombe district, below 15 years were not included in this study since they had little knowledge on the language change and shift from Kibena to Kimaswitule. 50 respondents were included in the study. The study used qualitative and quantitative approaches. The purposive and random sampling were used, the researcher predominantly used snowball sampling method to have sample for the study. Data were collected through, Focus Group Discussion (FGD), structured interview, questionnaire, observation and checklist methods. Data were analysed by scrutinizing, sorted, classified, coded and organized according to objectives of the study. The findings showed that, participant, personal needs, influence of other languages and development of towns are social factors for language change and the research concluded that, changes of Kibena to Kimaswitule has endangered the indigenous education of Wabena because change in the society goes hand in hand with the changes of the norms and values as language embeds culture. The study recommended that; society has to find ways of preserving their original ethnic language.

**Keywords:** language change, Kibena language, Kimaswitule language, language shift

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## 1. Introduction

The Bena language commonly known as Kibena or Ikibena like other Bantu languages usually uses the “Ki” prefix in referring to a language. The Bena gives two origins of the name: some hold that the name originated from the founding father by that name. Hence, the clans such as Manga, Mtende, and Kahenele of Ikilavugi identify themselves by that name. Usovi and Nyikolwe who live in Ikilavugi believed that the name is derived from either *hubena* which means to reap finger millet and hence referring to the people as Va-Bena vuledzi or it is derived from the practice of pounding salt. Both these explanations imply economic activities. Va-bena vuledzi implies that they were cultivators while pounding of salt implies that they were producers of salt.

Before the name “Bena” was used the country and the people were known by names of the areas in which they lived or by the names of their clan leaders, for instance; Sovi ‘Usovi’, Vakilavugi ‘Ikilavugi’, Vafwagi ‘Ifwagi’, Nyikolwe ‘Nyikolwe’, Vamasagati ‘Masagati’ and Vamavemba ‘Uwemba’ respectively. Whatever its origin, the name Bena is now applied to the present-day Bena, an agricultural Bantu-speaking people who live in Njombe region but also found in the neighbouring Ulanga district. In its broadest sense, Ubena means the whole area stretching in the west from the Mpangali valley (now part of Usangu) and the broader rising of Livingstone mountain ranges northwards to Igavilo and the whole of Nyikolwe in the south, Luhudzi-Ulanga valley in the east of this plateau. This area lays approximately between latitudes 7.5<sup>0</sup> and 9.8<sup>0</sup> South and longitudes 34.4<sup>0</sup> and 36<sup>0</sup> East (Nyangava 1988:49).

Kibena language comprises of about seven main varieties (Nyangava 1988:96). The varieties (dialects) are named after their geographical locations namely Kilupembe and Kimasagati spoken in eastern zone- (Lupembe zone), Ki-ilembula spoken in north western zone (Ilembula or Wanging’ombe zone), Ki-sovi spoken in the western zone (Maswamu zone), Kiulanga spoken in Ulanga district (Morogoro region) and Kimavemba spoken in the southern zone (Uwemba zone). Although these varieties (dialects) have slight differences in stress, intonation, pronunciation and some of them in phonological and morphological features, they are mutually intelligible and almost the same. In addition, Kibena has a lexical similarity with other ethnic languages, 71% with Pangwa, 65% with Hehe, 55% with Sangu, 53% with Kinga, 51% with Wanji and 47% with Kisi) (Nyangava 1988). There are few studies and literature on Kibena. However, none of these studies and literatures presents a comprehensive language change in Kibena. The present study sought to identify the changes and examine the factors which cause the change from Kibena to Kimaswitule

## **2. General Objectives**

The general objective of the study was to examine influence of language change from Kibena to Kimaswitule.

### **2.1. Specific Objectives**

The specific objectives of this study are:

1. Identify social factors that influence language change from Kibena to Kimaswitule;
2. To explore effects of language change from Kibena to Kimaswitule on the society.

## **3. Literature Review**

### **3.1 Language Change**

Language change is the manner in which the phonetic, morphology, semantic, syntax and other features of a language are modified over time. All languages are continually changing, English language for example, has a huge variety within itself and this variety is known as synchronic variation: from these different forms, comes the effect on language over time, known as diachronic change.

Two linguistic disciplines concern themselves with studying language change, historical linguistic and sociolinguistics. Historical linguistics examines how a language was spoken in the past and seeks to determine how present language derives from it and relate to one another. Sociolinguistics is interested in the origins of language changes and wants to explain how society and changes in society influence language.

