UNDERSTANDING GRAMMATICAL STRUCTURE AND IDENTITY OF SHENG: THE URBAN LANGUAGE OF NAIROBI

AN ABSTRACT

SUBMITTED ON THE SECOND DAY OF MAY 2022

TO THE INTERDISCIPLINARY PROGRAM IN LINGUISTICS

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

OF THE SCHOOL OF LIBERAL ARTS

OF TULANE UNIVERSITY

FOR THE DEGREE

OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

BY

Isaac Muhando

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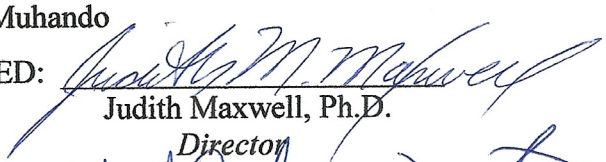

Judith Maxwell, Ph.D.

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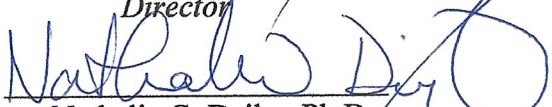

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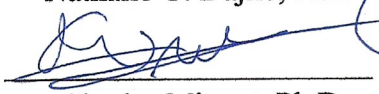

Charles Mignot, Ph.D.

ABSTRACT

This dissertation is twofold: first, it aims to provide a grammatical descriptive analysis of one of the urban vernaculars spoken in the Eastland slums of Nairobi known as Sheng. Second, it seeks to explore how this variety has evolved, especially in the millennial period, to assume new social functions and identities. I draw on the grammaticalization approach (Heine & Kuteva 2005) and the Matrix Language Turnover Hypothesis (Myers-Scotton, 2002) to characterize grammar and grammatical development of this variety as an urban mixed contact language. I also embed sociolinguistic approach to investigate how the urban youths of Nairobi are using this variety to enact, construct, perform, and contest both old and emerging identities.

I use a mixed model approach that features traditional sociolinguistic field interviews (Labov 1972) and, observations as well as critical ethnography to collect naturally occurring spoken Sheng data in the subaltern areas of Nairobi. The interviews are semi-structured to allow both the researcher and participants to engage in a predetermined but uninterrupted conversation that feature both elicited data and spontaneous topics of interest. I also have recourse to participatory ethnography to further observe and consider how the millennials use social space and abilities to redefine their urban cultural and local realities through linguistic practices such as *bazes*, local hip-hop and the media. The data is assembled and coded using ELAN -an open-source software for annotating audio and video recordings. For the analysis of the data, I first compare grammatical structure of Sheng with that of its main lexifier, Swahili to assess points of divergence in their nominal and verbal morphology. Secondly, I draw on the 4-M model (Myers-Scotton 2002) and Grammaticalization theory to examine the morpheme system interaction and cases of grammaticalization in Sheng. Finally, I use ethnographic data and

personal observations to draw conclusions with regard to the changing youth identities in the subaltern Nairobi.

The findings reveal that Sheng grammatical structure consists of a composite grammar combining elements from Swahili, English and other substrate languages in a novel way. That is, its matrix frame displays system morphemes from languages other than the lexifier/matrix language, an indication that the restructuring of morphosyntactic frame is underway. Evidently, the Sheng grammatical frame include late system morphemes from other substrate languages. Further analysis demonstrate that this variety has assumed new social functions in the postmillennial period, that is, the urban youths in Nairobi are using Sheng as a means to articulate, (re)shape and project newer identities that were previously not available to them.

This dissertation adds to the growing literature in contact linguistics on language evolution by characterizing the grammar of a mixed language. Sheng as an outcome of language contact needs to be linguistically characterized in terms of its position on the cline of linguistics repertoires in Nairobi. This clears the ambiguities as to whether Sheng is a Swahili dialect, pidgin, creole, or split language. The study of Sheng has pedagogical implication as well. First, with the growing concern that Sheng contributes to poor performance in English and Swahili national examinations, this study provides insight into understanding that Sheng is an urban vernacular with its own crystalized grammar. With this knowledge, it can be legitimized as a Nairobi vernacular for early education. Secondly, the dissertation calls for publication of Sheng literature to preserve urban social and cultural knowledge that would otherwise be lost.

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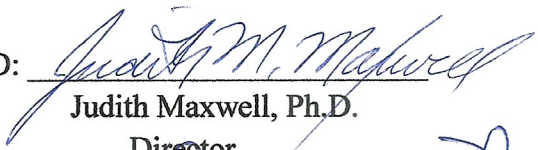
APPROVED: 

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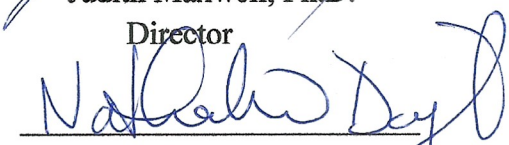

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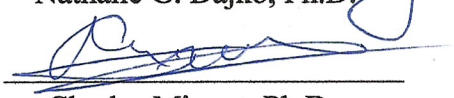

Charles Mignot, Ph.D.

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My very first scholarly attempt in the study of Sheng was in the form of a term paper I wrote in Dr. McKay's sociolinguistic class at Ball State University. The constructive feedback I received from her class immensely furthered my interest in studying Sheng extensively. Her comments, questions, suggestions, and feedback afforded me clear pathway to advance the study of this variety. I am greatly indebted to her. My memory would fail me if I were to acknowledge every individual who played part in the success of this work be it from words of encouragement, emotional support, prayers, or interest, for their input and assistance encourage me to move forward. Nonetheless, I will acknowledge a few individuals, if not all. Any errors and omissions are solely mine.

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DEDICATION

To my late mother, Margaret Musimbi, you were a great warrior. I learned that later. To Irene, Tasha, Natasha and Gabriel, I cherish you all.

