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Teaching Heritage Languages to Children

Perspectives of Kenyan Immigrant Mothers in Finland and their Efforts

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ABSTRACT

Maintenance of linguistic and cultural identity has become a crucial issue for most immigrant groups. Most acknowledge upholding their heritage languages as a key approach to maintaining cultures and identities. In Finland, heritage language teaching is observed as a common practice through the encouragement of the Finnish National Education Authorities. This allows migrant children to receive lessons in their native languages, in order to uphold their heritage languages. Some Diaspora communities in the country have taken advantage of this provision to maintain and revive their heritage languages.

This research looks at multiculturalism and languages in the Diasporas, under the heading of heritage language teaching specifically among Kenyan immigrants in Finland. It explores the attitudes of Kenyan immigrant mothers towards Swahili, and their methods in passing on this linguistic and cultural heritage to their children in Finland. Twelve Kenyan immigrant mothers having children between the ages of two to twenty were interviewed. Using qualitative research method, the transcribed data were analyzed with the use of thematic analysis.

Results demonstrate that Swahili is viewed as a unifying language in Kenya. However, passing on Swahili as a heritage language to children in Finland is not unanimously agreed on. Many other definitive factors such as marriages to people of other nationalities, the dominance of Finnish, the benefits attached to the Finnish language, significantly influence this outcome.

Keywords: Heritage Language, Language Maintenance, Cultural Identity and Diaspora, Kenyan Immigrants.

1. INTRODUCTION

International migration is one of the most important issues in the world today. More people than ever before are crossing different international borders. These movements consequentially have triggered different socio-cultural and linguistic interactions. (Montoya 2009: 65) As individuals and families move and settle in other countries, for different reasons, the desire for their children to speak and maintain their home language remains in the affirmative. (Chen 2013: 1) According to Duff (2008: 71), the maintenance of the home language also enables the children to establish cultural identity.

With language learning also now more salient than ever, new multilingual generations are birthed as multilingual environments are reconstructed. (Della 2012) Many studies show that children of immigrants rarely maintain their parents' heritage language. (Chen 2013: 1) Preserving heritage language in host societies, therefore, remains challenging. But since children's ability to maintain strong social and emotional ties to their parents and extended relatives in source countries is important (Alzayed 2015), it is therefore very essential to teach them their heritage language.

Although studies demonstrate that learning one's own heritage language facilitates the learning of other languages (Tallroth 2012), it, however, remains challenging to extract this advantage, as many children find learning or maintaining another language unnecessary as they are always accustomed to the languages of the host community. In Finland, significant effort has been on the part of the government to support the maintenance of heritage language due to its role in integration. (Protassova 2008) According to scholars, heritage language is often used to identify a minority or immigrant language different from the dominant language in any given context. (Cabo, 2016: 3) Although many immigrant communities are still to take advantage of the government policy, a few like Russian, Somalia, and Kenyan have already seized the opportunity.

It would be interesting to know how well children of immigrants acquire their home language, yet few studies have been conducted on the subject in Finland particularly on African languages. Motivated by the generally scanty research on Swahili as a heritage language, my objective in this study is to look at how Kenyan immigrants pass on Swahili to their children as their heritage language. In this study, the participants are Kenyan mothers raising their children in Finland.

The choice of the specific target group as "Kenyan Immigrant Mothers" was highly influenced by the African context of women, a culture where mothers are considered guardians of children, husbands and the entire household. Therefore, they have a responsibility to teach and uphold the

culture, language, and tradition of the family and ethnic group. Consequently, the choice of the home language may be largely influenced by the mother. This thus is the reason Kenyan immigrant mothers are the target group for this study.

1.1 Background: Language context in Kenya

Kenya is a country located in the Eastern part of Africa, bordering the Indian Ocean, between Somalia and Tanzania. According to the Official Government Website (2012), the country covers over 581,309 km^2. It has a population of about 46,100,000 inhabitants (World Bank 2016). It has nine major ethnic groups with Kikuyu as the majority, comprising about 22% of the total population. Other major ethnic groups include Luhya (14%), Luo (13%), Kalejin (12%), Kamba (11%), Kesii (6%), Meru (6%). Descents from other African countries also form a significant part of the society. They compose of 15% while non-Africans (Arabs, Asians, and Europeans) make up 1 percent of the population. (Sobania 2003: xi-xiv)

Linguistically, Kenya is a multilingual country. Due to the high multicultural nature of the country, an average Kenyan speaks at least three languages. This is because of the existence of different ethnolinguistics groups in the country and the need to interact with different persons in diverse settings. Studies portray varying estimates in the number of languages spoken in Kenya. Some place the number of spoken languages between 30 and 60 (see Heine and Möhlig 1980; Batibo 2005; and Githiora 2005). For Mwaka (2009) the number ranges between 41 and 61, excluding the common slang called Sheng used by youths in the urban areas with a grammar similar to Swahili. However, of these, about 65% are Bantu, between 30-32 % Nilo-Saharan, while the rest are of the Cushitic family. (Githiora 2005)

Due to complications and superfluities inherent in the documentation of the number of languages, an earlier estimate put the number of indigenous languages in the country to about forty. (Muaka 2009) Although recent studies put the number to 81 languages (Hammarström et al. 2016), there exists overall complexity in estimating the actual number of spoken languages due to the insufficient knowledge of the linguistic situation (Githiora 2005; Muaka 2009). Nonetheless, it remains difficult to differentiate between dialects and languages. (Muaka 2009)

Simons and Charles (2017) claim that despite the number of languages in Kenya, Swahili and English remain official languages, alongside while 68 other spoken languages used by ethnic groups. Of these, 67 are living and 1 is extinct. "Of the living languages, 60 are indigenous and 7

are non-indigenous. Furthermore, 12 are institutional, 34 are developing, 15 are vigorous, 2 are in trouble, and 4 are dying." (Simons and Charles 2017) These languages consist of tribal African languages, Nilotic languages spoken in the Western part of the country, Bantu languages spoken in the Southeast and Central region and the Cushitic languages spoken by the inhabitants of the northwest. Still, in this domain, non-African foreigners speak other non-African languages like Arabic and Hindi. Each ethnic group has its language and tends to view Swahili as a national language taught in school and spoken by Kenyans. (Trillo 2002: 67- 68)

With regard to the language policy in Kenya, the education system acknowledges English as a medium of instruction (Muaka 2009) as it is the dominant and main language of instruction in urban schools at all levels, though Swahili is still used in the school setting. In rural areas where linguistic homogeneity exists, the language policy recognizes indigenous languages as the language of instruction from the initial stage of education, that is, from Standard One until Standard Three, with English taught as a subject. (Mugambi 2002) Swahili is also taught from Standard One, specifically in multi-ethnic contexts, until Third Grade. After the Third Grade, Swahili is included in the curriculum as a subject and the indigenous languages are replaced with English as the medium of instruction. Teachers usually consider the teaching of indigenous languages as irrelevant because they are not tested in the national examinations. This is because of the linguistic, political and social prestige which accompanies the use of English language. (Mugambi 2002) The fact that students must have a passing grade in English before admittance to Kenyan public university better explains the role of English in public domains regarding the career pursuit. It is also worth noting that Swahili and English dominate the urban area while ethnic languages are dominant home languages in the rural areas where culture and oral history is still of great value because they carry the people's culture and oral history. (Muaka 2009)

In the domain of media, the Kenyan Broadcasting Corporation (KBC), controlled by the government, uses English and Swahili as languages of operation. The National Service Broadcast from Nairobi (Capital city) has all its programs strictly in Swahili, and the General Service broadcast in English from Nairobi. There are also regional radio stations set up by the governments and all the radio programs operate in at least seventeen major regional languages on a four-hour basis per day. There also exist FM radio stations which use different local languages to function all day. For example, Kamene FM in Kikuyu, Mirembe FM in Luhya, Ramogi FM in Dholuo, and Musyi FM in Kamba. In addition to these stations, there are other FM stations which are popular

to the public. Reporters in these stations use Swahili and English in their broadcast and Sheng in talk shows mostly in urban areas. (Muaka 2011: 218-220)

From the language policies of both public and private media, the promotion of English and Swahili is quite evident, although the private media to a limited degree encourages and allows the liberal use of local languages and Sheng. (Muaka 2011: 218-220) Local languages are often marginalized in Kenya, as they are perceived as obstacles to success in educational and government domains. However, these local languages serve as identity markers, play significant roles in religious and community development projects, and are tools for business transactions especially in rural areas. In addition, local languages are used by local rulers in the rural areas like village headmen, sub-chiefs, and chiefs. Notwithstanding, Kenyan local languages play a great role in the implementation of official policies, thus it is unfair for these languages to suffer continuous marginalization in Kenyan public domains. (Muaka 2011: 218-220)

1.3 Kenyan migration to Finland

Although Finland does not have a long history of immigration in general, the 1980s and 1990s, however, witnessed a twist in this trend in the country. This period which reshaped demographic history also unraveled a new page in the country's migratory dynamics. This was mainly influenced by two major inputs. Firstly, the country received a great increase in the number of returnees to Finland. The majority were returnees from Sweden, who had left Finland during the periods of economic hardship between the 1950s and 1970s. (Korkiasaari and Söderling 2003) Other returnees were from other parts of Europe, the United States, who had to flee during the civil unrest before 1917. (Korkiasaari and Söderling 2003: 3-7)

Secondly, the 1990s on their part saw the country alternated into a receiving country. This was motivated by the rapid economic turnaround witnessed in the mid-1990s. Many countries, like Kenya, have taken advantage of a new open door approach as well as Finland's external relation and have established close ties with the country. The country has over the last three decades enjoyed very close political and socio-economic relationship with Finland. Through cooperation ties and other avenues, many Kenyans have migrated to Finland. (Korkiasaari and Söderling 2003: 7-10)

According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Finland, Kenya and Finland have been partners for over 35 years, with the relation recognized since June 1965. Finland's primary objective is to assist

the Kenyan society politically and socio-economically. In order to achieve the above objectives, Finland cooperates directly with the Kenyan government and has missions in Kenya. For example, the Finnish embassy in Nairobi, which directs the Local Cooperation Fund (LCF), sponsors many NGOs with goals of promoting human rights and good governance. In addition, the availability of an Honourable Consulate based in Mombasa, Kenya, helps to regulate Finland's affairs in Kenya.

These bilateral relations between the two countries have resulted in an increasing number of Kenyans in Finland. The table below illustrates the population of Kenyans in Finland between 2005 and 2014 and indicates that over the years the number has almost tripled. From the information, it is noticed that the population of Kenyans in Finland has increased from 496 in 2005 to 1287 in 2014. Though there is not much disparity between the male and female population, the recent information (2014) indicates that there are more Kenyan women than men in Finland.