([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/language\\_change](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/language_change))

Fasold (1984) wrote on the language maintenance and language shift. He says that language maintenance relies on the long term, collective results of language by the members of the community. Language shift takes place when members of the community have collectively chosen a new language.

The community collectively decides not to use the language that was formally in used. In his study, he pointed out factors that contribute to language shift: these include migration, industrialization, and economic changes, medium of instruction, government pressure and urbanization.

### 3.2 Studies on Factors of Language Change

Grosjean (1982) did a study on the monolingual immigrant families who immigrated to the United States from different parts of the world due to different reasons. The study pointed out the reasons for language change. The main reasons included educational policy, American Nationalism, Assimilation Policy, uses of the language as well as government policy.

Day (1985), who studied Hawaii and Comoro languages, wrote on language death as the result of cultural contact between two unequal societies in terms of economic resources, military strength and international prestige. He argues that Hawaii came into contact with the western world in 1778 when the Americans first entered the Island, a pidgin developed to enable the Hawaiians communicate with the Americans as they initially had no common language. The pidgin was used in limited circumstances such as in trade. As the whaling industry became important and the Island got exposure to the western world, the Islanders started giving room to other western civilizations like education and religion.

There have been many studies and theories to explain why languages change. The studies discover that all languages are constantly changing. The causes are many and varied ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/language\\_contact](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/language_contact)). The following are some of the causes of language change.

### 3.3 Analogy

Analogy is both the cognitive process of transferring information from a particular subject (the source) to another subject (the target) and linguistic expression corresponding to such a process in a narrower sense. Analogy is an inference or an argument from a particular to another particular, as opposed to deduction, induction and abduction where at least one of the premises or conclusion is general.

The word analogy can also refer to the relation between the source and the target which is often, though not necessarily a similarity as in the biological notion of analogy. Analogy plays a significant role in problem solving, decision making, perception, memory, creativity, emotion, explanation and communication. It lies behind basic tasks such as the identification of places, objects and people, for example in the face perception and facial recognition systems. It has been argued that analogy is the core of cognition; specific analogical language comprises exemplification, comparisons, metaphors, simile, allegories and parables.

(<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Analogy#Linguistics>).

### **3.4 Language contact**

Language contact is mentioned as another cause of language change. Language contact occurs when speakers of distinct speech varieties interact. The study of language contact is called contact linguistics. Multilingualism has been common throughout human history. In hunter-gatherer times, multilingualism was not uncommon, as bands would need to communicate with neighboring peoples who often spoke different languages. The present-day areas in the Sub-Saharan Africa, where there is much variation in language over even short distances, it is common for someone who has dealings outside his own town or village to know more than one language, as the case of early times when almost all languages were spoken in a small territory. Thus, language contact is a very common phenomenon in human history, and the world's present vast linguistic diversity has developed as a result of this constant contact.

When speakers of different languages interact closely, it is common for their languages to influence each other. Languages normally develop gradually by accumulating internal differences until one parent language splits into daughter languages. This is analogous to asexual reproduction in biology. The change due to language contact, in this analogy, is a kin to the recombination that happens when separate organisms exchange genetic material. Forms of influence of one language over another involve borrowing of vocabulary and other language features, language shift, substrata influence and creation of new languages; creolization and mixed languages.

([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/language\\_contact](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/language_contact))

The literature reviewed above shows that little have been done on Kibena language. Most work on Kibena dealt with aspects of phonology, morphology and classification. There are no comprehensive linguistic studies on it. Moreover, none of the studies paid particular attention on changes from Kibena to Kimaswitule. Following the foregoing discussion, it is obvious that the few work done on Kibena have paid little attention to language maintenance. None focused on language change, maintenance and its dialects a gap this study aims to fill.

### **4. Methodology of the study**

The area of the study was Njombe district. In this district, the inhabitants predominantly speak Kibena as their mother tongue. The qualitative approach was more preferably used due to its nature of being explorative and interactive (Kothari 2004 and Grady 1991). The study focused on collecting information about people's attitudes, opinions, habits and perceptions on the changes from Kibena to Kimaswitule.

The quantitative method had been used to compliment the qualitative method. The analysis was presented through tables, numbers and percentages.