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ABBREVIATIONS

PRS	present tense
PST	past tense
SG	singular
PL	plural
FV	final vowel
PERF	perfective
LOC	locative
GEN	genitive
CL	noun class
FUT	future
PROG	progressive
SUBJ	subject
OBJ	object
OM	object marker
NOM	nominative case
INT	intransitive
INTJ	interjection
CS	codeswitching
ML	matrix language
POSS	possessive
MLF	matrix language frame
HAB	habitual
TAM	tense aspect mood
EL	embedded language
4-M	four types of morphemes
FCML	fully crystalized mixed language
NEG	negative
COMP	complementizer
CP	complementizer phrase
APPL	applicative
BE	stative verb
TRANS	transitive
INT	intransitive
INTS	intensifier
PASS	passive
IML	incipient mixed language
ML	mixed lect
FCML	fully crystallized mixed language
L1	first language
L2	second language
TL	target language

SL	source language
INTER	interrogative
PREP	preposition

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

In the summer of 2018, I spent three months in the Eastlands slums of Nairobi studying how local business firms utilize Sheng as a mechanism to engage their customers through TV commercials and outdoor ads. Their novelty and ingenuity in the use of Sheng to advertise sparked my interest to study this variety further. The preliminary study also set the stage for what would later become the beginning of my dissertation journey. From what some Nairobians characterized as a degenerate argot of Swahili in the early 60's through the 90's, Sheng has continued to evolve and restructure into a language of wider communication not only in Nairobi but in Kenya as a whole. It is fascinating how a language once overly stigmatized and grimaced upon has rapidly gained prestige and status not only in the urban slums but also in the mainstream populace. Nonetheless, it is still frowned upon by a portion of Kenyans who see it as an undesirable language. According to Kaviti (2015), language purists and some educationists consider Sheng as a threat not only to the 'standardness' of English and Swahili but also as a contributing factor to poor performance in national examinations among primary and secondary school candidates. Parents of the early 80s through the 90's have continually challenged the use of Sheng among the youth. These parents consider Sheng use by their children to be a sign of alienation from their home culture and a revolt against ethnic language and custom. In addition, to them Sheng is a language of the street allied to crime in the inner city.

On the flipside, with the expanding globalization and urbanization, Sheng continues to gain popularity in pop culture, business, and the political class. The growing population of urban millennials has embraced Sheng as a symbol of urban culture and style. Additionally, the social value of Sheng as an urban vernacular has significantly improved when it started featuring in the mainstream media, such FM radio stations, TV commercials, online and outdoor advertising. Both local and international corporations such as *Safaricom*[1] and *Coca-Cola* have featured Sheng in their outdoor ads and TV commercials. Lately, Sheng has attracted scholarly interest not only from social and historical linguists but also business marketing scholars. The recent publication of Fee and Moga (1997)'s Sheng dictionary by Ginseng Publishers and the growing online content in Sheng such as www.sheng.co.ke are just but examples of many expanding forms and depth of this urban vernacular in the recent past.

1.2 Sheng as an urban youth language

In the wake of twentieth century, urban youth languages have rapidly evolved across the major cities of Africa. *Lugha ya Mitaani* 'Street language' in Dar es Salaam (Reuster-Jahn and Kiebling (2007) as cited by Beck 2010), *Town Bemba* in Zambia (Spitulnik 1998), *Nouchi* in Abidjan (Kube-Barth 2005), *Indoubil* in Kinshaza (Goyvaerts 1988), *Iscamtho* in Johannesburg (Slabbert and Myers-Scotton 1996) are but a few examples. Majority of these languages are linked to youths who use them to express their city culture and urban lifestyles. These languages perform a central role in redefining linguistic and cultural identity of its speakers in the urban spaces. For instance, Nouchi is a popular language among local young artists in Abidjan, Ivory Coast who used it to

[1] Leading telecommunication and mobile company in Kenya.

compose local music such as *Zouglou* (Lafage 1998b as cited by Kiessling and Mous 2004). Camfranglais of Yaounde and Douala, Cameroon (Chia and Gerbault 1991) is associated with school going children in both high schools and universities who were bilingual in English and French, and it functioned as a secret code from which young people would use to communicate when they wanted to hide certain information from their seniors. Emergence of these languages can directly be attributed to the need to construct alternative identities that reflect the emerging culture of globalized youths.

This is also the case in Nairobi where multilingual urban youths participate as agents in the creation of new mixed codes such as Sheng. The expanding domains of Sheng have significantly reshaped the linguistic landscape in Nairobi and other areas where this language is actively spoken. As one of my informants mentioned, Sheng is the 'national' language of Nairobi.

The overarching role of these urban languages is in marking group identity among the youths. In their effort to define their own source of meaning and experience, young people use urban languages to enact, construct, renew and vitalize their own identities that set them apart from other members of the populace. For instance, Nairobi youths use Sheng to mark their own identities and practices that are different from the mainstream population. Precisely, they use this language to form sociocultural identities based on their practices and experiences living in the ghetto slums of Nairobi. As the residents call it, it is *lugha ya mtaa* 'street language'. Engsh, another urban language in Nairobi, is used by affluent kids of Nairobi as a counter language to Sheng. That is, young people from the rich suburbs of Nairobi also wanting to identify with a language that is neither directly affiliated with their parents such as English or Swahili nor a language of the

'uneducated' such as Sheng, created Engsh to achieve this function. Engsh shares English grammatical frame with rest of the lexicon being derived from Swahili and Sheng. Another dominant feature of these languages is that their social functions are associated with urban culture of the subaltern regions, except for counter languages like Engsh. And lastly, urban youths are main actors and agents of these sociolects.

