

Patterns of Language Use among Immigrant Children from Anglophone African Countries Living in Botswana.

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the patterns of language use among immigrant children from Anglophone African countries living in Botswana. The study reveals major differences in their patterns of language use when compared to that of their parents. Three distinct language use patterns were identified; namely, children who are monolingual in English; those who are bilingual in English and the mother tongue, English and Kiswahili, or English and Setswana; and a third group who are multilingual in the mother tongue, English, Kiswahili and/ or Setswana. The study also reveals that whereas majority of the immigrant parents do not speak Setswana, in spite of their length of residence in Botswana, a good percentage of their children speaks Setswana. Another interesting finding is that many of the immigrant children who cannot speak their mother tongues are fluent speakers of Setswana, the dominant language of the host community. Data for this study were collected using two instruments; namely, a questionnaire designed for parents and an interview schedule for children aged between 18- 25. The questionnaire was administered to 100 immigrant parents from Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya, Tanzania, and Zambia. Fifty immigrant children from these countries were interviewed to get more insightful data on the patterns of language use among this population. Convenience sampling was used to identify the participants. The theoretical framework of this study was based on the “opportunity versus motivation” argument on language maintenance and language shift. The researcher recommends that immigrant children should be given more exposure and opportunities to learn and speak their mother tongue languages, especially in the family domain.

Key words: Anglophone Africa, language maintenance, language shift, monolingual, bilingual, multilingual, opportunity versus motivation argument.

INTRODUCTION

Immigration is a worldwide phenomenon. All over the globe, people move from their countries to other seemingly more advanced and more prosperous economies in search of a better life. In war torn countries such as Syria, Afghanistan, Libya, Somalia, many families are forced to leave their countries as refugees and asylum seekers in search of safety, security and survival. Migration in Africa, however, is largely occasioned by a search for greener pastures: better employment and business opportunities.

Because of the economic prosperity, political stability, peace and tranquility that exist in Botswana, many African migrants see the country as a safe haven and a destination of choice. Therefore, Botswana being an English speaking country attracts immigrants from other Anglophone African countries such as Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The majority of these immigrants are educated; they are professionals in various fields of human endeavor. These immigrants have settled in Botswana and have lived for many years, raising their children and making a living. This study focuses on

this population, the immigrants from Anglophone African countries living in Botswana. Incidentally, this population has not been studied.

Migration goes with enormous challenges in different areas of life. Tannenbaum and Howle (2002) note that immigrants face various difficulties such as identity conflicts, alienation and role changes; and these are likely to affect the family atmosphere and disturb the familiar pre-migration patterns of behavior. Safdar (2002, in Kasatkina, 2011:36) observes that immigration produces complex interactions among individuals from all over the globe. These interactions include exchange of ideas using a common linguistic code, values and customs. Perhaps the greatest challenge that immigrants face is in the area of language. Dweik and Qawar (2015: 1), point out that, "the community of immigrants faces greater challenges whether to keep their mother tongue actively in use, to shift to the dominant host language or use their ethnic language side by side with the dominant official language of the host country."

Language is not only used for communication, it serves as a means of social integration, identity and socialization. Through language, the cultural heritage of the past is received and transmitted to the next generations (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1981, Sung, 1985). Immigrants, therefore, often face the complicated task of maintaining their mother tongue, and in particular, the challenges of communicating with their children in this language in a new environment. The language question among the immigrant population in Botswana is the focus of this paper. This study aims at examining the language use patterns of immigrant children vis-à-vis those of their parents in order to determine whether the mother tongue is being maintained in the host country or whether there is a shift to the dominant language of the host country or to the official language, English.