In this study, the focus was on the youth, the middle age and the elders (men and women) in Njombe district. People below 15 years were not included because the researcher thought they had little knowledge on the language change and shift particularly from Kibena to Kimaswitule.

About 10 respondents were selected from each dialect of Kibena in Njombe district. Both sexes were consulted to represent their respective groups. The researcher obtained the sample through purposive sampling (snow ball) and random sampling. The researcher predominantly used snow ball method to get the sample for study. The snow ball method proved to be a good technique in obtaining the sample because it enabled the researcher to consult people with rich information on the subject matter.

The study employed focus group discussion, structured interviews, questionnaires, observation and checklist in collecting primary data. Moreover, documentary review was used to collect secondary data.

## **5. Presentation, Analysis of Findings and Discussion**

The data analysis involves the demographic information and two research objectives namely; the identification of socio - economic factors influence language change from Kibena to Kimaswitule and also the identification of the effects of language change from Kibena to Kimaswitule in the society. The data were first scrutinized and sorted out to get only relevant information for the study. The data which seemed irrelevant were left out. Moreover, data were classified, coded and organized according to research questions, objectives and theory. Complex data were presented by using tables and percentages. Additionally, some authentic texts were extracted and presented to support the arguments.

### **5.1. Social factors that influence language changes**

#### **5.1.1 The change Language due to social interactions**

From the interview held with 20 elders (10 males and females each) the responses were as follows: Five women reported that location where the speakers came from was one among the factors leading to the change. They argued that the language changes when Kibena speakers from different locations meet and interact. They argued that speakers tended to modify their mother tongues by making slight changes when they met speakers of different dialects. The changes could be permanent or temporary. They further argued that the changes could spread to all Kibena varieties. Consequently, the

changes could become common to all Kibena speakers: new words modified are what they call maswitule words.

Four men argued that, the change was caused by interactions of people from various locations. During the discussion between the researcher and the respondents, the researcher observed that different locations contributed to the change from Kibena to Kimaswitule. Below are Examples of words change attributed to location.

**Table 5.1:** Changes of words from Kibena to Kimaswitule due to location

Varieties of Kibena	Location	Word	Kimaswitule	Kiswahili	English
<i>Ki-mavemba</i>	<i>Uwemba</i>	<i>Mvaha</i>	<i>Mkomi</i>	<i>Mtu muhimu</i>	Important person
<i>Ki-lupembe</i>	<i>Lupembe</i>	<i>Mgoyo</i>	<i>Mkomi</i>	<i>Mtu muhimu</i>	Important person
<i>Ki-ilembula</i>	<i>Ilembula</i>	<i>Mvina</i>	<i>Mkomi</i>	<i>Mtu muhimu</i>	Important person
<i>Ki-maswamu</i>	<i>Maswamu</i>	<i>Mweneha</i>	<i>Mkomi</i>	<i>Mtu muhimu</i>	Important person

**Source:** Field Data

*Mvaha* means an important person in Kimavemba, while an important person is known as *mgoyo* in Kilupembe. Moreover, *mvina* means an important person in Ki-ilembula, similary *mweneha* in Kimaswamu. However, it was said that nowadays the word *mkomi* means an important person is in all four dialects of Kibena. So, *mgoyo* from Kilupembe, *mvaha* from Kimavemba, *mvina* from Ki-ilembula and *mweneha* from Kimaswamu have changed to *mkomi* which is common to all varieties.

One respondent aged fifty from Lupembe (where Kilupembe is spoken) explained the source of Changes from Kibena (Kilupembe) to Kimaswitule by saying:

*“Bwana hiki kiwanda cha chai kinakusanya watu kutoka sehemu mbalimbali, kila mtu na lugha yake. Kufika hapa tunaanza kuchanganya lugha na sasa haileweki tunaongea lugha gani”.*

Hello! This tea factory attracts people from different places with different languages and when they come together tend to mix languages resulting to difficulties in understanding the variety of the language we are talking now. In the checklist, 95% of the respondents chose location as one of the factors for the change. From the findings above, it can be noted that word (lexical) changes occur when speakers from different or various locations meet and interact.

### 5.1.2. Language change due to participants

From the responses of the interviewees, it has been realized that language may change as a result of the differences in education levels, occupations and age. About 40% of the

respondents mentioned that Kibena had been changing resulting from the interactions of different speakers. The reason given was, when Kibena speakers interacted with speakers of other languages, they tended to simplify their languages bringing them to a common language they could all understand. As a result, a new language emerged, that is Kimaswitule.