While evolution of these sociolects has been associated with criminal activities, many of them have progressed to become languages of wider communication especially in urbanized regions. The linguistic landscape of urbanized areas, especially in the African context, directly contributes to the grammar and structure of these youth dialects. The language contact phenomenon in major African cities has occasioned multilingual complexity that involves code-switching, mixing and the evolution of new sociolects such as Engsh and Sheng. The ethnolinguistic composition of Nairobi is a prerequisite for linguistic innovativeness as well as language change. It is not surprising that Wolfram and Schilling note "heavy contact across different population groups strongly promotes the diffusion of innovations" (Wolfram & Schilling, 2016:146). In the following section, I use existing literature to characterize how these urban languages are classified and characterized in African context.

1.3 Classification of urban languages

Beck (2010) divided urban languages into two categories: Old urban languages and new urban languages. According to her, 'old urban languages' were a postcolonial phenomenon which involved new speech styles in the early 1960s. Such languages characterized their speakers as urban and cosmopolitan. Unlike the old rural population, they were progressive and embraced modernity. Swahili, for instance, is an example of

old urban language that is linked to development of cities along the coastal region in East Africa such as Mombasa, Malindi, Pemba, Kilwa among others (Beth 2010). Such languages were promoted by trade and cultural activities of its speakers.

For the new urban languages, Beck (2010) argues that they were an evolution from the slang phenomenon recorded in the first half of the twentieth century. Their establishment can also be associated with colonial urbanization which was salient in the early twentieth century. Unlike old urban languages, Beck observes that new urban languages like Town Bemba in Zambia, Chi Harare or Krio vernacular in Freetown are not associated in any way with precolonial activities such as trade but rather are often named after the cities in which they are used. Not all languages are however, named after the cities they originated from. For example, Sheng in Nairobi and *Lugha ya Mitaa* in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. The rise of these languages is contextualized around linguistic practices and multilingual nature of the cities in which they are spoken. Unlike Pidgins, the new urban languages are not borne out of necessity to communicate but index other sociolinguistic practices. In Dar es Salaam for example, Swahili serves the purpose of unifying people around nationhood but *Lugha ya mitaa* is a social creation which young people use to mark multiple identities in the city. The same applies to Swahili and Sheng in Kenya, Town Bemba and Bemba in Lusaka among others.

1.4 Sheng as an outcome of language contact phenomenon

Sheng is a case of language contact situation in Nairobi born out of multilingual complexity of the city. Thomason defines language contact as the "use of more than one language in the same place at the same time" (Thomason, 2001:1). Nairobi is a melting pot of multilingualism. Its linguistic landscape encompasses city residents who come

from different ethnolinguistic backgrounds. Since independence, Nairobi has continued to attract speakers from diverse ethnic groups both locally and internationally who upon arrival live side by side in the city neighborhoods. For instance, in my research site of Eastlands, there is a diverse group of speakers predominantly from Luo, Kikuyu, Kamba, and Luhya who collectively engage in small scale businesses or work together in the nearby industries as manual laborers. The outcome of such co-existence and urbanization has led to extensive language contact situation especially in subaltern Nairobi. The second and third generation want to identify themselves with the city life and culture, and so gradually start to shift to urban dialects such as Sheng and Engsh which they consider as ethnically neutral.

The language contact phenomena continue to attract scholarly attention especially in the field of language, variation and change, glottogenesis, pidgin and creole, and dialectology. The overall product of language interaction is broadly categorized into three major outcomes (Winford, 2003, Thomason, 2001, Thomason and Kaufman, 1988). These include language maintenance, shift and genesis. When two or more languages come in contact, speakers of a language may choose to preserve their own language despite pressure from the surrounding languages in what historical linguists refer to as language maintenance. Even though majority of features in their native languages are preserved, there are still cases of external influence such as nativized borrowings where the language in contact incorporates foreign characteristics into its lexicon. For instance, Kikuyu, a Bantu language spoken in Kenya, incorporate several phonemicized English words in its lexicon despite of its maintenance of Kikuyu language over the years. Consider table 1.0 below.

Table 1.0
Kikuyu phonemicization of English words

Kikuyu		**English**
Thengio	[ðeŋgɪo]	Thank you
bataraitha	[bɑtarɑðə]	Fertilizer
macini	[mɑsini]	Machine

In areas with diverse multilingualism, language maintenance can also be characterized by structural diffusion involving code-switching, borrowing, and L1 transfer. In Nairobi, for example, the populace is composed of multi-ethnic individuals that speak varying indigenous languages in addition to English and Swahili. It is not surprising, that nearly all of Nairobi residents are multilingual or bilingual at bare minimum. Many of the languages are spoken within same locality allowing diffusion and transfer of grammatical features from one language to another. In the Eastlands slums of Nairobi, where the present study was conducted, individuals who come from different ethnic backgrounds speak upcountry Swahili[2] that slightly varies from standard Swahili but heavily accented with respective L1 dialects. A larger percentage of Nairobi residents are fluent in both English and Swahili. Swahili functions as a national language and a symbol of national cohesion. Locally, Swahili is commonly referred to as *lugha ya mwananchi wa kawaida* 'language of the common citizen'. According to Myers-Scotton (2002), Swahili brings out the aura of being local and conversant with the surroundings. However, this linguistic space is in constant reconstruction and reconfiguration where local varieties such as Sheng and Engsh are assuming new social functions including those previously performed by Swahili. For example, Hollington and Nassenstein (2017:398) observe that "Sheng has seemingly proceeded to the extent that some people see it as Kenya's new lingua franca". On the other hand, English is considered as a global