Table 1: The population of Kenyans living in Finland from 2005-2014

Year	Men	Women	Total
2005	261	235	496
2006	302	276	578
2007	332	321	653
2008	378	382	760
2009	412	414	826
2010	446	450	896
2011	483	497	980
2012	547	537	1084
2013	587	611	1198
2014	611	676	1287

Apart from Kenyans, many other migrant communities exist in Finland. Although the racial and political and physical climate of Finland has not always been favorable toward immigrants (Protassavo 2008), over the year, the population of immigrants has nonetheless slowly but steadily

increased. According to Statistics Finland (2016), the total population of the country by the end of 2015 was around 5.4 million inhabitants. Recent statistics (at the end of January) show that population has slightly increased to 5,502,640 inhabitants. (Statistics Finland 2017) The figure below shows a change in Finland's population from the years 2013 to 2017. The figure demonstrates that migration plays a vital role in the country's population. Immigration exceeded emigration by 1201 as a result of migration gain from abroad.
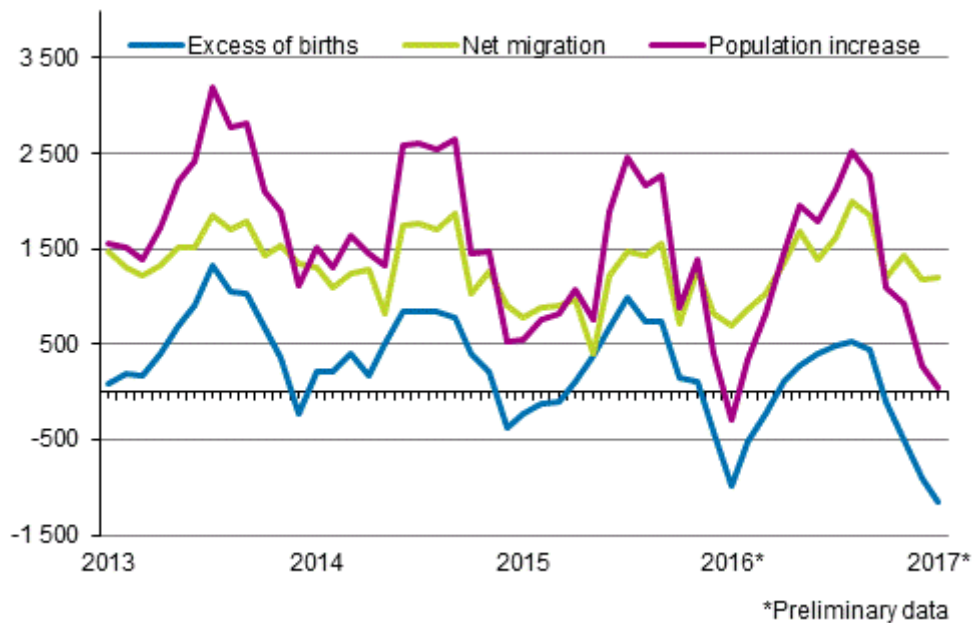
Figure 1: Monthly population increase in Finland (2013 - 2017)

According to the above figure 1, there has been an increase in immigrants from the year 2013 to 2017. "According to the preliminary statistics for January 2017, 2,484 persons immigrated to Finland from abroad and 1,283 persons emigrated from Finland. The number of immigrants was 283 higher and the number of emigrants 232 less than in the corresponding period of the previous year. In all, 646 of the immigrants and 921 of the emigrants were Finnish citizens." (Statistic Finland 2017)

Although the increase in immigrants is evident throughout the country, Helsinki, the capital and most multicultural city in the country experience more increase in immigrants than other cities.

According to a 2017 fact sheet, the city of Helsinki in particular and the Uusimaa region, in general, have experienced a significant increase in foreigners in the recent past. By the end of 2015, slightly over 11 percent of the region's population speak a language other than Finnish and Swedish as a mother tongue. (City of Helsinki Urban Facts 2017). A 2016 study, however, shows that the biggest

foreign-language speaking groups include Russian speakers, (72,436 persons), followed by Estonian speakers, (48,087 persons), and then Somali speakers, (17,871 persons). Furthermore, an overview of the country portrays that the total number of foreign language speakers has also slightly increased from 5.4 percent in 2014 to 6 percent in 2016. (Statistics Finland 2016) Other cities like Tampere, Turku, not leaving out Vaasa are also gradually becoming more cosmopolitan as result of the influx of immigrants. (Gropas and Triandafyllidou 2014: 124-131)

The insurgence of immigrants in Finland cannot be overemphasized. It has greatly impacted the society as a whole (Gropas and Triandafyllidou 2014) especially the linguistic landscape. Although there is the need for migrants to integrate into the country, the question of upholding particularly their languages and cultures or assimilate into the new culture still looms. Dominant immigrant communities of Russians (Protassova 2008) and Somalian have already developed heritage teaching and learning programs for their children.

1.4 Aim and objectives of the research

It is, therefore, the thrust of this study to examine the effort made by Kenyan immigrants in Finland with regard to maintaining their heritage language. My interest and focus on Kenyan and Swahili is simply due to the fact that relatively scanty research has been conducted on this small community and their efforts to teach and maintain their heritage language. The study will, therefore, contribute to a sound social policy of integration of immigrants into the Finnish society.

The study essentially seeks to investigate the attitudes and initiatives of Kenyan immigrant mothers towards maintaining Swahili as a heritage language to their offspring. This will be achieved through the following specific objectives which analyze the views of Kenyan immigrant mothers towards teaching and maintaining Swahili as a heritage language and to carefully examine the methods used by these mothers in passing on Swahili to their offspring.

This research answers the following questions:

1. What are the views of Kenyan immigrant mothers on Swahili as a heritage language and why is it important or not important for them to pass on this language to their children?

2. How do these mothers educate their children in Swahili?

The answers to the aforementioned questions draw on semi-structured interviews conducted with 12 Kenyan immigrant mothers with children between the ages of two to twenty living in the Uusimaa region of Finland. The interviews are analyzed using thematic analysis.

1.5 Structure of the thesis

This study opens with the first chapter introducing the main idea of the entire work including general background knowledge of the topic under study. The second chapter discusses the important concepts of language maintenance; language, identity, and diaspora; acculturation and heritage language. The third chapter focuses on the methodology used in analysing the data. Further, Chapter four presents the data collected for the research, elaborating on the profile of interviewed participants and the method used in collecting the data. Chapter five analyses the data in relation to the research questions, chapter six discusses the results of the analyses; the final conclusions of the research are presented in chapter seven.

2   THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this section, this study focuses on these three broad themes: language maintenance; language, identity, and diaspora; and heritage language. Each theme will be defined and elaborated, discussion on the literature will be based on how heritage languages are maintained with a particular focus on Swahili as a heritage language.

2.1 Language maintenance

Moshe Nahir (2003: 439), defines language maintenance as follows:

> "Language Maintenance is the preservation of the use of a group's native language where political, social, economic, educational, or other pressures threaten or cause (or are perceived to threaten or cause) a decline in the status of the language as a means of communication cultural medium, or a symbol of group or national identity." (Moshe Nahir 2003: 439)

Milroy and Milroy (1997: 52) quoted in Marongiu (2007: 52), also defined language maintenance as "an overt, institutional process of maintaining a particular variety of language in a population where there is wide enough linguistic diversity to make communication difficult."

The context of this process is a bilingual community and may include government intervention through language planning and policy. In some instances, it can be a hidden and an imposed language policy through education. For example, instituting a language as the only language of instruction in schools automatically makes it superior to other languages in that community. (Marongiu 2007: 52-54)

In situations where languages in contact compete for maintenance when a small group of migrants fails to uphold their migrant language, another language may take the dominant position within this group. This may lead to a decrease in the speakers of the said migrant language due to lack of confidence and competence of its speakers. Thus, using the migrant language as a home language or language of instruction in heritage language schools and community gives the language exposure and rebuilds the confidence and identity of its speakers. (Marongiu 2007: 53-55)

There is a difference between migrant and minority language when discussing language maintenance and heritage language. For the purpose of clarity in this study, migrant language is used to discuss language maintenance. On one hand, a minority language can be defined as "the

language spoken by less than fifty percent of the population in a given territory or country." On the other hand, migrant language is a language spoken by immigrants in a foreign country. The difference between minority and migrant language is that while a minority language is spoken by a minor group within the country of origin, a migrant language is spoken in a foreign country by a minor group of people who have moved from their country of origin. (Grenoble and Adam Roth 2014: 1)

Generally, the idea of language maintenance is shadowy or "less than crystal clear" (Edwards 2004: 457). A language can nonetheless be preserved in written form, but spoken only by few (or none). As such, maintenance does imply a continuity in the spoken medium. So, for a language to be maintained it is necessary for it to have a sustained transmission tract, without which it becomes vulnerable and threatened. Although Edwards (2004: 462) has pointed out that objectives of language maintenance include promotion of bilingualism, biculturalism and the revival of heritage languages, other authors state that two main factors foster language maintenance. In Kloss' (1966) write-up cited by Edwards (2010: 85), the factors are clear-cut and ambivalent at the same time. The clear-cut and ambivalent factors include "an early point of immigration, the existence of linguistic enclaves, membership of a denomination with parochial schools, and pre-emigration experience with language maintenance." (Davis and Elder 2004: 709) In very pluralistic settings where many languages come in contact, there is a tremendous possibility for migrant languages to be endangered. In order to prevent the total disappearance of these languages, language maintenance comes to play. Language maintenance schools are viewed as options (Fishman 2001:83), because of increased immigration, with many groups viewing their language to be at risk as they come in contact with other languages. (Edwards 2004: 458; Toppelberg and Collins 2010)

Bradley (2002) proposed that the key factor that determines the success or failure of maintaining a language is the language attitude of its speakers and the significance attached to the minority language as a mark of identity. Language attitudes can be expressed through the overall attitudes of individuals or the community as a whole towards language maintenance. Also, factors such as the choice of the majority language being the home language in order to facilitate integration into the majority society on the one hand, and parents trying to maintain and promote children's proficiency in the minority language, on the other hand, may influence language attitude. (Bradley 2002: 1-22)

Another factor that influences language attitude is the historical background of the language, writings, songs, and stories in a language can help build the confidence of its speakers. The

language policies of speakers of the majority language may also influence the maintenance of the minority language. In a community where speakers of the majority language adopt monolingual policies, speakers of the minority language are often educated on the advantages of being bilingual as to having the ability to code-switch in interactions and above all a wide knowledge of the world's view. (Bradley 2002: 1-22)

2.1.1 Language maintenance of a community

Jackson's (1999) definition of community highlights that a community has an unlimited number of members who hold the same norms, shared values and sets of understanding. In addition, the members of ethnic communities can identify one another with symbols, norms, and meanings and construct an identity. Therefore, ethnicity is a socially defined category of people who share a common cultural heritage, ancestry, cultural experience, language or dialect, history, and homeland. (Jackson 1999: 9-10)

According to Fought (2006) language clearly, classifies an ethnic community as among the social and cultural shared factors that reveal the uniqueness of a group. Hence, language maintenance promotes and revives the cultural identity of one's ethnic group. The environment greatly influences language maintenance as the involvement of heritage language communities like organizing weekend language schools encourages heritage language learners. This is because these learners are exposed to a more formal instruction in heritage language community schools and as such participate in varieties of cultural activities that shape their perception of the language under study. (Kondo-Brown 2006: 18, 19)

2.1.2 Language Loss

Language loss occurs when speakers of the said language no longer use the language in everyday situations. That is, they are not able to use the language in conversations with friends or read newspapers without referring to a dictionary. Language loss is a gradual process that is not caused by a change in a group's characteristic, rather it results from the loss that takes place in individuals of a minority language group. (Fase et al. 1992: 8) Migrant languages also face language loss as immigrants may find it difficult to uphold and speak the said language due to factors like social structures and dominant cultures of the host country. (Renen 2014: 4-5)