The findings from secondary schools (where, selection to join secondary school education is based on the performance of the pupils). Almost all secondary schools in Njombe have speakers of the seven varieties of Kibena. The researcher surveyed the list of students selected to join two community secondary schools (Mpechi and Mabatini sec. schools) to find out where they came from. The researcher realized that all seven Kibena varieties were found to be spoken. Although they are restricted from speaking their ethnic languages in schools, still students communicated through their ethnic languages. Since they came from different locations, the researcher observed that they tended to distort their original dialects and adopt a pidgin which is called 'Kimaswitule or Kibena cha mjini' (Kibena spoken in town).

**Table 5.2:** Words modified from Kibena to Kimaswitule

s/n	KiBena	Kimaswitule	Kiswahili	English
1	<i>Dembera</i>	<i>Ibendera</i>	<i>bendera</i>	Flag
2	<i>Yeani</i>	<i>yenani</i>	<i>Ni nani</i>	Who is
3	<i>Tembeli</i>	<i>hukanisa</i>	<i>kanisani</i>	Church
4	<i>Mhandzave</i>	<i>udada</i>	<i>dada</i>	Sister
5	<i>Upapo</i>	<i>ubibi</i>	<i>bibi</i>	Grandmother
6	<i>fikong'oro</i>	<i>finu</i>	<i>vitu</i>	Vessels

**Source:** Field Data

### 5.1.3 Language Change due to Personal Needs

Whenever one communicates with another person, it is obvious that there are personal needs that a speaker wants to satisfy. Personal needs of the speaker may cause a language change. The data collected from middle aged females and males (25-50 years) show that language changes due to personal needs of the speaker.

The interviews and questions administered to the respondents show that language can change when one communicates with another one depending on what he/she wants or needs to communicate. From the interview, fifteen respondents said that the language changes due to the personal needs/interests of the speaker.

One respondent from Mjimwema Njombe aged 42 said:



“Sisi wafanyabiashara tunakutana na wateja kutoka sehemu mbalimbali wanaozungumza lugha tofauti tofauti. Sisi wafanyabiashara tunamhudumia kila mmoja kulingana na lugha yake, kadri muda unavyokwenda lugha ya Kibena inabadilika na kufanana kidogo na Kiswahili, hiyo ndio inayotumika zaidi na wafanyabiashara wa mjini”

Gloss ‘means we businessmen and women, meet with different customers from different places speaking different languages, we attend them according to their languages. As a matter of fact, Kibena has been changing slightly to Kiswahili. The modified Kibena is the one used frequently by business people in town.

**Table 5.3:** The change of Kibena to Kimaswitule due to personal needs

Archaic Kibena	Kimaswitule	Kiswahili	English
<i>Ihate</i>	<i>Ibiblia</i>	<i>Biblia</i>	Bible
<i>Amapola</i>	<i>Kamwene</i>	<i>Hujambo</i>	How are you?
<i>Hwifunya</i>	<i>Husali</i>	<i>Kusali</i>	To pray
<i>Kaniki</i>	<i>Inguo</i>	<i>Nguo</i>	Cloth

Source: Field Data

#### 5.1.4 Language change due to socio-cultural influence

In every cultural group, there must be a language that enables to communicate and socialize. Since a language enables a man to live the way he does, it plays an important role in man’s development (Mlekwa 1977:14). It is the language that enables groups in schools, working places or worshipping places and other social cultural groups interact among themselves.

About 17% and 24% of middle aged men and women respondents respectively mentioned socio-cultural influence as a factor for language change from Kibena to Kimaswitule. In the discussion, they explained that the socio-cultural influence occurs when two or more societies come into contact.

**Table 5.4:** Kibena to Kimaswitule due to socio-cultural contacts (Christianity vocabulary)

s/n	Kibena	Kimaswitule	Kiswahili	English
1	<i>Tembeli</i>	<i>hukanisa</i>	<i>Kule kanisani</i>	In the church
2	<i>Itembeli</i>	<i>ikanisa</i>	<i>kanisa</i>	Church
3	<i>Patembeli</i>	<i>pakanisa</i>	<i>Pale kanisani</i>	At the church
4	<i>Mutembeli</i>	<i>mukanisa</i>	<i>Ndani ya kanisa</i>	Inside the church

Source: Field Data

*Tembeli* which originally meant church changed to *hukanisa* to mean a place for prayers and *hu* stands for location. *Ikanisa* means church: *i* stand for singular (one church),

*pakanisa* means a specific place (church) and *pa* stands for specific area, *mukanisa* means inside the church *mu* means inside something. Nowadays words *pakanisa*, *ikanisa*, *mukanisa* and *hukanisa* are well known as Kimaswitule words, and are derived from Kiswahili word *kanisa*.