Statement of the Problem

Indigenous African languages are on the decline because many educated parents no longer transmit the mother tongue to their children in this era of globalization and technological advancement (See Adegbija, 2004; Ani, 2012; Batibo, 2005; Onyencehe, 2002; Umunnakwe, 2015). This situation is aggravated among immigrant families raising their children in diaspora. These parents are faced with the enormous challenges regarding the choice of language with which to bring up their children in a foreign environment. Should they speak the mother tongue, shift to the dominant language of the host country, use the official language English or use a combination of these languages? The population under study has these linguistic challenges. Identifying their language use patterns will not only be a pointer to their attitude towards the mother tongue, but also help in determining whether the mother tongue is being displaced or maintained in the family domain.

The following questions were considered in this paper:

- 1) What are the languages that immigrant children in Botswana speak at home with their parents?
- 2) Are there differences in the language use patterns of the children and those of their parents?
- 3) What attitudes do the children have towards their mother tongue languages?
- 4) What are the implications of their language preferences on language maintenance or shift?

Language Situation in Botswana

In order to put this study into its proper context, it is necessary to give an overview of the language situation in Botswana, which is the host country of the immigrants. The official language in Botswana, like in all other Anglophone African countries, is English. English, which

is a colonial heritage, is the language of education from Primary 2, as recommended by the Revised National Policy on Education (RNPE, 1994). It is the language of government and administration, the language of law, business and the mass media. Setswana, which is the dominant language spoken by about 80% of the population is the national language and lingua franca (Andersson & Janson, 1997). There are other indigenous languages spoken in Botswana, which include Ikalanga, Shekgalagadi, Shiyeyi, Setswapong, Sebirwa, Sesotho, Silozi, Isindebele, Otjiherero, Zezuru, et cetera (Letsholo, 2009). All these minority languages are largely confined to the informal domains of family, friendship and community interactions. They have not been assigned any official status. Thus, in its semi-official status, Setswana is used alongside English, in government, media, national assembly, and in Kgotla (traditional village gatherings) meetings. However, English still has a more prestigious status as the nation's official language. It provides the link or bridge with the international community in such areas as tourism, business, and international relations. Immigrants from other Anglophone African countries can comfortably reside and do business in Botswana using the English language, which is widely spoken in offices, schools, churches and business transactions. It is therefore possible for immigrants to perform all their communicative functions in the host country purely in English, without recourse to Setswana or any other indigenous language.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study was carried out using the "opportunity versus motivation" argument to examine the complex sociological variables involved in language choice in the family domain. The opportunity argument is premised on the belief that "language shift among the children results from the lack of exposure or opportunities to use and speak the heritage (mother tongue) language" (Zhang 2010:44). Krashen (1981) notes that language maintenance can be achieved through creating "comprehensible input" and "enough input" in the heritage language that are interesting and relevant to children (in Zhang 2010:44). If parents speak the mother tongue to children at home, they will learn it and use it, at least in the family domain. Contrarily, if parents do not give the children the opportunity or encouragement to speak the mother tongue, the children will shift to another language and the mother tongue may subsequently be lost.

The motivation argument, on the other hand, posits that, children's language shift results from lack of motivation to learn the heritage language which is regarded as useless or difficult in the host country (Zhang 2009). Schumann (1978), notes that the failure of immigrant parents to acquire English (or Setswana in this case) is largely because of their resistance to assimilate into the mainstream society. This assertion emphasizes the social and cultural facts that govern the process of language learning. This study explores both the opportunity and motivation arguments in order to find out which factor (s) influences language maintenance or shift among immigrant parents and their children in Botswana.

METHODOLOGY

Data for this study were collected using a questionnaire and an interview schedule. The questionnaire was administered to 100 immigrant parents from some selected Anglophone African countries namely; Nigeria, Kenya, Tanzania, Ghana and Zambia. These countries fairly represent the West, East and Southern Africa. The choice of these countries was merely coincidental and for purposes of convenience. In addition, 50 immigrant children aged 18 -25 years from these countries were interviewed in a bid to collect more insightful data about their language use patterns. This age range was chosen because they would be in a position to articulate their language use patterns and preferences. The researcher did not want to rely solely on parents reporting on their children's language use patterns but believed that the

voices of the children should be heard for a balanced assessment of the phenomenon under study.