Jackson II and Hogg (2010) define language loss as "the suppression of an indigenous language or mother tongue". Further, Jackson II and Hogg (2010) proposed two situations that can lead to language loss with the first being the total destruction of a group leading to a natural disappearance of the language because of the absence of any of its speakers. The second condition is that in which the people are dislocated and uprooted from their linguistic community of origin. The dislocation process may strip the people of their language. Looking at the above causal conditions of language loss proposed by Jackson II and Hogg, it is evident that language loss is a product of domination, power, and control from the majority group and language. For example, the power and fame subsumed in a majority language may cause speakers of the marginalized communities to identify more with the majority language in order to shun the inferiority associated with the migrant language and embrace the benefits that come with the majority language. In the situation of migrants in the host society, language loss can result from the need of migrants to integrate into the new community in order to survive economically or socially. In that case, these migrants may abandon their language and learn the language of their new society. (Jackson II and Hogg 2010: 422:424)

Language loss has significant effects on the minority group. Most of the groups lost their culture, religion and other beliefs as a result of complete assimilation in the new culture. This is because the minorities believe knowledge in the language and culture of the new or dominant group serves as a means of socio-cultural and economic development in the new world. (Jackson II and Hogg 2010: 422-424)

2.1.3 Acculturation

When people migrate, they not only experience a change in geographical location, they also encounter new cultures, languages and new ways of life. In the domain of language which can be considered a feature that is subsumed under the cultural makeup of identity formation in individuals, immigrants usually experience a struggle between their native language and the dominant language of their new society. Thus, immigrants can either learn the language of the host country to attain satisfactory proficiency in the language alongside maintaining, rejecting or losing the native language. Or they can also refrain from learning the language of the host country. This is also a possibility. It is worth noting that acculturation strategies are intertwined with immigrants' willingness to learn the language of the host country. (Isurin 2011: 207-208)

According to Berry (2005: 698), acculturation is defined as

> "[…] dual process of cultural and psychological change that takes place as a result of contact between two or more cultural groups and their individual members. At the group level, it involves changes in social structures and institutions and in cultural practices. At the individual level, it involves changes in a person's behavioral repertoire." (Berry, 2005: 698)

Acculturation takes place as a result of migration which leads to the coming together of two or more languages and cultures. Different groups and individuals find themselves in the host society for different motives, and this is the reason why migrants do not go through the acculturation process in the same way. Acculturation involves a long process for individuals and in the case of a group it might take years, generations and even centuries, it also requires different forms of mutual accommodation, which may in some cases lead to long term sociocultural and psychological adaptations between the immigrants and the host group. That is, as long as two or more cultures are in contact, different acculturation processes will be used by immigrants to negotiate through the host society. (Berry 2005: 698)

Berry (2005) proposed four acculturation strategies namely: integration, assimilation, marginalization, and separation. These acculturation strategies consist of two elements that are usually connected, attitudes and behaviors. Attitudes in this context refer to an individual's preference on how to acculturate, behaviors, on the other hand, comprise of a person's actual activities. The choice and consequences of an acculturation strategy basically depend on both cultural and psychological factors that precede the implementation of acculturation. (Berry 2005: 704)

According to Berry, the four acculturation strategies mentioned above can be classified under two main themes. That is the difference between "a relative preference for maintaining one's heritage culture and identity and a relative preference for making contact with and participating in the larger society along with other ethnocultural groups" as explained in the figure below.
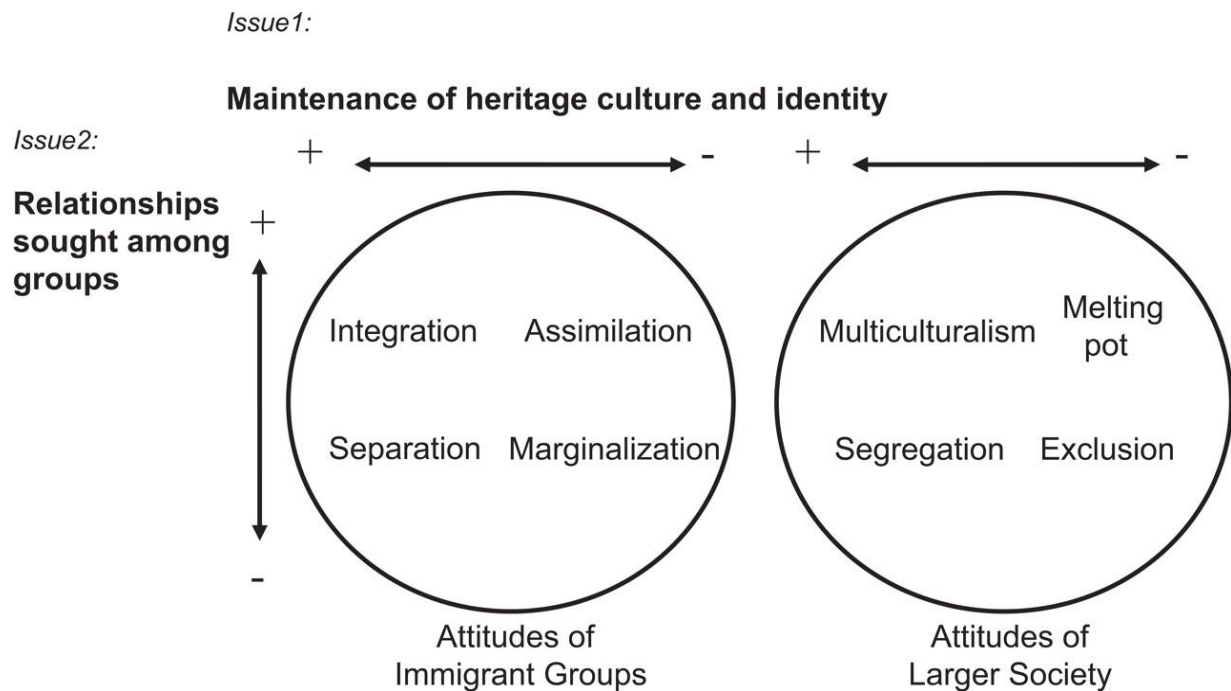
Issue1:

Maintenance of heritage culture and identity

Figure 2: Four acculturation strategies. (Berry 2005:705)

From the figure above, the left circle represents different acculturation processes adopted by immigrants to integrate into the host society. It is worth noting that each acculturation strategy used by the immigrants is influenced by their attitude towards the host society.

The acculturation strategy of assimilation is adopted in a context where the migrant group or migrants are ready to interact with other cultures with the aim to learn these cultures and replace them with their culture of origin, that is, they do not wish to maintain their cultural identity, hence give up their culture. According to Berry (2005), "at the ethnographic level of observation, assimilation is rarely the goal embraced by acculturating groups because although cultural change is common, cultural groups all over the world have not disappeared and cultural sameness has not resulted from intercultural contact." (Berry 2005: 705-706)

The separation strategy is the best for migrant groups or migrants to implement when they stick to their original cultural identity and try as much as possible to avoid contact with other cultures to maintain their heritage culture. In this case, migrants completely reject the cultures and way of life of the host society thereby upholding their culture zealously. The acculturation strategy of separation can also be practice in multicultural societies where migrant groups create new cultures as a result of resistance towards assimilating into the host country. (Berry 2005: 705-706)

The integration strategy is mostly influenced by the wish of the migrant groups to uphold cultural integrity and the need of getting involved in the larger social system which is the host country in this case. In this context, migrant groups interact with other cultures with the aim of accepting these cultures alongside maintaining their heritage culture. Migrants usually adopt the integration strategy because of the benefits that come with learning and embracing the host culture. It should be noted that integration can only be "freely" chosen and successfully pursued by the migrant group only in multicultural situations where the host country is open and inclusive in its orientation towards cultural diversity. That is to say that a mutual effort is required to succeed in the acculturation strategy of integration. (Berry 2005: 705-706)

The marginalization strategy is adopted in cases where migrant groups are less willing to maintain heritage culture and identity and have little interest in interacting with other cultures. This is common in contexts where the culture of migrant groups experience cultural loss and at the same time exclusion and discrimination from the larger society. Nevertheless, these strategies are explained from the perspective of the non-dominant groups; the explanation is based on the assumption that these groups have the possibility to choose acculturation methods that they deem doable. (Berry 2005: 705)

However, there are perspectives in which the dominant group may impose acculturation strategies on non-dominant groups. From the right side of the figure, on the point of view of the dominant society, the "melting pot" represents situations where assimilation is being required by the dominant group. "Segregation" occurs when the dominant group imposes separation. When the dominant group enforces exclusion, marginalization comes to play. In addition, in contexts where diversity is the major characteristic of the society comprising all ethnocultural groups, multiculturalism is implemented. It should be noted that with this approach it could be possible for comparisons to be made between individuals and their groups and between non-dominant groups and the larger society. (Berry 2005: 706)

2.2 Language, Identity, and Diaspora

Identity, language, and diaspora are closely related. Identity is intertwined with language and for anything to be called language it must be spoken by a group of people within a particular geographical location. Thus, when people migrate, they carry along language and identity with them to the host country (Diaspora). According to Ludmila (2011), language is an important component of the cultural makeup and identity formation in a multicultural context. That is, for

immigrants, both the language of origin and that of the host society are associated with their cultural adaptation and the transformation in their self-perception when negotiating bilingualism. This is to say that, the comfort of home and sense of belonging, can be linked closely to the native language for some and with a complete rejection of that language by others. (Ludmila 2011: 222)

2.2.1 Identity

Every human, thing or object possess an identity. The concept of identity is one with too many definitions, as its definition proves contradictory and slippery because everyone has different perspectives on what identity is all about. Lawler (2008) claims that the view of identity centers on its contradictory nature of sameness and difference because the meaning of identity is derived from the root of a Latin word "idem" which literarily means "same" which gives rise to the word "identical". From this explanation, it is evident that identity deals with grouping, sameness, and uniqueness. (Lawler 2008: 2-4)

Schwartz et al. (2011) on their part, refer to identity as the implicit or explicit responses people give to the question "who are you?" This simple question of "who are you?" conveys different meanings to different individuals or groups in different situations. It may require answers tied to self-definition, group identity, or actions. Hence, the identity question, "Who are you?" is pregnant with a range of diverse, related context and processes, which may include ancestors, body or spouse. (Schwartz et al. 2011: 2-3)

Sociologists like Bauman (2004) hold the claim that the issue of identity was not troubling before the rapid increase in globalization, migration and the fall of nations due to war and other disasters. However, identity has become unstable due to constant changes in the social world. Bauman further explains that in early years, 'natural identity' such as national identity was not faced with competition or opposition as is the case today where national identity is highly cultural and constructed. This explains why people always try to negotiate, apologize, hide or proudly display their identity when interacting in a multicultural society. (Bauman 2004: 8-12)

Lawler (2008) considers identity as a social and collective process, not an individual and unique possession. That is, identity can be constructed and lost through social interactions. She further explains that identity formation takes place through our experiences and that identities are produced through our daily engagements, even though not many will officially write an autobiography. Therefore, identity is constructed through the combination of understandings,

experiences, knowledge, and interpretations that are told through narratives and everyday interactions. These narratives and interactions are not a true representation of identities rather their interpretations and reinterpretation serve as the basis for understanding the world, others and ourselves. (Lawler 2008: 2-19)

Leeman (2015: 101-103) points out that social constructivists have a different perspective from that of earlier essentialists who consider identity to be a static entity embedded in people.