Thus, the religion has influenced language change. The introduction of new religions led to introduction of new religious words from the preachers (priests, pastors, sheikhs, imams etc). For instance, *husali* which means praying replaced *hwifunya* (the proper word for praying in Kibena). Preachers used ethnic languages to communicate with local people. Thus, they simplified the language and made it common and easy for the people to understand when they preached. The consequence was the distortion of the original language and the emergence of the new variety of language 'Kimaswitule'.

### 5.1.5 Change of Language due to the Influence of other Languages

A language can change or become modified due to the influence of other languages through the process of borrowing (Fasold 1984). The study found that the change from Kibena to Kimaswitule has been greatly influenced by Kiswahili language. Kiswahili being the medium of instruction in Tanzanian primary school as well as the National language has a great impact on ethnic languages, and Kibena inclusive.

90% of respondents said that the use of Kiswahili in almost all places in the district all the time had caused the change from Kibena to Kimaswitule. Some Bena words have been changed by adding prefixes to Kiswahili words or by deducting some syllables from Kiswahili words. As a result, words are neither Bena nor Kiswahili words, but hanging somewhere. This has led to the formation of the language which is called Kimaswitule at the present. For example, the Swahili word *Kanisa* (church) is prefixed with *hu*, *pa*, *mu*, *i*, to indicate different location of the church (*Kanisa*).

*Hu + Kanisa = hukanisa*: means in the church.

*Pa + kanisa = Pakanisa*: means at the church

*Mu + kanisa = mukanisa*: means inside the church

*I + Kanisa = ikianisa*: means church.

The respondent aged 58 said that:

*“Avana ava sihu idzi vilonga hiswahili shene valema uhulonga ishahwatwo  
whahuvoya vawimbile amadarasa. Ndevalonge ihibena vihandza ni hiswahili”*

The gloss for this is “*The youth of these days, use Kiswahili and ignore their mother tongue, may be because they have gone through formal education. They often mix Kiswahili with Kibena when communicating*”.

From the information given above the researcher learned that even this respondent was not competent, was mixing between Kiswahili and Kibena. For example, the words *vasihu indzi* is adapted from Kiswahili word 'wa siku hizi'. The original Bena word was 'va figono ifi'. Also, the word *amadarasa* is adapted from the word *madarasa*. For this matter, Kiswahili influences almost all kibena speakers.

**Table 5.5:** The words modified from Kiswahili to Kimaswitule

Kibena	Kiswahili	Kimaswitule	English
<i>Upapo</i>	<i>Bibi</i>	<i>Ubibi</i>	Grandmother
<i>Ukuhu</i>	<i>Babu</i>	<i>Ubabu</i>	Grandfather
<i>Umhandza</i>	<i>Dada</i>	<i>Udada</i>	Sister
<i>Ng'wang'ula</i>	<i>Kumaliza</i>	<i>Uhumalidza</i>	To finish
<i>Ndilema</i>	<i>Sitaki</i>	<i>Sitahi</i>	I don't like
<i>Uhunywa</i>	<i>Kunywa</i>	<i>Hunywa</i>	To drink
<i>Humsoni</i>	<i>Hospitali</i>	<i>Husibitali</i>	Hospital
<i>Hukaye</i>	<i>Nyumbani</i>	<i>Hunyumba</i>	Home
<i>Fikong'oro</i>	<i>Vyombo</i>	<i>Fyombo</i>	Utensils
<i>Padasi</i>	<i>Msitu</i>	<i>pamsitu</i>	Forest
<i>Hiho</i>	<i>Kijiko</i>	<i>hijiko</i>	Spoon
<i>Msugu</i>	<i>Mjanja</i>	<i>Mjandza</i>	Clever
<i>Mavondo/ mabodo</i>	<i>Miguu</i>	<i>Magulu</i>	Legs
<i>Lwindzi</i>	<i>Mlango</i>	<i>Mlyango</i>	Door
<i>Mgunda</i>	<i>Shamba</i>	<i>hushamba</i>	Farm

**Source:** Field Data

From the Table 5.5 above shows Kimaswitule words adapted from Kiswahili. Addition or deduction of syllables made on Kiswahili words is a characteristic of Kimaswitule. The words fit in neither Kibena nor Kiswahili. The study also discovered that there are influences of neighbouring languages to Kibena. 80% of elderly respondents said that the change in Kibena language had been influenced by neighboring languages. Speakers tried to make modification of their languages and coming up with new vocabularies or words and these new words lead to Kimaswitule.