[2] Kaviti (2015) calls this variation '*Kenyanese Swahili'.*

language or a language for upward mobility. Generally, it is associated with the elites and the educated. However, within the linguistic context of Nairobi, many speakers consider themselves fluent in both English and Swahili. It is for this reason that, there exists ubiquitous codeswitching among Nairobi residents. Access to both languages is a prerequisite for classic codeswitching which over time progresses to mixed lects such as Sheng. The emergence of mixed codes has a sociolinguistic implication here. First, newer urban dialects emerge not only to index group identity but also as a means of protesting mainstream ideologies. The youth may adopt new sociolects to oppose dominant ideologies and practices that exclude them. They may engage in linguistic practices that are aimed at changing such narratives. As it shall be discussed in chapter 4, young people are using Sheng as linguistic capital to venture into other income generating activities such as music, standup comedy, and street comedy. Secondly, it indexes group identity among its speakers. The urban youth, for instance, may want to identify themselves with urban city life and culture and it is such hybrid codes that fits in well in providing them with symbolic value of 'citiness'. It is one of the repertoires that affords them new styles and attributes that grant them acceptability into urban social group. Foreign calques and borrowings embedded in the local language provide one way to sound exotic, global, and sophisticated while still upholding the local values. Sheng invokes a glocalization effect - a linguistic practice that involves global aspects such as fashion, music, speech blended with a local twist of African culture. Consequently, this also has a spillover effect on languages in contact and or emergent languages. Consider example (1) below from one of my field interviews.

(1)

a) Informant: *US* food *ni* *cheap?*

US food BE cheap
'Is food cheap in the US?'

b) Interviewer: *Food ni cheap, na u-na-weza pe-w-a*
Food BE cheap, and 2SG-PRS-able give-PASS-FV

hata free kama hu-na job
MOD free COND 2NEG.SUBJ-POSS job
'Food is cheap, and you can be given free if you don't have a job'

c) Informant: *Food obviously ni cheap pa-le, huku kw-etu*
Food obviously BE cheap CL 17-DEM, CL 18LOC CL18LOC-POSS
chakula ni expensive.....chakula ni expensive
food BE expensive……food BE expensive

'Obviously, food is cheap there, here food is expensive.....food is expensive'

This extract demonstrates a classic codeswitch between English and Swahili where interactants use code-mixing between two separate languages as an unmarked choice. This proficiency is characterized by intra- and inter-word switching, as well as embedded islands insertions. (1a) shows inter-word switching with the NP 'US food', AdjP 'cheap' and 'free' being inserted into Swahili frame. In (1c), the phrase 'food obviously' is an example of embedded island in a Swahili grammatical frame. While the speech does not mark complete shift to a specific language, speakers in (1) are bilingual in both languages and maintain them as separate codes but invoke the mixing when they want to show group solidarity or identity that is marked by such codeswitching. In Nairobi, for instance, codeswitching between English and Swahili is an unmarked choice that comes with the sense of urbanity or one wanting to sound urban with devoid of rural affiliation. It is an identity marker.

In certain language contact situations, dominant linguistic groups may have adverse linguistic effect on a non-dominant speech community leading to significant changes in the linguistic landscape of that given speaker group. A speech community (in

most cases that of a substrate language) under the influence of another speech community (superstrate) may partially or completely abandon their language for another, a contact phenomenon known as language shift (Winford, 2003; Myers-Scotton 2002; Thomason 2001; Weinrich 1967; Thomason and Kaufman 1988). For instance, when speakers of language A, acquire language B (to replace A either partially or completely), language shift is assumed to have occurred. In many British and French colonies in Africa, English or French, both superstrate languages, had significant linguistic effects on local languages. Many of these effects are typological in nature and may include loss, addition, or replacement of linguistic features. In a bilingual contact situation, shift can result in the successful acquisition of the target language (TL) with minimal interference from L1 of the shifting speaker community. In most cases, the TL is that of the dominant group while the L1 is that of the minority or the shifting group. In Nairobi, for example, children of migrant workers who come from different ethnic groups, are gradually shifting from their ethnic languages towards urban Swahili and Sheng. Language contact scholars divide such shifting situations in two groups. The first group involves the scenario where the shifting group (in most cases a minority group) partially or completely adopts the target language (also the dominant language) and transfer a few linguistic features of their native language to the target language. For instance, immigrants who move to the United States and adopts English as their language of wider communication with partial or complete abandonment of their native language. The second situation may involve cases where the L1 of the dominant group e.g. colonizers become target of shift after being introduced into the local community of the colonial territory. The indigenous community may acquire the L1 of the invaders or

colonizers to replace their indigenous language or become a second language (Winford, 2003). In reference to the first category of shift, it is common to find linguistic features of the shifting group transferred to the target language. During and after the Norman French Conquest of 1066, for example, French had a great influence on English. Campbell (2013:7) notes that "the /ou/ was the French way of spelling /u/, as in French *nous* /nu/ 'we'; later, English underwent the Great Vowel Shift in which /u:/ became /au/, which explains why words such as *thou, house* and *loud* (formerly /θu:/, /hu:s/ and /lu:d/ respectively) no longer have the sound /u:/ that the French orthographic *ou* originally represented". Regarding the second category, Winford (2003) adds that when a foreign language, usually that of colonizers or invaders, is adopted by local people it can either replace their own indigenous language or be used alongside their L1 as a second language. While quoting Lambert (1975) Myers-Scotton (2002) points out that this bilingualism can be additive or subtractive. Additive bilingualism is brought about when speakers maintain their L1 but learn L2 for use in certain domains. A good example she offers is the use of English in Switzerland among the four speech communities who speak Italian, French, German and Romansh. On the other hand, subtractive bilingualism is when a speech community learns a second language that eventually replaces their first language. Most migrants who come to the US either as refugees or workers end up abandoning their L1 for the dominant English language. Myers-Scotton notes that language domain, power differential, and number of active language users significantly determine the shape and nature of language learning, borrowing and shift (2002). A language that is used in a variety of domains or holds a high status within a community is likely to expand in the future. In Kenya, for instance,