> "Contemporary social constructivist accounts emphasize that the people's sense of themselves and of their relationship to the world is shifting and multiple. Identities are not fixed within the individual but instead are shaped and constrained by the macro- and micro-level socio-historical contexts, including societal ideologies, power relations, and institutional policies." (Leeman 2015: 101-103)

The above excerpt explains that the identity of an individual or group can be negotiated and re-negotiated in intercultural settings. This is because identity is not inborn but it is rather constructed both at the social, historical and political levels. That is, an individual or group can have multiple identities at one point and lose all these identities at another point in time. (Leeman 2015: 101-103)

2.2.2 Language and identity

According to Evans (2014) language in a discourse, context is more than grammar. That is words, phrases, sentences or intonation and other linguistics properties. Language is symbolic and expresses ways of being in the world by creating meanings that relate to us in terms of identity. Language in this context can be referred to as a social component in the process of identity formation because other features like attitude and perception come to play when using language in an intercultural setting. (Evans 2014: 9)

Evans (2014) further termed language a two-edged sword, which apart from limiting identity also creates an identity. Therefore, incompetence in a language of a particular group by an individual may restrict them from identifying with that group even if that individual is born in that group or nation. On the other hand, competence in a language may give way for the said individual to identify with the group or language to which the language belongs. (Evans 2014: 4)

Some researchers consider language as a social variable and resource, which is dependent on community, shared norms and on the perceptual and ideological aspects of identity as a social construct. Bassiouney (2014), on his part, came up with a two-fold role of language in identity

formation. According to his assertion, language can be used as a resource when presenting a common identity to coherent communities that have similar perceptions, ideologies, and habits. In this context, code-switching and code-choice play a significant role because the code one chooses in a public discourse reveals his or her self-positioning and perception in relation to others. (Bassiouney 2014: 41)

2.2.3 Cultural identity and the Diasporas

The Dictionary of Media and Communication (2011), defines cultural identity "as the definition of groups or individuals (by themselves or others) in terms of cultural or subcultural categories (including ethnicity, nationality, language, religion, and gender)." (Chandler and Munday 2011: 84) According to Fong and Chuang (2004), individuals observe cultural identity at international, national and personal levels in what they term "real" ways. That is, people establish solid communities (e.g. Somalis in Finland) and others going to war because of the unifying strength in their cultural identities. That is while some migrant groups, on one hand, come together to form an association in order to uphold their cultural values and identity in the host country, and on the other hand, the minor group of a community may go to war against the major group in that same community in order to maintain their culture and identity. (Fong and Chuang 2004: 70)

Hall 1996 cited by Nicholas (2014: 22-23) proposed two ways of perceiving cultural identity in the diaspora; the first is cultural identity with regards to:

> "One shared culture, a sort of collective "one true self", hiding inside the many other, more superficial or artificially imposed "selves", which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common…this "oneness" underlying all the other more superficially differences is the truth."(Nicholas 2014: 22-23)

According to Nicholas (2014: 22-23), the second form of cultural identity in the diaspora examines cultural identity as

> "[…] a matter of "becoming" as well as of "being". It belongs to the future as much as to the past. It is not something which already exists, transcending place, time, history, and culture. Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But like everything which is historical, they undergo constant transformation."(Nicholas 2014:22-23)

The identity of the diaspora imagined community is unstable because it is "constituted within the crucible of the materiality of everyday life, in the everyday stories people tell individually and collectively." Hence, immigrants sometimes hold strong to their cultural identity when referring to

their place of origin in a multicultural context. Ethnicity has been used by sociologist as an important factor in identity building in the diasporas. That is, it is used as a social construct indicating uniqueness and difference and has been one of the key elements in of cultural identity. (Benedict 1983: 50-52)

2.3 Heritage Language

According to Obor (2006) language embodies a non-verbal structure of cultural values, thus the existence of a language guarantees the existence and preservation of culture and the group of this culture. On the other hand, the loss of a language eventually means a loss of culture and identity. Therefore, language maintenance in the diasporas through the teaching of heritage language in informal settings includes culture as an important constituent in the learning process. This serves as an instrument in reconstructing ethnic or national identity in the diaspora where these identities are endangered by diversity. (Obor 2006: 349)

Valdes (2005: 411) in one of his articles, mentions that "heritage language is used generally to refer to non-societal and non-majority languages spoken by groups often known as linguistic minorities." From this definition, the minorities include "a group of people who are either indigenous to a particular region to a present-day nation-state or belong to a population that has migrated to areas other than their own region or country of origin." (Valdes 2005: 411)

According to Aravossitas and Trifonas (2014), what constitutes heritage language must be able to be reinvented to include fluid understandings of bilingualism and multilingualism. That is, one that comprises of not just home languages and trans-language, but also the way in which this trans-language breaks the continuity and tradition of existing cultural norms. (Aravossitas and Trifonas 2014: 266) It is worth noting that the term used to refer to such languages has an effect on the way its learners perceive their identity in bilingual societies, especially learners of the minority group. (Valdes 2001)

2.3.1 Heritage language learner

Generally, the person studying a language that is connected to the culture, ancestors, ethnic group and family in an informal or formal setting is referred to as heritage language learner. According to Valdes (2005), "there are two types of heritage language learners.

The first comprises of members of linguistic minorities who are concerned about the study, maintenance, and revitalization of their minority languages. Such minorities include populations who are either natives to a specific region of a present-day nation-state or persons that have migrated to areas other than their own native land." (Valdes 2005: 411)

The second type of heritage language learners refers to a student who is raised in a home where a language other than the majority language of the said community is spoken. Such a student may speak and understand just the basics of the said heritage language and still be considered as bilingual in the majority language and the heritage language. (Valdes 2005: 412)

These categories are connected because the first category comprises of parents of members of the second category. That is offspring of immigrants and second generation immigrants. The difference between this two categories is that the second category of heritage language learners (second generation immigrants) have no prior knowledge of the language under study. While the first category member has prior knowledge and is learning the language with the aim of maintaining and improving it. These categories can be applied to the Finnish educational system where children learn heritage language through after-school programs in schools, weekend classes organized by ethnic communities of the heritage language and at home by parents and other relatives.

2.3.2 Heritage language teaching and learning

The increase in ethnic diversity has given rise to multilingualism since ethnic groups speak different languages other than the major languages. Thus, the desire to maintain and promote these languages and bilingualism has given birth to heritage language teaching. Also, plural societies to an extent encourage the teaching and learning of heritage language with the aim to increase knowledge in its speaker's and facilitate second language learning. (Valdes 2005: 411)

According to Valdes (2005), heritage language teaching has expanded significantly since the early 1970s. This has led to an increase in heritage learners and improvements in educational approaches and resources. Heritage language communities have established heritage language programs with the objective of developing the proficiencies of learners of the said languages. (Valdes 2005: 411)

Cummins (2005) further explains that there is massive loss of national language resources because of the limited opportunities for young children to use and become literate in their heritage language. In addition, the use of a particular language as the only medium of instruction in these heritage

language schools causes children to be ashamed of speaking and identifying with the heritage language. The use of the home language in school is important in promoting heritage language speakers to perceive their multilingual talents as a treasured element of their identities. (Cummins 2005: 586-590)

It is important to state at this juncture that, there are stages in heritage language learning where parents (informal setting, home), and teachers (formal setting, school learners, weekend lessons), negotiate the heritage language teaching process. Such method is implemented when parents want children to be more advanced in the heritage language because in the formal heritage language school there is a possibility for children to learn numerous grammatical features and the written form of the heritage language accurately. (Bilash 2011: 1)

Research has proven that heritage language teaching is significant in cultural and identity learning. This is because heritage language teaching is not just to teach the linguistic forms of a language. Rather, it also consists of teaching culture and identity since these programs lay emphasis on improving the significance of culture and identity. Bilash (2011) suggests that "language is both the repository and transmitter of a group's culture, history and traditions. The study of heritage languages strengthens linguistic and cultural heritage, maintains a valuable economic resource and promotes intercultural and cross-cultural understanding in learners" (Bilash 2011: 1).

Researchers have proposed common outcomes of heritage language learning. Some of them include (Bilash 2011: 1)

i.   The encouragement of the learner's self-esteem
ii.   Enhancement of communication, thereby bridging the gap between family members of different generations in the same cultural and linguistic group.
iii. Heritage language learning builds up the personal and cultural identity of its learners.
iv.   Promotion of pride in heritage
v.   Increase in bilingual proficiency
vi.   Provide opportunities to learn national languages

2.3.3 Heritage language teaching in a formal setting

According to Cummins (2005), there are diverse strategies of teaching heritage language in formal settings, for example, a heritage language classroom. He proposes different teaching strategies that

can help communities and educators improve the academic performance and proficiency of students in both the target language and first language. (Cummins 2005: 586-590)

Cummins (2005) explains that Monolingual Instructional Assumptions limit the opportunities for learning the target language and improving the first language. This is because, in such teaching strategy, the first language and the language under study are used separately. In addition, instructions are carried out exclusively in the target language and the use of bilingual dictionaries is not allowed. (Cummins 2005:587)

Further, translation from the first to the target language is not encouraged. The assumption is that translation makes it more difficult for the heritage language learner to improve proficiency in the target language and the first language. Hence, Cummins (2005) proposes teaching strategies that provide heritage language learners with opportunities to better develop proficiency in the heritage language and at the same time excel in the academic performance of the first language. He terms the strategy "Teaching for Cross-linguistic Transfer." (Cummins 2005: 587-590)

Teaching for cross-linguistic transfer is a method of heritage language teaching whereby bilingualism is the key instrument in the classroom. Children are encouraged to use their first language in the classroom because the first language plays an important role in learning the heritage language (Cummins 2005: 588) Cummins further explain three strategies that are embodied in teaching for cross-linguistic transfer. It should be noted that these strategies can be applied in monolingual instructional contexts to better improve learning outcomes. These strategies include the following:

a) Cognate Relationships

This involves the similarity in meanings of words between two languages. Languages that are cognitively related like Spanish and English can be used by heritage language students to enhance the learning process. Thus, encouraging students to relate the meaning of words in their first language and the language under study as they read words, phrases, sentences, or stories helps in transferring their first language knowledge to the target language, thereby improving their proficiency in both languages. (Cummins 2005: 588-589)

b) Dual Language Books

This bilingual strategy deals with designing dual language books. Students are asked to write stories in their first languages and later translate into the heritage language they are studying with

the help of their parents, teachers and other relatives. This helps new students express their thoughts, intellect, and experiences to both their teachers and peers. Dual language websites have been created to enable students to share stories with relatives and friends from their country of origin. This bilingual instruction strategy encourages students to use translation programs like Google Translate or Babel Fish for editing in both languages. Though the option of using computer translation programs has limitations by producing an inaccurate translation for students, it gives room for teamwork with students and teachers with the goal of providing an accurate translation. (Cummins 2005: 589)

c) Sister Class Projects

According to this method of teaching, students interact with a sister class in a technologically mediated way, using the dominant language and the language under study to create literature and art or to examine issues of social importance to them and their communities. The sister class projects can act as a huge encouragement for students to engage in language learning and language maintenance activities. (Cummins 2005: 590)