**Table 5.6:** Language change due to the influence of neighbouring languages

s/n	Neighboring Language	Ethnic word	Kimaswitule	English
1	<i>Ki-pangwa</i>	<i>Mlongowo</i>	<i>Myino</i>	Relative
2	<i>Ki-Bena</i>	<i>Lukolowo</i>	<i>Myino</i>	Relative
3	<i>Ki-hehe</i>	<i>Myago</i>	<i>Myino</i>	Relative
4	<i>Ki-kinga</i>	<i>Mnino</i>	<i>Myino</i>	Relative

**Source:** Field Data

From Table 4.8, the word *myino* (a relative) is common to *Pangwa*, *Bena*, *Hehe* and *Kinga*.

### **5.1.6 The change of language due to the development of towns**

The study realized that, the change from Kibena to Kimaswitule is the result of development of towns (urbanization). The study administered checklist to the respondents (middle aged and elders). Thirty one out of 40 respondents chose urbanization as the source of language change. Similarly, all interviews and checklist found out that the urbanization was one of the reasons for change from Kibena to Kimaswitule.

The respondents said the change occurs when people interact and speakers tend to modify their original languages, hence the formation of new language which does not belong to their original languages. They said that many people have tendencies to migrate from villages to neighboring villages and towns. The respondents argued that those who migrate to towns often send their children back to bena land for traditional education. One respondent argued that children do not speak Kibena but Kimaswitule (Kibena *cha mjini*) consequently, they attribute language change.

They also said that intermarriages among people with different languages contribute to the language change. They observed that when a Bena marries a non-Bena, there is a tendency of modifying their original languages during interactions. As a result, there is emergence of another language, which is a language of none of the couple (Massamba, 2002:95). 80% of the respondents realized that there is a tendency of children to learn two languages at the same time from their parents. They said that this tendency leads to distortion of both languages and hence emergence of a new language. One student from Mpechi secondary school said that her mother was Ngoni while her father was Bena. Hence she could neither speak any of the two languages properly (Kibena and Kingoni), what she could do was to mix both languages.

## **6. The impact of Language change from Kibena to Kimaswitule in the society**

Seventy six percent of the elders were not comfortable with the change of Kibena language. They maintained that the new language was not stable for traditional education. It should be noted that Kibena language carries many cultural values as opposed to other languages. Informal or traditional education is highly valued among Bena. Such education is believed to be the only way of uncalculating in children's minds the knowledge and values that are acceptable in the society. Bena speakers regard this education important for passing on their culture and traditions from one

generation to another one. The study realized that the tendency of taking children from the town to villages and vice versa contributed to the change of language hence children could speak words from town and other children in villages borrowed those words. This situation led to the formation of a new language. This was explained by one old woman aged 60 from Luponde village (where Kimavemba is spoken), she said;

*“Avana avaneng’uni, kaa! Ndevilonga hihi manyage, vasipuliha shetilonga te vagogoro lino sitipuling’ana”*

Gloss *“The children of this era do not understand what old people say and consequently we do not understand one another.”*

Moreover, some respondents were not comfortable with girls and women coming from towns because they ignore their mother tongue ‘Kibena’. One respondent aged 63 from

Luponde remarked that she will never allow her son get married to a woman from town, unless she knows how to speak Kimavemba correctly because she would fail to give her traditional education on how to handle her son.

She says:

*“Lole lino avadala vilehwa na vagosi vawo vigela hulanguha”*

Gloss *“Look here, a good number of women nowadays is divorced due to their failure to handle their husbands and misbehaving”.*

It was realized that the change from Kibena to Kimaswitule was hindering the provision of traditional education, hence a source of deterioration of traditional life skills to the new generation importance of tradition education.