The questionnaire data from parents were part of a larger project carried out by the researcher. The use of both instruments (questionnaire and interview) helped to enrich the study, and for purposes of triangulation. Also, collecting data from both parents and their children ensured greater validity and reliability of the results. Convenience sampling was used to select the children, while random sampling was used to select the sample for the parents.

The questionnaire was designed to elicit demographic information as well as information on the language use patterns with spouses and children at home. The demographic information included gender, age, ethnicity, educational qualification, occupation and length of stay in Botswana. The section on language use patterns sought information on languages spoken by parents in order of preference, and language (s) used with children in the home. The interview schedule for the children also elicited demographic information such as gender, age, type of school attended, and length of stay in Botswana, among others. The children were also required to indicate the languages they speak in order of preference, language (s) used with parents at home, with siblings and with friends. They also indicated their attitudes towards their mother tongue, English and Setswana.

Of the 100 respondents for the questionnaire, 50 were male and 50 were female. Their ages ranged from 31 to above 60. The majority of them (42%) were in the 51 – 60 age range, followed by 41 -50 (32%), then above 60 (21%) and 31-40 years (5%). Their educational qualifications ranged from PhD (22%), Master's (16%), Bachelor's (50%), Diploma Certificate (10%) and Cambridge or its equivalent (2%). Their professions also varied from teachers (38%), lecturers (23%), Professors (6%), nurses (7%), business (9%), pharmacy officers (6%), doctors (3%), Paramedics (5%), accountant (1%), administrator (1%), and a pastor (1%). All the parents are well educated and professionals in various fields. Their length of stay in Botswana also ranged from 16- 20 years (38%), 11-15 (30%), 6-10 (21%), above 20 years (7%) and 1-5 years (4%). This shows that the majority of parents have lived more than 10 years in Botswana.

Of the 50 immigrant children interviewed, 30 were male and 20 were female. Their ages ranged between 18- 25 years as has already been stated. The majority of them were within the 21 -25 age range (76%), while the rest were between 18 -20 (24%). Many of the children (80%) were university students from University of Botswana, and other private institutions, and the remaining children (20%) were in the Senior Secondary School. Generally speaking, all the children were in a position to adequately articulate their language preferences and the language use patterns with family members and friends. The results of the study are presented and discussed in the section that follows.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This discussion is presented in two parts; namely the language use patterns of parents and those of the children.

Language use patterns of parents

The participants were requested to indicate the language (s) they speak with their spouses and their children when interacting at home. The language options were: Mother tongue only, English only, Mother tongue and English, any other language, a mixture of other languages.

The following results were obtained:

Table 1 shows the result of the participants' language use patterns with their spouses and their children,

Participants	Mother tongue only	English only	Mother tongue and English	Any other language (e.g. Kiswahili)	A mixture of languages (English, Kiswahili, Setswana)	Total
With Spouse	37 (37%)	12 (12%)	23 (23%)	10 (10%)	18 (18%)	100 (100%)
With Children	3 (3%)	26 (26%)	41 (41%)	15 (15%)	15 (15%)	100 (100%)

Table 1 indicates that the dominant language of interaction between the majority of the participants and their spouses (37%) is the mother tongue. This is followed by the combination of the mother tongue and English (23%). 12% speaks English only with their spouses, 10% any other language (e.g. Kiswahili) and 18% speaks a mixture of languages (e.g. mother tongue, English, Kiswahili or Setswana). This result shows that the majority of immigrant parents speak the mother tongue at home even in a foreign land. The implication of this result is that immigrant parents have a positive attitude towards their mother tongues; hence they speak it with their spouses. The 12% that speaks English only are parents who do not speak the same mother tongue. English, which is a common linguistic code in Anglophone Africa, is adopted as a medium of communication in such homes. Participants from Kenya and Tanzania use Kiswahili, which is the official language and lingua franca in the two countries.