From the above instruction strategies, it is evident that heritage language teaching provides opportunities for children to excel academically. Thus, it is advisable for educators to accommodate home languages in the classroom, thereby encouraging heritage language students to be aware of the advantages of their multilingual identities. (Cummins 2005: 586-590)

Denham and Lobeck (2006) also propose the use of bilingual instruction in the classroom. These scholars suggest that teachers in heritage language schools should provide an environment that encourages bilingualism in both the heritage language and other languages. This can be done by involving the heritage language community members and teachers in an effort to provide flexible linguistic and cultural experiences. In addition, teachers can swap teaching materials with inviting elders from the heritage language community to the classroom to tell stories, give talks and presentations on educational and cultural topics. (Denham and Lobeck 2006)

In Finland, where the Finnish Education Board funds the teaching of heritage languages, schools offer two hours of heritage language instruction a week. Immigrant children often attend such classes after their normal school hours and on weekends; this is the case of Swahili lessons on Saturdays in Helsinki. The promotion of heritage language teaching by the Finnish National Board of Education is a motivation to foster the learning of Finnish as a second language. (Finnish National Board of Education, not dated)

2.3.4 Heritage language teaching in informal setting

Heritage language teaching in informal settings largely takes place at home, and heritage language educators need to advise parents to use the heritage language all the time at home with their children because this does not only introduce and give them an insight of their culture and identity, but it also fosters their acquisition of the majority language. This is because multilingual children are likely to show greater readiness to recognise language structures and are more advanced in phonological, lexical and semantic awareness. (Chen et al. 2010: 176) A heritage language learning environment greatly influences the learning process of its learners, thus a non-heritage environment with the absence of parents, grandparents, elders and other peers from the heritage community slows down the heritage language learning process. This is because there are fewer linguistic inputs like historic and other cultural stories and experiences which heritage language learners need in order to enhance the learning process. (Bilash 2011: 1)

According to Chen at al. (2010), consistent communication between parents and children in the heritage language in their early age is the first step of teaching that language. Research has proven that inconsistent communication using the heritage language is usually a reason for failure in heritage language learning. (Chen et al. 2010: 176)

Bilash (2011) also explains that exposing children to heritage language at home by parents is crucial in teaching heritage language. The question many will ask is how much exposure is needed for a child to learn a language. It is worth nothing that though scientifically no exact linguistic input has been recommended, scholars like Wang (2008) have suggested that a child needs multiple exposures to a heritage language in order to successfully acquire it. In addition, reading routines, personal experiences and storytelling, de-contextualised language exchanges and a print-rich environment are credited as inputs to enhance heritage language learning at home. This method can be successful especially if parents choose wisely stories that are of interest to the children and the right moments in their lives to tell them. (Bilash 2011: 1)

It is important at some point in time for parents to cooperate with teachers, heritage language schools, and communities. Bilash (2011) concludes by pointing out that each developmental stage in heritage language learning requires a new task. Studies have proved that consistent communication between parents and children in their early years matches the initial stage. The task of matching the home and school language of children by parents is carried out as the children transition from staying at home with the parents to schools such as Preschools and Kindergartens.

This is because heritage language teaching in schools is to an extent advanced as compared to that spoken at home by parents. The Heritage language literacy skills should be the main task when children are in elementary and secondary school. (Bilash 2011: 1)

2.3.5 Language teaching and gender

Over the years, the interrelationship between language and gender has been of great interest in studies like applied linguistics, sociolinguistics, cultural studies, gender studies, conversation analysis and other disciplines. The relationship between language and gender has diverse interpretations and emerged as a separate field of inquiry in the 1970s. This research was prompted by feminist concerns about the connections between sex, power, and language. (Pavlenko et al. 2001: 17)

Women have a great role to play in language, as was the case of Provencal and Breton mothers who initiated language shifts by refusing to teach their children the primary language of the community. They rather spoke French to their children as they perceived it to be associated with modernity, urbanity and higher social status while perceiving Provencal and Breton as inferior. Still, in this domain, the death of the East Sutherland Gaelic was triggered by the refusal of women to transmit the language to children in the 1930s. (Aneta et al. 2001: 30)

Historically, African women have always be subjected to taking care of the home and all that is in it including children. In addition, it may be difficult for women to utter a word or make any decision concerning the running of the home. Thus, they carry on the manual work of cooking, taking care of the laundry, teaching the children cultural or religious values and cultivating food products for home consumption or sale. Politically, women were totally excluded in parliaments and occupied the back sits in church.

3   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research questions for this study is answered by conducting a qualitative research using a thematic approach. Research has proven that gender and sociology researchers often include intersectionality when analysing data. Collins (2000: 17-18) defines intersectionality as "an analysis claiming that systems of race, social class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nation, and age form mutually constructing features of social organization, which shape Black women's experiences and in turn are shaped by Black women". That is, the intersectional approach is specifically concerned with the formation of social identities and argues that researchers need to think outside the box (Collins 2000: 17-18).

3.1 Narrative Interviews

Riessman, (2007:1) defines narrative thematic analysis as follows.

> "Thematic analysis where content is the exclusive focus (minimal focus on how the narrative is spoken/written). This form of analysis is close to grounded theory but keeps the story intact and often uses prior theoretical concepts. Thematic meanings and understanding the 'point' of the narrative are emphasized over language and form. Narratives are often situated in their macro context while the local context is neglected." (Riessman 2007:1)

According to researchers, a narrative engages the audience in the narrator's world. It invites listener, viewers into the perceptions of the narrator. Narratives also mobilize others into action for progressive change. Riessman (2007) defines narrative analysis as the family method for interpreting texts that have in common a storied form. These texts can be oral, written or visual and the basis for analysis is case-centred. Cases that form the basis for a narrative analysis include individuals, communities, identity groups, organizations or even nations. Narrative inquiry focuses in particular on how an individual narrates a story, the language used and content of the narrative. In addition, narrative studies rely "on extended accounts that are preserved and treated analytically as units, rather than fragmented into thematic categories, as is the case for other forms of qualitative analysis such as grounded theory." A good narrative analysis prompts readers to think beyond the texts and therefore move towards a broader commentary. (Riessman 2007: 11-13)

Narrative interviews guarantee authentic and unique data for the researcher to carry out an intensive research by merging the life experiences of the group, individual or society under study and the socio-historical contexts, to enhance the interpretation of the ideas that redefined the beliefs and values that influence the perceptions of the interviewees. Therefore, the narrative interview is more significant in conducting qualitative research since qualitative research lays emphasis on

constructing different perspectives of the real world that cannot be determined quantitatively. (Muylaert et al. 2014: 187-188)

3.2 Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis is one of the widest research methods used by qualitative researchers. According to Braun and Clark (2006), thematic analysis is the most common method for "identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organizes and describes your data set in (rich) detail. However, frequently it goes further than this, and interprets various aspects of the research topic." (Braun and Clark 2006: 79)

4   DATA COLLECTION

This section examines the motivation and choice of participants involved in the interviews. It is followed by a detailed demographic representation of participants and concludes with an explanation of the method used in collecting the data for this study.

4.1 Interviewed participants for the study

For the purpose of this study, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 12 Kenyan immigrant mothers having children between the ages of two to twenty. This is because linguistic research has proven that children usually learn languages at their young ages (Chapelton 2016: 1) this does not invalidate the fact that some teens learn languages even faster depending on the method and reason for learning the language. The Swahili teacher of the Kenyan Association in Finland was also interviewed. All the participants live in the city of Helsinki, which has the highest number of immigrants and is the most multicultural city in Finland. These mothers were chosen on the following research-based criteria:

   i.   They are Kenyan citizens who have lived in Finland for more than seven years
   ii. They have children between the ages of 2 to 20 years, who are born in Finland.
   iii. They speak Swahili fluently besides one or more other languages

There was no precise criteria regarding marital status, the level of bilingualism, the level of education, occupation and the reason for migrating to Finland. The reason for excluding these criteria during the selection of participants was intended to investigate through the data provided during the interviews if they impacted the perspective of the participants. In addition, including the above criteria when making the choice of participants for the interview would have somehow limited the number of participants for the research.

Before the main interview session, a brief explanation was given to the participants about the research, and the purpose of the interview. Each participant's permission was also requested since the interviews were recorded. In addition, the confidentiality of their names and identities was guaranteed, hence names are changed in the analysis, except that of the Kenyan Association in Finland. This is with the consent of the board of the Association.

It is worth noting that an official study plan was submitted to the Kenyan Association in Finland through the Secretary General; this study plan concisely explains the purpose of the study. The thesis plan was duly approved by the Kefiso board and attached on the association's website and

Facebook page. This official process created the opportunity to contact those who were interested in participating as interviewees for the study. There were to either comment by writing their emails or phone numbers or contact the secretary. As a result, 50% of the participants are Kefiso's members while the rest though non-Kefiso members were still contacted by Kefiso. Finally, Kefiso linked the participants with the researcher who then contacted them. Most of the interviews were conducted in the homes of the participants. This was to create convenience and to minimize the feeling of pressure to the lowest. Table 2 below represents the general statistics of participants:

Table 2: The general statistics of participants

Participants	Ethnic group	Number of children	Ages of children	Years lived in Finland	Home language
M1	Kikuyu	1	9	12	Swahili
M2	Luo	1	11	15	English
M3	Luya	2	2/7	10	Swahili/ Estonia
M4	Kamba/Meru	1	2	10	Swahili
M5	Kikuyu	1	3	8	Swahili
M6	Luya	3	15/13/ 3	14	Finnish
M7	Luya	1	7	10	Swahili/ Finnish
M8	Kamba	2	15/9	10	Swahili
M9	Kikuyu	1	5	6	Swahili
M10	Kamba	1	6	10	Swahili
M11	Luo	2	10/3	11	Swahili/ Finnish
M12	Kikuyu	1	4	9	Swahili

Most of the mothers are bilingual with a satisfactory level of Finnish. Some are still enrolled in Finnish language programs. M6 is a student in a Finnish language school, though she has lived in Finland for eight years. She just enrolled in a Finnish language program after two years of marriage with a Finn. In addition, all the participants belong to one or two ethnic groups. For example, M4 belongs to the Meru and Kamba ethnic groups. It is worth noting that most of the participants are literate because they have acquired an average level of education and they are employed as full-time employees, except M9 and M6 who are students. This, therefore, implies that these participants do not actually stay home all day.

The choice of the home language can somehow be attributed to spouses, marital status and family and personal reasons. For example, M1, M4, and M10 are single mothers; M6, M7, M3, and M11

are married to Finnish men; M2 is married to a Ghanaian and M1, M5, M8, M9, M12 are married
to Kenyans. Further, participants from the Kikuyu (M1, M5, M9 and M12) ethnic group used only
Swahili at home, while those from the Luya and other ethnic groups (M2, M3, M6, M7, M8, M10,
M11) used either Swahili and Finnish, or English and Finnish only, as in the case of M6 and M2.