To show that there is a change in traditional life skills, one old man from Uwemba village (where Kimavemba is spoken) explained that even the ways of greeting have changed completely. He said: *“During my youth, greetings were varied basing on age, time, and status. Again, the younger man or women would first greet the elder one. This situation has now changed”* (Translated from Kimavemba). The respondent gave the samples of the old and the new greetings styles as presented below.

**Table 6.1:** Greetings between young and old people

Time	Young	Old
Morning	<i>Veya yuue</i> ( good morning)	<i>Lamwihe</i> (did you sleep well)
Afternoon / Evening	<i>Veya yuue/ hwewuli</i> (good afternoon/ how was the day)	<i>Hwewuli</i> How was the day)

Source: Field Data

The word *hwewuli* was derived from Kibena words *Uhtwe wuli* which meant “*how was the whole day*”. The respondent continued to emphasize that in his youthful ages, there were greetings which were used between people who had not seen each other for a long time. According to the interviewee, these greetings were common to close relatives and people who know each other as presented below.

**Table 6.2:** Comparison between original Bena greeting and Kimaswitule greeting

Original Bena greetings		Kimaswitule greetings		English
Greeting person	Greeted person' response	Greeting person	Greeted person's response	
<i>Amapola</i> (How are you?)	<i>Ongo</i> (I'm fine)	<i>Kamwene</i> (Fine?)	<i>Kamwene</i> (I'm fine)	How are you?
<i>Hamwene</i> (How are you?)	<i>Hamwene</i> (I'm fine)	<i>Kamwene</i> (Fine?)	<i>Kamwene</i> (I'm fine)	How are you?
<i>Veya yuue</i> (Are you fine?)	<i>Yune veyya</i> (I'm alright )	<i>Kamwene</i> (Fine?)	<i>Kamwene</i> (I'm fine)	How are you?
<i>Nogage?</i> (How are you doing?)	<i>Ongo</i> (I'm fine)	<i>Kamwene</i> (Fine?)	<i>Kamwene</i> (How are you?)	How are you?
<i>Madjengo?</i> (How is work?)	<i>Ale</i> (Fine)	<i>Makasi</i> (How is work?)	<i>Nofu</i> (Fine)	Fine.

Source: Field data

“*You can note that the greeting used now is Kamwene irrespective of either time or duration*” This indicates that there is a change from Kibena to Kimaswitule. Kimaswitule greeting style does not distinguish time, status and age of the participants.

The respondents said that the changes of language go hand in hand with the change or destruction of traditions and culture of the people. 75 out of 20 middle aged respondents from Njombe were of the opinion that language, traditions and the culture of Wa-bena is becoming less popular day after day. Greeting was singled as the most pronounced thing with regard to traditions, norms and culture which have been noted to have changed. Through the interview and discussions, the researcher found out that, greetings were accompanied by features which are distorted due to ongoing change.

**Table 6.3:** Features of greeting existing and distorted

s/n	Features of greeting	Existing or distorted
1	Courtesy kneeling down / bending	Existing (very few people)
2	Embracing or hugging	Strongly exists
3	Taking off the head cover	Does exist
4	Hand shaking	Exists (minimal)
5	Putting fingers together / palm together	Exists (women)

Source: Field Data

## 7. Conclusion

The findings imply that ancient Kibena will no longer exist in probably twenty years to come due to the current changes taking place in the language. For instance, the history of Kiswahili shows that it emerged from many Bantu languages. Hence, they developed a pidgin that later on developed into a creole which eventually became a common language “Kiswahili” (Masebo and Nyangwine 2002:12).

Moreover, the history of Kiswahili shows that intermarriage between Bantu and Arabs led to the emergence of Kiswahili. Thus, from this research it can be concluded that it is possible for Kibena language to be modified and result into a language called Kimaswitule.

The findings imply that the changes endanger the indigenous education of Wabena because the change of language in society goes hand in hand with the changes in the norms and values of the society. This shows that in some years to come the Bena traditions and culture could totally change under the influence of Kimaswitule. The findings show that apart from the impact of changes in the language as explained above, there are other impacts on the society. The changes would lead to the use of one variety in the whole district and this variety will be Kimaswitule. Thus, the changes will lead to the death of Kibena as Kimaswitule is spoken in almost every corner of Njombe district.

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A CASE OF KIBENA TO KIMASWITULE IN NJOMBE DISTRICT, TANZANIA

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