Table 1 also shows that the dominant language use pattern with the children is a combination of the mother tongue and English (41%). This is followed by the use of English only (26%). Only three participants (3%) speak the mother tongue with their children. 15% each speaks Kiswahili or a mixture of Kiswahili, English and Setswana. The results reveal that whereas the majority of the participants (37%) speak the mother tongue with their spouses, only 3% of them speak the mother tongue with their children. This result clearly shows that intergenerational transmission of the mother tongue (Fishman, 1991) is being disrupted in many immigrant families in Botswana. The preferred linguistic code with children is a combination of the mother tongue and English. This result implies that immigrant parents desire their children to be bilingual in the mother tongue and English. The fact that 26% of parents speak English exclusively with their children shows that some immigrant children are growing up as English monolinguals, children who cannot speak their mother tongue. These children are not likely to transmit the mother tongue to their own children and such mother tongues are endangered and may face extinction with time. Anderson (2010:131) asserts that "when children ... no longer acquire a language as their mother tongue, that language may be considered endangered and on the path to oblivion ..."

Furthermore, respondents were requested to give reasons for their choice of language with spouses and children. The following results were obtained:

Table 2 indicates the reasons for the language use patterns with spouses.

Reasons for language choice with spouse	No of respondents	Percentage
I speak mother tongue with spouse because we speak the same language	37	37
I speak English with spouse because we speak different languages	12	12
I speak Mother tongue and English as a matter of preference	23	23
I speak Swahili with my spouse because we speak different languages and Swahili is our lingua franca/ national language	10	10
I speak Swahili, English and mother tongue as a matter of preference	18	18
Total	100	100%

The results indicate that spouses who speak the same mother tongue (37%) show loyalty by using it even in a foreign land. This portrays that these parents have a positive attitude towards their native languages. The participants that do not speak the same mother tongue will necessarily use a common language to interact at home and that language is English (or Kiswahili for respondents from Kenya and Tanzania). Exogamy or inter-ethnic marriage is therefore a factor in the displacement of the mother tongue in the family domain. Participants that use a combination of mother tongue and English stated that it was a matter of preference. It is quite natural for bilinguals to use one or both languages depending on the context or the topic of discussion. There may even be cases of code-switching in the use of the two languages. The results also show preference for Kiswahili among participants from Kenya and Tanzania, indicating that indigenous languages in these countries are under threat, not from English but from Kiswahili, which is the official language and lingua franca. The respondents who speak Kiswahili, English and the mother tongue (18%) do so also as a matter of preference.

Participants were also requested to give reasons for their language choice with their children. The following results were obtained:

Table 3 presents the reasons adduced by respondents on their patterns of language use with their children.

Reasons for language choice with children	Frequency	Percentage
I speak mother tongue with children because I want them to learn to speak it for cultural identity and to be able to communicate with relatives.	3	3%
I speak English with children because it is an international language and the language of education.	26	26
I speak mother tongue and English because children in a foreign land need the two languages for survival.	41	41
I speak Swahili with my children because it is our national language.	15	15
I speak Swahili and English because they need the two languages in a foreign land.	15	15
Total	100	100%

From the results, 41% of the participants believe that their children need both English and the mother tongue for survival in a foreign land. They recognize that their children need English to perform well in school, and also need the mother tongue for cultural identity. These parents want to maintain a linguistic balance with their children who are being brought up in diaspora.

Furthermore, the parents who speak English only with their children stated that English alone can meet all their children’s communicative needs, socially and academically. These parents also perceive the mother tongue as irrelevant in a foreign environment. This should be a cause for concern because in such homes, the mother tongue is being displaced and English is migrating into a domain that should be the exclusive preserve of the mother tongue (Fishman, 1972). Similarly, Kiswahili is displacing the mother tongues in most East African families who prefer to interact with their children, not in the mother tongue but in Kiswahili. It is surprising to note that only three families (3%) interact with their children exclusively in the mother tongue. This does not augur well for the maintenance of the mother tongue. Brenzinger’s (1997:276) caution that “the mere fact that only a few parents may decide not to use the minority language with their children already results in endangering the entire transmission from one generation to the next” becomes very pertinent.