Table 3: The profile of participants

Mothers	Highest level of Education	Employment Status	Other Languages	Marital Status	Nationality of "Spouse"
M1	Bachelors	Employed	English Kikuyu Finnish	Single Parent	Kenyan
M2	Bachelors	Employed	English Luo Finnish	Married	Ghanaian
M3	Bachelors	Employed	Luya English Swedish Estonian German	Married	Estonian
M4	Bachelors	Employed	Finnish English Swedish Kamba Meru	Single parent	Finnish
M5	Bachelors	Employed	Kikuyu English Finnish	Married	Kenyan
M6	High School	Unemployed Student	English Finnish	Married	Finnish
M7	Bachelors	Employed	Luya English Finnish	Married	Finnish
M8	Diploma	Employed	Kamba English Finnish	Married	Kenyan
M9	Bachelors	Unemployed Student	Kikuyu English	Married	Kenyan
M10	Diploma	Student	Kamba English	Single Parent	Estonia
M11	Diploma	Employed	Luo English Finnish	Married	Finnish
M12	Bachelors	Employed	Kikuyu English	Married	Kenyan

4.2 Method of Interviews Conducted in English

The information for this research was collected by conducting a semi-structured narrative interview. The purpose of this data collection method was to collect good data that can be analysed qualitatively. Creating an atmosphere in which interviewees can freely express their point of views without limiting them to the researcher's theme and language was important. (Muylaert 2014: 188) In addition, since the findings of this study are based solely on the experience the interviewees narrate, a semi-structured narrative interview best fit this study. Thus, the time range for each session was not fixed before the interview because there was no fixed format or questions to follow, as the interviewer got to pose questions that arise from the interviewees' stories with respect to the interviewees' interests. (Bauer 1996: 9-12) Nevertheless, each interview lasted between forty to fifty minutes.

The interviews were conducted in very informal conditions. This greatly achieved the objective to allow participants to speak freely. Also, a lot of information was gotten after the main recorded interview. That is what Bauer (1996) refers to his model as "small talk." During post interview chats and refreshments, since the interviewees offered some food such as chapatti (Kenyan-Indian food), they could freely relate the food to the topic under study, hence throwing more light to what they already discussed before.

Framing the questions for the interview was an important stage in this work. However, the questions were designed to comprise three sections. There were background questions for participants, general and specific questions on the study subject. However, questions were formulated such as to obtain answers that would incorporate the meaning of heritage language according to participants, its significance, and their teaching methods, while addressing other issues quite relevant to this research. Therefore, the questions were open-ended in order to get broad answers and also to allow participants to answer in their own words. (Patton 1990)

Though there were prepared questions, these were mostly used as guides as the interviews were often done in a relaxed and informal context, most times new questions arose in the conversation. However, the interviews were quite focused and tailored to remain within the scope and framework of this study. Furthermore, question orders were not followed strictly, as participants would sometimes cause their order to be inverted.

5   ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the data collected from the interviews with participants are discussed and analyzed in relation to the research questions. As mentioned above, thematic analysis deals with themes that arise from the data. Thus, the analysis will comprise of discussing these themes in connection with theories and policies related to heritage language teaching. In addition, quotations from participants responses in the data will be used to support the analysis where needed. The analysis ends with a conclusion and proposal for further research on the topic under study.

5.1 Views on Swahili as national language

Participants' perspectives on Swahili as a language spoken in Kenya was considered a very important element for this study. They were, therefore, requested to explain in their own opinion what comes in their minds at the mention of Swahili in Finland. This was significant in getting participants' stance towards Swahili, spoken or not spoken in Finland, and the aspect of self that is associated with it. Therefore, when this question was asked, some of the participants had this to say on what they perceive as functions of Swahili in Kenya.

> (1)   It is generally used in Kenya as the national language. And as Kenyans are concerned, it actually breaks the barrier between ethnicity and ethnic groups because everybody can communicate in it so it creates an open place for us all to communicate that is the ethnicities can come and communicate in one common language […] yeah it is a language spoken by everybody. (M1)

M1 explains in the above excerpt that Swahili is a national language in Kenya which serves as a medium of communication to those from different ethnic groups.

For M4 on her part,

> (2)   Swahili is a language that unites us as Kenyans together and it is my mother tongue that is what I tell everyone that is what I write everywhere and I don't even like speaking about the ethnic groups. Yeah in my opinion so Swahili is my mother tongue is a language that is close to my heart, I think in Swahili and yeah […] Swahili is the national language of Kenya […] yeah it is dominating. (M4)

The explanation of M4 indicates that Swahili is a national language in Kenya that unite Kenyans from other ethnicities. She mentions that Swahili is a mother tongue to her and the most dominant language in Kenya. Further, M4 views Swahili as a component of identity and pride to its speakers in the diaspora, as she identifies with Swahili when introducing herself to everyone in Finland.

This ascertains to the point of view that language and identity are intertwined and the sociolinguistic claim that the ways we speak identify us. Also, the view of language being seen as a unifying factor supports the view of researchers who hold that language represents a people. (Evans 2014: 4)

Participants like M6 share the view that Swahili is a national language spoken by non-English speakers in Kenya.

> (3)   Ummm yeah it is the national language spoken by all the tribes in Kenya and it is the only way these tribes can communicate with each other and those who don't understand English speak. (M6)

From the above extract, it can be observed from M6 explanation that Swahili is not only perceived as a national language in Kenya, it is also a foundation for unity amongst different ethnic groups in the Kenyan society. This is due to the fact that everyone speaks and understands Swahili irrespective of the different ethnic groups.

In like-mindedness, M2 in talking about the importance of Swahili as a uniting factor goes further to say that

> (4)   Yeah, we have other languages in Kenya but Swahili joins, combines all these languages, it is the language that brings us together with the language which everybody speaks… there are so many ethnic groups but Swahili brings us together, I mean when we come together we speak Swahili and identify with it. (M2)

It is interesting to note that, language does not only work as national identity construct as pointed out by the participant who explains that, it also fills the gap, the division among ethnic groups.The unifying factor of Swahili as a national language in Kenya is further corroborated by M3. Although M3 goes further to elaborate on the processes, she nonetheless concludes on the same unifying status of Swahili as a national language in Kenya as illustrated in the excerpt below.

> (5)   Because am a Kenyan that is as long as I am a Kenyan we have a lot of languages and there is one language which everyone speaks and that is Swahili and then English so that is the form of identity we are Kenyans. (M3)

Also, participants M2 and M3 perceive Swahili to be a foundation for unity amongst different ethnic groups in Kenya, due to the fact that everyone speaks and understands it irrespective of the different ethnic groups.

From the responses of participants, it is worthy of note that they perceive the heritage language differently, especially in the diaspora. Hence, their responses reveal the role of Swahili in Kenya and the diaspora. On one hand, participants view language as a unifying factor intertwines with identity. It is further explained that Swahili breaks the barrier between ethnicity and ethnic groups in the country of origin and the diaspora. On the other hand, participants perceive Swahili as being significant where it is dominant, that is the country of origin because it is considered the universal medium of communication in the context where it is given the name "national language".

Furthermore, all the above participants mentioned the issue of linguistic diversity in Kenya in the cause of explaining Swahili as a unifying language in Kenya. This reveals that there are different languages and ethnicities in Kenya.

The linguistic diversity in Kenya revealed in the explanations of some participants is said to be solved to an extent by Swahili. Participant M3 explains that Swahili unites speakers of different dialects in the excerpt below

> (6) In Kenya, we have 42 languages so if I speak my own language… my dialect is *luya* and if my friend I have a friend who speaks Kikuyu, but if I bring my children and my children together the one common language they have is Swahili. (M3)

The issue of linguistic diversity in Kenya is also being raised by participant M3 as she explains her view on Swahili as a language in Kenya.
For M5 apart from unifying factors, she garnishes it with the social impetus, the pride, and esteem as the excerpt below shows.

> (7) It makes Kenyans one that is why we are proudly Kenyans, you feel at home especially when you find somebody who speaks Swahili oh God you can't help it we speak Swahili regardless the tribe anyone comes from. (M5)

Participant M5 perceives Swahili as a language that does not only unify speakers of different tribes in Kenyan but also in the diaspora.

5.2 Role of Swahili in Finland

According to some participants, Swahili is less significant in Finland compared to the national language Finnish. These participants hold the view that Swahili plays a great role only in Kenya where it is the national and dominant language, just as Finnish is the national and dominant language of Finland. When the question on the role of heritage language in Finland is asked, some

of the participants have this to say on as they explain the place of Swahili in Finland. For M6 who is married to a Finn, she has the following to say:

> (8) Yeah because in this house we speak just two languages the first one is Finnish and the second is English so yeah that is the reason and my struggle now is to study good Finnish in order to speak well with my husband and also integrate into the system and pick up a job you know how it is with Finnish language here, hmmm they always ask for Finnish language when applying for a job. Even also to get Finnish Citizenship so Finnish is all that matters, I will say Swahili is not important here so I don't speak it in this house […] yes I don't. (M6)

She acknowledges that Swahili is the national language spoken by Kenyans in Kenya, but she admits it is not relevant in Finland as Finnish is needed for integration and employment in Finland. From her explanation in the above except, her husband being a Finn influences her choice of home language to a greater extent.

Participant M2 also shares the same view. However, for them, their home language is English because she is married to a Ghanaian. This can be seen in the excerpt below;

> (9) We speak English because of my husband from Ghana. I love my child to speak Swahili always, but now he has only me to speak to at home no one else because his father does not speak it and he speaks Finnish with his friends since we are in Finland. Yeah if we were in Kenya my son will speak Swahili all the time. (M2)

From the explanation of participant M2, she acknowledges the fact that she identifies with Swahili as her language. But it is not the language spoken at home in Finland because she is married to a Ghanaian and she thinks it is wise for her to speak Finnish with her son since they live in Finland and not Kenya.

Participant M4 on her part highlights that she identifies with Swahili in Finland, but she still has to get her son integrated into the Finnish system by sending him to a Finnish day-care. This is explained by the fact that Swahili is just an identity marker in this context, not the dominant language due to its insignificant status in Finland. The elaborate discourse below illustrates her view on the subject.

(10) Yeah I speak to him in Swahili it is good but I still send my son to Finnish daycare because I don't want him to lack behind like facing what I went through because I studied in English, we are in Finland and we need Finnish all the time yeah his godparents are speaks Finnish and Swahili so when they visit he speaks Finnish to the Finn and Swahili to the Kenyan so he knows who to speak what to. (M4)

Participants M6, M2 and M4 explanations from the above extracts concur with those of participants M1, M5, and M3 to an extent on the ground that Swahili serves as a unifying factor because it is spoken by all Kenyans. Nevertheless, it contradicts the idea of Swahili being a language to be spoken and promoted in Finland due to its insignificant position in Finnish society. Participant M6 holds from her explanation that Finnish has replaced Swahili given the fact that one can benefit from the Finnish economy and society as a whole by learning and speaking Finnish. Thus, it adheres to the claim that immigrants to an extent tend to study the language of the host country in order to integrate into the society as is the case of Berry's acculturation strategy of integration. (Berry, 2005:705-706) That is being aware of the socio-cultural and economic on-going in the host society, rather than maintaining and promoting the language of origin, which has no place in the society. This also supports reasons for immigrants' adoption of the acculturation strategy of assimilation where immigrants tend to replace their culture of origin with the new culture. (Berry, 2005:705-706) This is also evidence of how heritage languages are endangered and even lost because speakers no longer value them and choose to teach their children the language of the host country.