the Ogiek, a Southern Nilotic tribe are shifting their language use from Ogiek to Kikuyu and the Akie of Northern Tanzania, is shifting their language use to Maasai. because the speakers have assimilated to cultures of the surrounding people. The Ogiek people were hunters and gatherers who inhabited forest areas but over time, they are abandoning their lifestyle and culture and adopting those of the speakers of dominant neighboring languages. The Ogiek of Kenya are assimilating towards Kikuyu language spoken around Kinare in Nakuru county while the Akie of Tanzania are shifting towards Maasai (a culturally dominant Nilotic language). Similarly, the urban youths in Kenya especially those from affluent neighborhoods are shifting towards English and Swahili while others are assimilating to identity languages such as Sheng and Engsh. Scholars of contact linguistics argue that the future of any language depends on the cohesiveness of the speech community and the language utility within that group (Myers-Scotton, 2002; Thomason and Kaufman 1988). Use of a language on a daily basis to communicate with their fellow native speakers predicts a healthy for that language. When a minority group is not disintegrated demographically, they are likely to protect their language from shift forces. While they may adopt the new language, they use it alongside their L1, preferably in different domains.

Finally, the last major outcome of language contact situation is that of glottogenesis. With glottogenesis, a new language or mode of communication may be formed as a result of two or more languages coming together (Campbell, 2013, Myers-Scotton, 2002, Winford 2003, Thomason & Kaufman, 1988). Language evolution may result in pidgins, creoles, or mixed languages. Contact linguistics involves extensive mixture of linguistic elements from more than one language limiting them to be

characterized as either cases of shift or maintenance. The evolution of pidgin and creole languages has raised several arguments among historical linguists and language contact scholars as far as their typology is concerned (Mufwene 2001; McWhorter 2001; 2005). The general view is that pidgin arose as a result of minimal contact between speech communities with no common language, in most cases a trading environment (Campbell 2013). Mufwene (1996) is of the contrary opinion that creoles did not evolve from Pidgin but rather were variants of the lexifier language that evolved to into their own right through process known as basictalization[3]. According to Mufwene interaction between slaves and masters in colony or homestead context led to interlanguage variety of the lexifier language which later developed into a creole through restructuring of the lexifier language. On the other hand, Chaudenson (1992) maintains the view that creole grammar can be directly traced from the its main lexifier language. Pidgins are characterized by minimal vocabulary and simplified grammar that are contextualized around trade. Structurally, they lack inflectional morphology, tense, aspect and mood (TAM), movement rules, rely exclusively on content morphemes and display lack of variety in the pronoun system (Campbell, 2013:311, Bickerton 1981). Examples of pidgins include, Russenorsk- used for trading communication between Russians and Norwegians up to the nineteenth century (Winford 2003: 20), Nigerian pidgin English, Chinese pidgin English, and Tok Pisin among others. However, Winford (2003) notes that the latter three have more elaborate social function and structure than the former. For instance, Tok Pisin is more elaborate to an extent that it is being used as an official language of Papua New Guinea. It is also on record that pidgin have evolved in contexts other than trade. For

[3] "gradual divergence of a contact variety from its lexifier resulting from successive cycles of imperfect second language acquisition" (Kouwenberg and Singler, 2018:217)

instance, Pidgin English in Japan arose during the post-war period in military contact and interaction (Winford, 2003). Another floated theory is that pidgins were derived from foreigner talk[4].

Creoles on other hand are examples of contact vernaculars that evolved from plantation colonies in the period stretching from the fifteenth to nineteenth centuries (Mufwene 2002). The classification of creoles has been debated among language historians and linguists. From a sociohistorical perspective, creoles are language contact varieties that emerged from colonial plantations where slaves converged for labor. It is apparent that these slaves came in contact with western languages with which they had little or no familiarity. Even among the slaves, there existed extensive linguistic diversity since they all came from different regions that had different tongues. Winford (2003:307) confirms this by noting "the reality is that creoles constitute a motley assortment of contact vernaculars with different histories and lines of development, though of course they still have much in common" The need for communication led to evolution of a language which was a pidgin that was nativized by second generation plantation workers as their first language. The adopted pidgin underwent restructuring and the expansion of grammar, creating a creole that was more complex than the simplified lexifier language of the pidgin. However, this evolution of creoles has been faulted since, there existed other pidgin varieties such as Nigerian Pidgin English, Tok Pisin and Sango Pidgins which were nativized without undergoing many structural changes (Winford 2003:306). Some scholars hold the view that creoles did not emerge from pidgins but developed

[4] A simplified communication that people use in situations where there is no common language. Campbell (2013) terms it "a sort of baby-talk like simplification of one's own language a European might use with a taxi-driver in some Asian country where the European traveler does not know the local language"

from second language that were based off from superstrate language and grew to become more diverse through basectalization process (Mufwene 1996). It seems therefore that the most accurate way of defining creoles is that of continuum. According to Winford (2003), creoles may range from second language varieties that are related to western languages or superstrate to radical creoles that are distinct languages and complex in structure.

What is central to the present study as far as creoles are concerned is characterization of their grammar. The restructuring of creole grammar necessitates some comment here. The term creolization has traditionally been used to reference diversification of creole grammar from that of the lexifier languages and from the precursor pidgin. Some scholars have, however, abandoned the term creolization for 'restructuring' (Winford, 2003:334). The restructuring process of creole grammar is a complex phenomenon involving the concerted efforts of both individuals and community at large. The restructuring is an attempt by the speakers or learners to modify and expand their language. Creole structures are as a result of input from both the superstrate and substrate languages. For instance, the superstrate language in most cases contributes lexicon to new language formations. For example, the Jamaican creole complementizer *se* 'that' is borrowed from English *say*. Others include progressive/imperfect marker *da* in Caribbean English creole that is derived from Southern English dialects periphrastic *do* /*də/* (Lalla and D'Costa 1990:77) The substrate languages participate in the restructuring of creoles as well. Radical creoles have been reported to draw from substrate languages in continual development of their grammar. For example, the serial verb construction in Surinamese creoles is an influence from the Kwa substrate (Smith 1996, McWhorter,

1992, Sebba, 1987, and Arends, 1986). The complex prepositional phrases in Sranan creole have been attributed to Gbe and Kikongo dialects (Bruyn 1994).