Language use patterns of children

The children were requested to indicate their language preferences when they communicate with their parents.

Table 4 presents the results of the language preferences of children when they interact with their parents. Three broad patterns were identified; namely, the monolingual, the bilingual and the multilingual patterns of language use.

Patterns of language use	Languages	Number of respondents	Percentages %
1- Monolingual	Mother tongue only	0	0
	English only	25	50
	Swahili only	0	0
	Setswana only	0	0
2- Bilingual	Mother tongue and English	10	20
	English and Swahili	8	16
	English and Setswana	3	6
	Mother tongue and Swahili	0	0
	Mother tongue and Setswana	0	0
3- Multilingual	Mother tongue, English & Swahili	0	0
	Mother tongue, English & Setswana	1	2
	English, Swahili & Setswana	3	6
	English, mother tongue, Setswana & Swahili	0	0
Total		50	100%

The results show that 50% (25) of the children prefers to interact with their parents only in English. It is interesting to note that none of the children prefers to speak mother tongue only with their parents. The implication would be that children whose parents communicate with them in the mother tongue (3%, see Table 3) would prefer to be spoken to in English.

Table 4 also shows that 20% (10) of the children prefers the combination of the mother tongue and English, 16% (8) prefers Kiswahili and English, and 1% (1) English and Setswana. This second pattern suggests that children prefer to speak the mother tongue when it is used in combination with English. The same goes for Kiswahili and Setswana. The implication of this result is that about 42% (20%, 16% and 6%) of the children are bilingual in English and the

mother tongue, Kiswahili or Setswana. This result is similar to the percentage of parents who speak the mother tongue and English with their children (41%, see Table 1).

The third pattern shows that 8% (4) prefers the multilingual combination of the mother tongue, English and Setswana, and English, Kiswahili and Setswana. This result echoes Arua and Magocha's (2002) observation that the multilingual pattern is as a result of "population mobility." Immigrant children interact with friends and peers in the host community, and learn Setswana. Multilingualism is characteristic of many African nations, Botswana inclusive (Arua & Magocha, 2002; Batibo, 2005; Letsholo, 2009). It is not surprising therefore, to have the multilingual pattern among immigrant children in Botswana.

Language use patterns with siblings

Table 5 shows the language use patterns of children when they interact with their siblings.

Patterns of language use	Languages	Number of respondents	Percentages %
1. Monolinguals	Mother tongue only	0	0
	English only	32	68
	Swahili only	3	6
	Setswana only	0	0
2. Bilinguals	Mother tongue and English	5	10
	English and Swahili	3	6
	English and Setswana	1	2
	Mother tongue and Swahili	0	0
	Mother tongue and Setswana	0	0
3. Multilinguals	Mother tongue, English & Swahili	0	0
	Mother tongue, English & Setswana	3	6
	English, Swahili & Setswana	3	6
	English, mother tongue, Setswana & Swahili	0	0
- Total		50	100%

Table 5 shows that the majority of children (68% or 32) prefer to communicate with their siblings in English. None of the children interacts with their siblings in the mother tongue only, 6% speaks Kiswahili with siblings and none speaks Setswana. Those who use these languages prefer to use them in combination with English. The rest of the children (12%) are multilingual in the mother tongue, English, Kiswahili, and Setswana (6%), and English, Setswana and Kiswahili (6%). This result follows a similar pattern with the result in Table 4 except that more children speak English with their siblings (70%) than they do with their parents (50%). The result further confirms the dominance of English in the linguistic repertoire of the children. This would imply that the children in this study are more comfortable in English than in any other language (s) that they speak, an indication that they have more competence in English than in the mother tongue or any other language that they speak.