5.3 Language as a tool for identity construction

Participants were asked to share their views on the role of language in identity construction in the diaspora. According to some participants, language functions as an instrument for constructing an identity as well as bringing speakers of the said language together. Thus, language or heritage language in this context, serves as a unifying factor, particularly in a multicultural society like Finland, with different languages and speakers. The following extract from M7 illustrates how she depicts how the language serves as a means of constructing identity in a multilingual society.

(11) Because in Kenya we have so many languages so if I speak I speak my own language…my dialect is *luya* and if my friend, um…I have a friend who speaks Kikuyu, but if I bring my children and her children together, the em…the one common language they have is Swahili so that is the form of identity…I mean that we are Kenyans. So Swahili plays … I mean a very big role as far, to who we are even when with other umm those from other countries. (M7)

For the above participant Swahili is not only used as an identity marker amidst other dialects as per the case in Kenya, it also plays a role in identity construction in an international context. Participant M7 also acknowledged that Swahili constructs the national identity of its speakers as Kenyans. In effect, that is one of the most important functions of heritage language in multilingual society. That is the vague and common identity question "who we are" can be answered with the language we speak. In this context, Swahili separates its speakers from other international speakers and defines who they are.

5.4 Teaching Swahili

According to participants who perceive Swahili as being a marker of their identity and that of their offspring, teaching Swahili is the most important aspect of passing on the language, culture, and identity to the offspring. As mentioned in the theory part of this study, there are two major settings in which a heritage language can be taught: formal and informal settings. During the interview, participants categorize their teaching methods into these two settings. The formal method comprises of Swahili classes. These Swahili classes are organized by the Kenyan Association in Finland (Kefiso) and classes take place every Saturday and are taught by a Swahili teacher. The informal setting is that by which individual parents teach their children Swahili at home.

Most participants agreed that teaching Swahili in an informal context, which is the home, is the first step of passing it on to their offspring. Participants explained that in order to achieve this they use different methods. Participants also explained that they have one goal, and the extract below explains one of the techniques used by participants.

> (12) […] to us we set up a goal not to teach him any other language than Swahili so to us we don't speak Finnish in the house so if he hears Finnish he will start laughing we speak Swahili regardless the tribe anyone comes from but if we are just from same ethnic group we speak our ethnic language. I think it all starts from the home you see they say charity begins at home. If you do not teach your children Swahili at home, even if you take them to Swahili classes or wherever they would not be able to learn well. (M5)

According to participant M5, teaching Swahili at home through a monolingual strategy is not just an informal way of teaching the language, it is also the starting point of teaching Swahili. To M5 teaching Swahili at home helps the child to understand the language at the initial stage. Therefore, sending the child to Swahili classes will serve as a means of improving what the child already knows. This participant proposes the home as the best starting point of teaching heritage language, before the formal setting which to her is to perfect what is being taught at home. This is in

accordance with Bilash's (2011) suggestion that formal literacy learning is best when the child is at the elementary stage in school. Such method is implemented when parents want children to be more advanced in the heritage language because in the formal heritage language school there is a possibility for children to learn numerous grammatical features and written form of the heritage language accurately. (Bilash 2011)

Participant M1 also uses the monolingual approach in teaching Swahili at home, but she further explains the different methods used at home to enhance learning as in the extract below;

> (13) All the time at home we speak just Swahili yes well, singing songs, telling him the importance of family, we eat Kenyan food chapatti, stories in Swahili, Kenyan movies teach just simple words in the language like clothes, shoes, eat just simple words communicating with him in Swahili daily, telling stories in Swahili, talking to our relatives back home because they speak even on phone in Swahili so that also helps. (M1)

From the extract above, M1 explains that she uses Swahili at home with her children with the objective of teaching them the language. She also stipulates that she creates a cultural environment where the children eat Kenyan food, watch movies in Swahili, and listen to Kenyan stories, speak to relatives in Kenya, all these aspects help boost her children's knowledge in Swahili as language and the Kenyan culture. The extract demonstrates that the participant uses the monolingual approach of allowing only one language that is Swahili to be spoken at home. This leaves the child with no other choice than to speak Swahili because that is the only language he is exposed to and nothing else. This also explains that environment has a huge influence on heritage language teaching and learning. This is because there are more linguistic inputs like getting historical and other cultural stories and experiences from parents and other relatives in a heritage environment to enhance the learning process. (Bilash 2011)

Participant M4 also explains her method of teaching Swahili to her child in the excerpt below:

> (14) […] I do not speak to my son anything else apart from Swahili I understand Finnish and I speak it both fluently, he comes from daycare telling me things in Finnish but I answer him back in Swahili and his speech develops as time goes on. (M4)

From M4's explanation, she uses only Swahili with her son, although the son speaks Finnish more often than Swahili. This explains to an extent that the monolingual approach seems not to be working in this case as this home can be term a bilingual home with Finnish and Swahili being the home languages. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the persistent use of Swahili by M4 is

slowing producing a positive result as she mentions that the child's speech in Swahili develops with time. The fact that the child understands what M4 tells him in Swahili is an indication that he is learning gradually. It should be noted that this is a complex situation as it is not possible to force a language on a child.

Another approach that participants use to impart heritage language to children at home is the stage which they expose these children to the language. In this respect, some participants mentioned that they start speaking Swahili consistently to their children at a very early stage, even before they were born in order to ensure that Swahili is the first language the children get in contact with. This is seen in the extracts below:

> (15) […] Speaking Swahili at an early stage such as when the child is born or still in the womb. Yes started speaking to him in Swahili before he was born. We try saying things to him in Swahili even when he does not understand we say it repeatedly until he grasps it. (M5)

Apart from M5, M1 also echoed the same as she interjects with excitement in the short extract below.

> (16) Oh since birth I started speaking Swahili to him just always communicating in Swahili, that way he learns it and when he goes wrong I correct him. (M1).

Discussing on the same issue, M4, who also concurs with exposing heritage language to children at a very early stage, goes further to elaborate on her choice of speaking Swahili to her children at the very beginning.

> (17) From the time he is born and like I said that is my mother tongue and I will want him to know Swahili that is my language. I will like for him when he meets with other Kenyans they can communicate and it's a richness for him to learn another language I think it will guarantee a proper relationship between me and him because if I explain something to him, for example, if I tell him from A to B, I first think in Swahili then translate it to English then to Finnish so, I rather speak something that is closer to my heart, it is just coming from my heart. (M4)

From the above excerpt, M4 explains that she started speaking to her son from birth, she further says that she speaks other languages like English and Finnish to her son. Thus, the home of M4 can be termed a bilingual home where Swahili is being taught with the aid of English and Finnish.

It is worth noting from the above extracts that participants use repetition as a method of teaching as in the case of participants M1 and M5. This is because when the children hear a word, phrase,

story or song in Swahili repeatedly, they tend to understand. Hence, consistency in speaking and repetition enhance heritage language teaching by parents to their children.

Participant M12 also makes it clear that it is easy for children to learn a language or any other thing at their early stage, this is because she thinks they have no previous information as for how things operate, thus tend to swiftly comprehend whatever one present to them first. This can be seen in the following extract;

> (18) Oh from the time she was born I thought eh children don't have any knowledge prior to being born, they are born not knowing how to speak or smile, they learn these things from us so I thought when I speak my language she will pick what am speaking and with time she will speak it. (M12)

Another very important strategy suggested as one of the many ways participants teach Swahili to their children is through socializing. Participants mentioned that socializing more with Kenyan friends, who speak Swahili with their kids, is another easy way to get the children to learn and to speak Swahili regularly. This is because it creates a good heritage language environment for the children to interact with other kids with Kenyan identity. During these interactions, by, for example, sharing some cultural stories, the children learn more about Swahili and the Kenyan culture as a whole. Many parents have benefitted from this strategy and the following extracts illustrate how participants have used socializing to establish Swahili language or culture to their children.

> (19) Most of the time if we meet with other Kenyan friends we communicate in Swahili most of the time because we use English in few occasions. So it is also easy for him (*referring to her son*) to socialize with Kenyan kids and also learn Swahili. (M10)

For M10, these social gatherings are great opportunities for her son to also make friends with people from the same heritage on her lineage. She later on elaborated that even through a phone conversation with relatives in Kenya, since Swahili is the language used, these also help the child further.

> (20) […] yes it is very important so he (*referring to her son*) can communicate with everyone back home, I don't need to be there to translate, I even leave him with his grandmother or uncles and he will be fine, talking to our relatives back home really helps him. (M8)

On the same note, M8 also advanced that she often speaks with relatives back home via phone, and this enhances the children ability to talk with other relatives on the phone as the excerpt above demonstrates.

Still, in this domain, participant M11 indicated that since socializing is important in developing a child's language, she decided on regular visits to Kenya. In the excerpt below, she stated that

> (21) Yes, he knows more about Swahili when we visit home since he interacts with other relatives and friends in Swahili. When he meets with other Kenyans they can communicate and it makes it easy for him to learn the language more. (M11)

From the above extract, interacting with other children and people of Kenyan descent enriches their language power in Swahili prior to their regular visits to Kenyan.

Participants also propose yearly trips to Kenya for holidays as one of the methods for teaching children Swahili. This serves as an experimental ground for the children as they get to see all that they have been taught and told through storytelling and the media. According to participants like M7, yearly travel to Kenya serve as a means for her child to perfect his Swahili through communication with grandparents, aunties, uncles and other relatives. The extract below from participant M7 discusses the role of yearly trips to the land of their origin in heritage language teaching:

> (22) Because we want him to know where he comes from, that is knowing the rest of the family his uncles, aunties, cousins, we don't want him even he becomes the Finnish president not to know his roots like Obama or not to know his way around and he learns more about his culture here we are just telling him but there he sees for himself like the animals he sees them only on TV so when he goes there he sees them actually he knows more animals in Swahili than in Finnish and when he visits the grandmother where they keep crocodiles he can see it. (M7)

Thus, this serves as a perfect heritage language learning environment for the child as he or she is exposed to multiple linguistic inputs for example, through cultural and historical stories told by grandparents and other relatives with the same root.

Further, some participants think that Kenya is home to their children. These participants explain that it is not just about taking the children to Kenya yearly to improve their Swahili, but they also getting familiar with the home environment and culture as in the case of participant M9 in the extract below;

(23) Yeah, of course, that doesn't stop me because we visit home as often as possible so it is good to speak the home language because still he is a Kenyan and I am a Kenyan. We visit Kenya every year. (M9)

Still in the domain of yearly travels to Kenya, participants express that, the fact that these children speak Swahili prior to the visit does not only create an environment for them to better understand Swahili, it also makes it possible for the children to enjoy the company of other relatives and save the parents the stress of being an intermediary in every conversation. The following extract better explain this claim;

(24) We visit Kenya every year, and it is very important so he can communicate with everyone back home. I don't need to be there to translate. I even leave him with his grandmother or uncles and he will be fine. He loves Kenya and he learns and enjoys the company of his grandma, basically the culture there is quite easy and can easily adjust and he always enjoy spending time with his grandma. (M1)

From M1's explanation, prior knowledge of Swahili before the visit to Kenya serves as a means of developing mutual trust between a family member and her child. This is because the child can relate with relatives in a relaxed manner even within the absence of the mother. There is, therefore, no language barrier hindering the child from understanding these relatives.