Further from superstrate and substrate influence, restructuring can also be as a result of internal influence and innovativeness. In Berbice Dutch grammar, features such as pre-verbal auxiliaries, negative markers, and serial verb construction can be attributed to processes of internal restructuring (Kouwenberg, 1996). Winford (2003) postulates that internal innovativeness in creole grammar can restructure both substrate and superstrate. Their input is constrained by universal principles of acquisition such as economy and simplification.

1.5 Sheng: A Swahili dialect or a mixed language?

The indeterminate nature of Sheng has a significant impact on how it is defined in literature. Scholars have had divergent views on whether Sheng is a dialect of Swahili, a distinct language, or a mixed bilingual language. Kange'ethe-Iraki (2004) identifies Sheng as a variety of Swahili used by young peers from the poor neighborhoods of Nairobi. Elsewhere, Kaviti (2015) characterizes it as a hybrid code. In Kaviti's description of two urban varieties, that is, *Sheng* and *Engsh* she notes, "I have deliberately chosen to refer to Sheng (and Engsh) as 'hybrid codes' rather than 'languages' or 'dialects' of English or Swahili" (Kaviti 2014:224). With this definition she contends that 'code' is a neutral label that is devoid of other connotations. Abdulaziz and Osinde (1997) on the other hand refer to it as a mixed urban code. In his dissertation, Rudd (2008) characterizes Sheng as a mixed language, that is, one which structurally infuses Swahili, English, and other indigenous languages. He argues that Sheng has a composite morphosyntax that characterizes it as a mixed language. In the next few

paragraphs, I use relevant literature to discuss the typology of mixed language with examples from traditionally declared mixed languages.

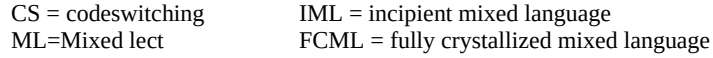
The classification of mixed languages is in most cases indeterminate and or it takes multiple definitions or classifications. Thomason (1997) argues that a mixed language is an outcome of contact situation that involves just two languages from a spread-out bilingualism. According to Thomason, unlike pidgin or creole, bilingual[5] mixed languages do not function as lingua franca but do arise within a single social group for in-group identity purposes. Thomason further classifies mixed language into two broad categories based on historical and linguistic principles. The first group involves a language of a protesting group that resists influence from a dominant language but due to cultural pressure, this language may start borrowing lexical and grammatical forms from the dominant language. This type of borrowing results in the rapid mixture of linguistic structures that could result in total structural replacement. The examples she cites include Kormakiti Arabic and Wutun. Examples she cites for total grammatical replacement during language reproduction are Anglo-Roman and Maa (Thomason, 1995). Her second broad category involves languages which develop speedily as varieties for group identity. Examples of such languages include Michif, Mednyi Aleut, Media Lengua among others (Thomason, 1995). The grammar of these languages consists of linguistic elements from all languages involved in contact.

[5] Thomason (1997) notes that the term bilingual in definition of mixed languages maybe misleading as it denotes the speakers of these languages are bilingual. She says “the label [bilingual mixed languages] refers to the fact that they are created by bilinguasl; but it is somewhat misleading, because there is in principle no upper limit to the number of languages that could be combined to form one of these mixed languages” pg 198.

Structurally, mixed language phenomena constitute a continuum of outcomes. While mixed language origin is maximally entrenched in language contact situation, its onset is characterized by simple codeswitching with gradual developments that result in more complex alternations. The path to mixed languages formation may involve heavy borrowing and is normally long a continuum (Rudd, 2008). Deumert (2005) provides a stage-based process for the development of mixed languages from simple code-switching.

Figure 1

Stage-based process of mixed language development



CS = codeswitching IML = incipient mixed language
ML=Mixed lect FCML = fully crystallized mixed language

Deumert 2005:127

According to figure (1) above, the process by which mixed codes are formed may start with simple codeswitching that later develops into mixed lects. Deumert divides these sociolects into two. First, are the mixed lects 1 which encompass regular and frequent intersentential codeswitching. An example is Campus Swahili in Tanzania which involves code-switching between English and Swahili (Blommert 1992). Second is the mixed lect 2 which involves advanced regularized sentential codeswitching[6]. With time this may develop into an incipient mixed language which is depicted by conventionalized codeswitching. Deumert points to Chammoro and Sinti Roman as examples (Deumert, 2005:126). Lastly is the fully crystalized mixed language which signals arrested[7] Matrix Language Turnover. I will discuss this in the upcoming chapter.

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[6] According to Deurmert (2005) there is no example yet that he would use to characterize this type of mixed lect. The closest he suggests is Kombuistaal.

[7] 'Arrested' is a term Myers-Scotton (2002) uses to refer to a situation when morphosyntactic frame structuring the language has changed.

Winford (2003) discusses autonomous bilingual mixtures that develop from mixed codes that are not distinct. Such languages, he argues, are different from their lexifier languages in terms of mutual intelligibility. But what is more relevant to the present discourse is their development and structure. According to Winford (2003), bilingual mixed languages consist of materials borrowed from just two languages. However, he is quick to point out that this is not always the case. Other proposed names for these types of languages include *syncretic* language (Dimendaal,1998:105) language intertwining and *split* language (Myers-Scotton, 2002:246). Myers-Scotton prefers the term "split language" because it echoes the formation of these languages in terms of lexicon and grammatical structure. She notes "the split is of interest here because it is prototypically right along the line between the lexicon and the grammatical system" (2002:246). Winford records that in mixed languages structural materials are derived from both sources. This is evident based on the typology of the resulting language (Winford, 2003:183). For instance, Michif, a language mainly spoken in Manitoba province in Canada, derives its verbal morphology from Plain Cree and nominal morphology from Metis French.