Language use patterns with friends

Table 6 shows the language use patterns of the children when they interact with their friends.

Patterns of language use	Languages	Number of respondents	Percentages %
1- Monolinguals	Mother tongue only	0	0
	English only	34	68
	Swahili only	2	4
	Setswana only	0	0
2- Bilinguals	Mother tongue and English	3	6%
	English and Swahili	3	6%
	English and Setswana	4	8%
	Mother tongue and Swahili	0	0
	Mother tongue and Setswana	0	0
3- Multilinguals	Mother tongue, English & Swahili	0	0
	Mother tongue, English & Setswana	2	4
	English, Swahili & Setswana	2	4
	English, mother tongue, Setswana & Swahili	0	0
Total		50	100%

Table 6 indicates that the majority of children (68% or 34) interact with friends in English. Here again, no child interacts with friends in the mother tongue only; 4% speaks Kiswahili with friends and none speaks Setswana. This result replicates the trend in Tables 4 and 5. 20% prefers the bilingual combination of English and the mother tongue (6%), English and Kiswahili (6%), and English and Setswana (8%). 8% of the children prefers the multilingual combination of the mother tongue, English and Setswana (4%) and English, Setswana and Kiswahili (4%).

The results presented in this section clearly show the disparity between the parents' language use patterns and those of the children. Whereas most parents want their children to be bilingual in English and the mother tongue, the children actually prefer to speak English, especially with siblings and friends. In addition, some of the children are multilingual in English, the mother tongue, and Setswana or English, Kiswahili and Setswana, indicating that they have also learnt the dominant language of the host community. This confirms Zhang's (2010) observation that children rapidly learn and adopt the dominant language of the host community, whereas their parents frequently maintain the use of their native tongues.

Language attitude of children towards the languages they speak

Children were requested to indicate the languages they speak and also to give reasons for their language preferences.

Responding to the question: **Can you speak your mother tongue?**

48% (24) said they can speak their mother tongues in varying degrees (from "a little bit" to "very well"), while 52% (26) cannot. The 26 children who cannot speak the mother tongue gave the following reasons:

Parents do not speak the mother tongue to us (81.8%)

Parents do not speak the same mother tongue so we speak English (or Swahili) at home (18.2%).

This result shows that the majority of children (52% or 26) cannot speak the mother tongue. Interestingly, this number coincides with the number of parents who speak English only to their children (See Tables 1 & 3). These children are not given the opportunity or the encouragement to speak the mother tongue at home, because parents do not speak the mother tongue to them. This confirms the “opportunity versus motivation” argument (Zhang, 2010). Consequently, the mother tongues are in danger of being displaced or ultimately lost. In such homes, intergenerational transmission of the mother tongue is being disrupted as noted earlier. However, the number of children (24 or 48%) who can speak the mother tongue (whether a little bit or very well) is quite encouraging. This shows that some parents motivate their children to speak the mother tongue at home. It is also evident that some mother tongues are being maintained in the family domain.

Responding to the question: **Can you speak Setswana?**

44% (22) of the children stated that they can speak Setswana (from ‘a little bit’ to ‘very well’), while 56% (28) said they cannot speak Setswana. This result shows that 44% of immigrant children can speak the dominant language of the host community in varying degrees. It indicates that a good number of children are willing to integrate into the host community and be immersed in the host culture. Zhang (2010), who studied the language use patterns of Chinese children in America, observed that “immigrant children are integrating, socializing and acculturating faster into the host community than their parents are, which may be taken as evidence of their intention to integrate.” This is a welcome development which should be encouraged for mutual and harmonious co-existence.

Responding to the question: **Do you prefer speaking English to your mother tongue?**

76% (38) of children indicated that they prefer to speak English than the mother tongue. 24% (12) said they prefer to speak the mother tongue. This result confirms that the majority of children are shifting to English. The following reasons were given:

I prefer English because I have better competence in it than the mother tongue (56%)

I prefer English because I cannot speak my mother tongue (20%)

I prefer speaking the mother tongue because I can speak it very well (24%).