Participant M4 also has this to say concerning yearly trips to Kenya with her children

(25) Going to Kenya is just a plus because he understands and is just about developing the language more. Yeah, he knows that all the big planes go to Kenya and the smaller ones to Rica (laughing) I don't know why Rica but that is what he knows. (M4)

From M4 explanation in the above excerpt, taking her child to Kenya is a way of improving the child's Swahili because the child already understands Swahili and some happenings in Kenya. For M5,

(26) Our next trip is maybe Easter or Christmas, am not certain yet but I think it will be more fun because he will be able to express himself because we want him to know where he comes from, that is knowing the rest of the family his uncles, aunties, and cousins. (M5)

From the above extract, participant M5 termed what she has been teaching the child as not being authentic, hence visiting Kenya perfect the child's knowledge of his identity and culture. Through the social interactions with relatives, the children kind of authenticate the different folklores and other stories told by the parents back in Finland.

Furthermore, some participants explain how they try to create an environment which to an extent is suitable for the teaching and learning of Swahili language and culture. This according to M5 is

> (27) We sing Kenyan songs, we do not make Finnish food we eat just Kenyan food, we keep the unity which is what we were brought up with like uniting with other people like family if people are friends you keep them close as family. (M5)

This is done through storytelling in Swahili, singing Swahili songs and making mostly Kenyan food at home. Practicing other Kenyan norms and ethics like unity, respect for elders at home also create a good learning environment for the children as they get to grow up learning the Kenyan culture, says participant M5.

Participant M1 has this to say;

> (28) Well, singing songs, telling him the importance of family, we eat Kenyan food chapatti, stories in Swahili, Kenyan movies. He knows about the Kenyan president (the son mentions the name of the president immediately). (M1)

According to participant M1, stories about the Kenyan history and watching mostly Kenyan movies in Swahili also helps in the teaching of Swahili and the Kenyan culture as they create a home environment where the children familiarize themselves with the songs, stories, food and other Kenyan cultural ethics like the significance of family.

5.5 Role of Swahili classes

In order to uphold the Swahili language in Finland, Kefisio resolved on organizing classes to parents interested in training their children in Swahili. Many participants also enrolled their children in these classes that take place on Saturdays. In order to understand the influence of these classes on children, participants were asked to discuss their view on the Swahili classes organized by Kefiso for children to learn Swahili in Finland. In general, their responses were positive based on the premise that Swahili classes boost the learning process of Swahili by children. However, participants believe sending children to Swahili classes is the second option. As evident in the excerpts below by M4 and M5, participants agree Swahili classes are just there to perfect and teach the children in more formal setting after some basic fundamentals of the language have been taught the children at home

(29) Yeah I will gladly take him to Swahili classes, but I guess in my opinion that is where the parent comes in because if I don't start teaching him and then I lock him in a class that now you must learn Swahili, so I don't teach him at home then he is not going to learn anything. (M4)

(30) I think it all starts from the home you see they say charity begins at home. If you do not teach your children Swahili at home, even if you take them to Swahili classes or wherever they would not be able to learn well. (M5)

From the above excerpts, participants expressed the view that sending a child to Swahili classes without any prior knowledge of the language is a waste of time. This is because they think the home plays a very significant role in introducing and teaching Swahili to children before sending them to Swahili classes.

However, some participants perceive Swahili classes to be a forum where children get to know more about their identity, thereby being confident of who they are and where they come from. The following extract from participant M1 supports this view.

(31) Yes, actually I have seen a Swahili Forum organizing classes for kids it is a very good idea and it is necessary for parents to make that effort: it is essential for the child to know the language and it helps more for them to connect with their parents homes, give them a sense of pride for them to be proud of where their parents come from. (M1)

In the above excerpt, M1 explains that organizing Swahili classes for children is a great idea because it does not only teach Swahili to the children, it also serves as a channel for them to know more about the origin of their parents. M1 also emphasized that Swahili classes make the children be proud of their parents' identity.

6   DISCUSSION

This study investigates the views of Kenyan immigrant mothers towards heritage language teaching and learning and the different techniques used by these mothers to teach heritage language to their children leaving in Finland. Based on the findings, all participants perceived Swahili as their language of origin. They all emphasized that it is what answers the identity question of who they are in the diaspora. Thus, Swahili as a heritage language makes these participants identify with other Kenyans living in Finland. This relates to Edwards (2009) claim that language plays an important role in the formation process of identity as the choice of one's language defines his or her identity. Further, it supports Evans (2014) findings that an individual's competence in a language is a visa for that individual to identify with the group or nation to which that language belongs. Therefore, accepting and identifying with a heritage language automatically makes one a member of the community in which the said language is spoken.

In order to answer the research questions for this study, a semi-structured interview was conducted with twelve participants. All participants are Kenyan mothers who have lived in Finland for more than five years with children between the ages of two to twenty. The data collected for this study was analyzed by conducting a qualitative analysis using thematic analysis. The purpose was to investigate the different views participants have towards Swahili as a heritage language and to examine the methods they used, taking into consideration other social factors like identity.

However, it is worth stating that the degree at which each participant identifies with Swahili is different. Most participants perceive Swahili as part of them, as it has always been their wish to speak, maintain and pass it on to their children. This explains why these participants use Swahili as one of their home languages, thereby creating an environment where children can learn and speak Swahili. These participants admitted that they have a responsibility of upholding and teaching the language and culture of Kenya to their children even though these children speak Finnish at home and also in school. This is because these parents perceive Swahili as their root and identity.

Some participants married to Finnish men view their Kenyan identity as a formal way of introducing where they come from, not as what they hold strong in everyday interactions. This is because they see themselves as Finns since they speak Finnish and perceive Finland to be home for them. The benefits that emerge from speaking Finnish as far as employment is concerned, not leaving out the role the Finnish language plays in bonding their relationship with their spouse and

in-laws makes them focus more on the Finnish language, While Swahili becomes just their language of origin, not what they want to speak, keep or pass on to their offspring so badly. According to Berry (2006), the acculturation process is bound to be implemented as long as two or more cultural groups are in contact. This is done in order to integrate into the host country. Hence, these participants decide to adopt the acculturation strategy of integration by studying the Finnish language and culture with no intention of maintaining or promoting their cultural identity or language, Swahili.

From the findings, the linguistic diversity in Kenya affects the way some of these mothers perceive Swahili to an extent. Mothers from the Kikuyu ethnic group which is a majority group identify more with Swahili than those from other ethnic groups like the Meru and Kamba. Still, on the findings, those participants who hold the view that Swahili as heritage language plays a great role in their identity and that of their children, all agreed that teaching Swahili to the children is the most important aspect of maintaining their language, culture, and identity. All of these participants explain that teaching Swahili at home is the first and best step in the teaching process. According to these participants, teaching methods like speaking Swahili to the children from birth, Swahili being the home language, making Kenyan food at home, socializing with other Kenyan families and kids, watching Kenyan music and telling Kenyan historical and cultural stories at home enhance the learning of Swahili and Kenyan culture by the children. Some of these participants pointed out that yearly trips to Kenya, Swahili classes organise by Kefiso, also improve the learning process of the children. This they explain is because it provides a favorable environment for the children to better understand Swahili and the culture of Kenya, thereby making them confident of their identity as Kenyans.

In addition, the findings validate the claim that children tend to learn the language at their early stage. This is one of the teaching strategies used by Kenyan mothers in teaching Swahili to their children and this supports the claim of Chen (2010:176-177), which explains that consistent communication between parents and children in the heritage language in their early age is the first step of teaching heritage language. Research has proved that children learn the language at an early stage due to their ability to easily grapes and understands what they hear at that stage (Chen (2010: 176-177).

Furthermore, it was found from participants' explanations that formal context of teaching heritage language does not serve as a starting point in the learning process, rather it creates an atmosphere of confidence as regards the identity of its speakers. Heritage learning in formal context also serves

as a medium through which the linguistic features like the grammar and written forms of the language are taught accurately. This ascertains Bilash (2011) explanation of the role of formal literacy learning in relation to heritage language learning. He explains that formal literacy learning is best when the child already knows the basics of the heritage language, that is when the child is at the elementary stage and the parents want him or her to be more competent in the heritage language.

7   CONCLUSION

This research was undertaken to analyze the views of Kenyan immigrant mothers towards teaching Swahili as a heritage language and to carefully examine the methods used by these mothers in passing on Swahili to their children. The study essentially aimed to investigate the attitudes and initiatives of Kenyan immigrant mothers towards maintaining Swahili as a heritage language to their offspring through the following research questions:

What are the views of Kenyan immigrant mothers on Swahili as a heritage language and why is it important or not important to them to pass on this language to their children?

How do these mothers educate their children in Swahili?

In order to answer the above research questions, a qualitative research was conducted through semi-structured interviews with 12 Kenyan immigrant mothers with children between the ages of two to twenty living in the Uusimaa region Finland. These semi-structured interviews were analyzed using a thematic analysis.

From the results, all participants viewed Swahili as a unifying factor in Kenya. They perceive Swahili as a language that identifies them as Kenyans irrespective of the different ethnic groups that exist in Kenya.

Some mothers perceived Swahili as a heritage language and wish to pass it on to their children in Finland. These participants feel more comfortable using Swahili as a home language and also encourage their children to communicate to other Kenyan friends in Swahili. Mothers who do not identify much with Swahili in Finland explained that Swahili has little or no place in Finland as compared to Finnish which provides huge economic and social benefits to its speakers. These mothers do not speak Swahili at home, rather they speak Finnish. Another reason for such mothers' choice of Finnish over Swahili in the case of those married to Finns is to strengthen their relationship with their husbands.

All mothers who have the goal of passing Swahili to their children teach Swahili in an informal setting, which is at home. They explain that they use methods like creating a monolingual environment at home where Swahili is the main language, making Kenyan food at home, socializing with other Kenyan families and kids, watching Kenyan music and telling Kenyan

historical and cultural stories at home enhance the learning of Swahili and Kenyan culture by the children.

Still, from the findings, the linguistic diversity in Kenya affects the way some of these mothers perceive Swahili to an extent. Mothers from the Kikuyu ethnic group which is a majority group identify more with Swahili than those from other ethnic groups like the Meru and Kamba.

This research focused only on Kenyan immigrant mothers living in Helsinki. Based on the size of this study a semi-structured interview with twelve mothers was adequate. However, a larger number of Kenyan immigrants located in other cities in Finland have to be interviewed in order to conduct a broader study and attain proper results.

It should be noted that the above results of this research do not solely reflect the way Kenyan immigrant mothers in Finland perceive Swahili and the methods used in teaching Swahili to children. This is because just twelve out of the large Kenyan community in Finland were interviewed. Other Kenyan immigrant mothers in other towns may have different views due to a variety of reasons, for example, the population and linguistic situation in those towns. Another reason is that it was a bit difficult to get the true views of some of the mothers during the interview as they were to an extent ashamed of the fact that they do not speak Swahili to their children even though they claim to identify so much with Swahili.

Further research in this study may include how Kenyan immigrant men perceive Swahili, the view of second Kenyan immigrant generation towards Swahili, why and how Kenyan community in Finland teach Swahili to children to investigate the role played by men, children and the Kenyan community in teaching Swahili as a heritage language in Finland.

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