1.6 Characterizing the grammar of mixed languages

Mixed languages are an outcome of language contact. It is not until the second half of the nineteenth century that mixed language started receiving scholarly attention. Before then, they were considered impossible (Thomason and Kauffman,1988). Typologically these are languages that have shared ancestry through merging of two or more identifiable source languages (Velupillai 2015:70). Thomason refers to all non-

pidgin, and noncreole mixed languages as bilingual languages, a term she says, originate from the fact that they are spoken by speakers who are at least bilingual (Thomason 2001:198). When speakers of other languages come together, they extensively borrow from each other which may lead to radical changes in the lexicon and grammatical structure of each language. Velupillai (2015) notes that mixed languages have independent language systems and are "languages in their own right" (p.70). The question that beckons is 'How do we classify these mixed languages?' Historically, there has been skepticism about existence of mixed languages. Just like contention around the evolution of pidgins and creoles, traditional historical linguists considered mixed languages as an extension of their lexifier languages. Winford (2003) contends that mixed languages constitute grammatical elements from just two languages. However, there is no restriction on how many source languages can be involved in formation of a mixed language (Rudd 2008). Another puzzle in trying to define mixed language typologically is that of a cline that exists in the formation of these languages. At what point does one declare a language mixed? How long does it take to become mixed? What characterizes a mixed language? Deumert (2005:114) in her effort to understand permeability of linguistic borders in language contact situations notes:

> Languages in contact are shaped not only by dynamics of internal, evolutive language change, but also by processes of linguistic convergence and language mixing which continuously interrupt the stabilization of fixed form-meaning pairings and challenge structuralist conception of language as a closed, unitary, and finite rule-system. Contact languages are fluid linguistic systems with 'soft' rather than 'hard' edges and classification.

In the present dissertation, I adopt Deumert's position on language mixing in trying to define and analyze structural formation of Sheng as a mixed language. As she observes,

mixed languages are fluid with soft edges and their definition calls for an interrogation on how these languages are used in bilingual speech as an urban situated practice. Language contact can lead to intertwining of two or more languages that may progressively produce hybrid codeswitching and mixed languages (ML). Borrowing and codeswitching are considered significant processes in formation of mixed languages. Ma'a and Anglo-Romani, are considered to have developed from intensive borrowing. In other cases, mixed languages have sprung from unmarked codeswitching which signals the endpoint on a cline of language development, that is, from simple codeswitching to frequent language mixing to crystalized mixed languages (Auer 1999; Deumert 2005). In certain linguistic context mixed languages may stabilize to become new languages in the repertoire of the bilingual speech community in which they are used. Auer (1999) further notes that such languages may functionally replace their source languages, as is the case of Michif. Zentella (1997) contends that during the development phase, both alternating forms in codeswitching and emerging unmarked codeswitching may co-exist within the same linguistic context. She refers to such speakers as "adept bilingual jugglers"[8]She cites the Puerto Rican speech in *el Barrio* New York as an example of such linguistic outcome.

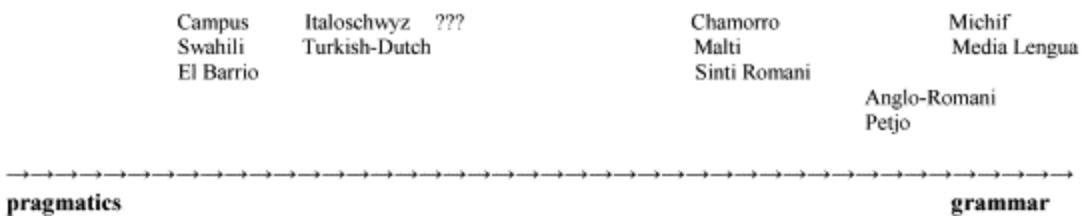
The gradual development of mixed languages from simple codeswitching is an interesting concept in language contact. Bakker (2003) argues that categorization of mixed language is a matter of degree and the exact difference between heavy borrowing and mixed language is still unclear. She bases her argument on the fact that there exists no language that displays gradual vocabulary replacement between the borrowing phase

[8] Bilingual speech that shows continuous and versatile linguistic mixing and switching (Zentella, 1997:134)

and completed mixed language phase. Deumart (2005:126) hints that “whereas the path from heavy borrowing to mixed languages is gradual and linear, the path from codeswitching to mixed languages might be relatively abrupt and does not appear to be linear in the same way.” Table 1.3 below shows bilingual codeswitching scenarios in their developmental stages as well as their progression to mixed languages. The trajectory from codeswitching to mixed languages happens in phases. The insertional and alternational codeswitching is the initial process that is likely to occur when two or more languages come into contact. At this stage codeswitching is socially meaningful and may also function as a discourse marker. This is characterized by increased frequencies of insertional and alternational codeswitching. The third phase mixed lect 2 involves on one hand constant reduction of alternational codeswitching and on the other increased density of insertional codeswitching coupled with extensive lexical borrowing. The third phase also known as incipient mixed language involves grammaticalization of insertional codeswitching with extensive borrowing. Deumert (2005) notes the frequency of borrowed vocabulary is still under 90 percent mark agreed by Bakker and Mous (1994). This interaction over time may translate into the emergence of a crystalized mixed language. Myers-Scotton (2002) refers to this point as Matrix Language Turnover. It is the point at which grammar is considered split representing the languages in contact. This shall be discussed at length in chapter 2.