It is very interesting to know that 24% of children can speak their mother tongue and therefore prefer it to English. These children have a positive attitude to the mother tongue and will transmit it to their own children. However, the fact that 76% of children (56% and 20%) prefer English to the mother tongue calls for serious concern. The maintenance of the mother tongue is seriously jeopardized among the majority of the immigrant children in Botswana.

Responding to the question: **Do you prefer speaking Setswana to your mother tongue?**

76% of children (38) said they do not prefer Setswana to their mother tongue, while 24% (12) said they prefer Setswana. Those who do not prefer Setswana had two reasons: 56% (28) said they cannot speak Setswana. 20% stated that though they can speak Setswana, they still prefer their mother tongue because it gives them ethnic identity and connects them to their roots.

The 24% that prefer Setswana to their mother tongue stated that they can speak Setswana better than the mother tongue. This result shows that whereas the majority of children prefer English to the mother tongue, when the comparison is made between the mother tongue and any other indigenous language, the mother tongue is preferred. This clearly portrays a positive attitude towards the mother tongue.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The implications of the language use patterns of parents and children in this study are summarized below:

Firstly, immigrant parents in Botswana wish their children to be bilingual in English and the mother tongue, the two languages they strongly believe children who are being raised in diaspora need for survival. The parents recognize the utility and functionality of English as the world's lingua franca and the language of education; therefore, the children are given every opportunity to acquire it. In addition, these parents speak the mother tongue to their children for cultural identity and for interaction with relatives whenever they go to their home countries.

Secondly, the number of immigrant parents who speak to their children in English only is worthy of note. These parents believe that English meets all the communicative needs of their children in a foreign land; therefore, the mother tongue is seen as irrelevant in this environment. These children grew up as English monolinguals. Obviously, they will not be in a position to transmit the mother tongue to their own children, since they cannot give what they do not have. If this trend continues unabated, the mother tongue languages or the indigenous African languages will be seriously endangered and will face possible extinction in future.

Thirdly, it is interesting to note that some immigrant children can speak Setswana, the dominant indigenous language of Botswana. Whereas most of their parents do not speak Setswana (as they indicated), the children have included Setswana in their linguistic repertoire. This is to ensure that they can navigate the linguistic terrain of the host community without much difficulty. Setswana becomes a language of survival since they have to interact with their friends, classmates and peers in the new environment. Knowledge of Setswana helps them to acculturate, integrate and socialize with members of the host community.

Finally, whereas the majority of the parents in this study are bilingual in English and the mother tongue, the children have varying language use patterns as have been discussed earlier. Some of them are monolingual in English; some are bilingual in English and the mother tongue; English and Kiswahili; or English and Setswana; while some others are multilingual in English, the mother tongue, Kiswahili or Setswana. These language use patterns mirror the multilingual situation in Botswana and other Anglophone African countries, where English co-exists with various indigenous African languages.

CONCLUSION

This study has outlined the patterns of language use of immigrant parents and some immigrant children aged 18-25 years. The patterns of language use of the parents and those of the children show major differences. Whereas majority of the parents are bilingual in the mother tongues and English, among the children, English is the preferred language of interaction, especially when they interact with siblings and friends. Some children are monolingual in English; some are bilingual in English and the mother tongue, Kiswahili or Setswana; while some others are multilingual in English, the mother tongue, Kiswahili and / or Setswana. English is also 'encroaching' into the family domain and competing with the mother tongue languages in their primary domain. This should not be allowed to continue if indigenous African languages must have a chance to survive in this era of globalization and technological advancement. Immigrant parents should therefore, give their children the opportunity to learn their mother tongues, and motivate them to speak the mother tongues, especially at home. This will ensure the maintenance of the mother tongue languages and halt the gradual shift to English or Kiswahili (for immigrants from Kenya and Tanzania).

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