Table 2.0
Mixed language trajectory from codeswitching to crystalized mixed languages

<table>
<tr><td colspan="3">Code-Switching Scenario</td><td colspan="2">Mixed Languages</td></tr>
<tr><td>STAGE A
Code-Switching
❖ insertional and alternational CS
❖ language juxtaposition is socially meaningful and/or marks discourse function</td><td>STAGE B
Mixed Lect (1)
❖ CS as an unmarked choice
❖ high frequencies of both insertional and alternational CS
❖ CS no longer socially or stylistically meaningful</td><td>STAGE C
Mixed Lect (2)
❖ gradual decrease of alternational CS
❖ increasing density of insertional CS and numerous nonce borrowings in the basic vocabulary</td><td rowspan="2">Incipient ML
❖ grammaticalization of insertional CS/ borrowing
❖ frequencies of lexical insertion still below the 90% mark stipmulated by Bakker & Mous (1994) for prototypical mixed languages</td><td rowspan="2">Fully crystallized ML
❖ matrix-language turnover
❖ lexical density approaches 90%
❖ grammar-lexicon split</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Borrowing/Language Shift Scenario
❖ replacement of inherited linguistic material in a situation of linguistic domination
❖ nonce borrowings as well as established borrowings</td></tr>
</table>



Adopted from Deumert (2005)

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In the next few paragraphs, I revisit some of the known mixed languages while exemplifying their structures and the environments in which they arose.

Media Lengua (ML), a language spoken in Central Ecuador, is a prototypical example of a mixed language. It developed from contact between Quechua and Spanish during Spanish colonial reign in Ecuador. Structurally the language is comprised of a Quechua based grammatical frame and Spanish based lexical forms (Muysken 1981a:75.). Muysken (1981a) notes that monolingual speakers either of the source languages cannot easily comprehend it. Consider the following example.

(2)

a. ML: *Unu fabur*-ta *pidi*-nga-bu *bini*-xu-ni
one favor-ACC ask_NOM-BEN come-PROG-1SG
'I come to ask a favor'

b. Quechua: ʃuk *fabur*-ta mana-nga-bu ʃamu-xu-ni
One favor-ACC ask-NOM-BEN come-PROG-1SG
'I come to ask a favor'

c. Spanish Vengo para pedir un favor
I-come for ask-INF a favor
'I come to ask for a favor'

(Data from Winford 2003:176)

It is apparent that ML uses Quechua grammar that can be observed in its SVO word order as well as verbal morphology/suffix organization including grammatical functions and tense. Stems to which ML suffixes are attached are Spanish derived. Winford (2003) adds that Spanish provides content and function morphemes. One interesting observation from ML is that it adapts Spanish phonological shapes it in its roots. For instance, *fabur-ta* for Spanish 'favor' or *pidi-* for Spanish *pedir* 'favor'. According to Muysken (1997a:384) ML has its own innovativeness such as reduplication, a feature that is not shared by Spanish nor Quechua. Many Spanish forms borrowed into ML undergo regularization and simplification. In order to account for this Muysken (1997) suggests a relexification hypothesis – that lexical substitution under which forms from L1 are embellished morphophonologically according to rules from L2.

Michif is another exemplar of a bilingual mixed language which developed as a result of contact between French men and Cree women in Manitoba province of Canada. The source languages for Michif are Metis French and Plains Cree. Metis French largely supplies the NP structure while Plain Cree largely contributes verbal morphology. According to Bakker (1997) ninety four percent of nouns are derived from French while the rest come from Cree, Ojibwe and English. Most articles, the number system and adjectives are mainly from French. However, in the nominal morphology Cree also

supplies demonstratives as well as personal pronouns. The verbal structure is made of 88-90% Cree with a few French verbs. The copulas are dominated by Cree, but traces of French are noticeable (Winford, 2003:185). Syntactically, word order is free, and Cree derived.

Ma'a a language spoken by cattle herders in Northern Tanzania is another case of a split language. Structurally Ma'a is characterized by Bantu morphosyntax with features such as agreement in demonstrative and pronominal possessives acquired from Cushitic languages. According to Thomason (1997:475), Ma'a basic lexicon is Cushitic-based while the rest is outsourced from other Bantu languages such as Pare and Shambaa. Ma'a morphosyntax is generally mixed. The language follows the Bantu SVO and noun adjective order. Certain prepositions such as *he* 'to' and *na* 'from' are Cushitic in origin. Winford (2003:195) adds "in cases where Bantu and Cushitic are typologically similar, Ma'a may employ constructions from both." A notable example is the obligatory copula construction in Ma'a that is echoed from Cushitic, a case that is rare in Bantu languages. Structurally, Ma'a shares many features with Mbugu. The non-Bantu features present in Ma'a are derived from Cushitic languages such as Maasai. The inflectional and derivational morphology is derived from Pare. While citing Thomason (1997b:478), Myers-Scotton (2002) suggests that Ma'a started as a Cushitic language and over time its original grammar was replaced by Bantu grammar. She further proposes this to be a case of Matrix Language Turnover as it is fueled by codeswitching and convergence, a mechanism that supports her hypothesis. According to Myers-Scotton (2002), Cushites who were surrounded by dominant Bantu speakers became bilingual. And since they wanted to keep their culture and tradition, they didn't give up on their language which

occasioned frequent codeswitching. Frequent codeswitching led to structural convergence that led to a new version of Ma'a that later underwent gradual Bantuization.

In summary, it is apparent that the bilingual mixed languages discussed above exhibit some structural differences in terms of their formation. Media Lengua, for instance, closely mirror the original frame of a lexicon-grammar bifurcation, that is, grammar is outsourced from one of the source languages while the lexicon come from the other. In Michif, however, the divide is between nominal and verbal morphology, that is, the verb phrase is derived from one of the contributing languages while the noun phrase is adopted from the other.

1.7 Characterizing Sheng typology

Having reviewed mixed languages as an outcome of language contact, I now turn onto Sheng with the aim of characterizing its typology. I use both a historical linguistic approach and sociolinguistic analysis to describe Sheng typology. As Thomason, (1991:35) notes, "it is the sociolinguistic history of the speakers, and not the structure of their language, that is the primary determinant of the linguistic outcome of language contact." Since Sheng borrows heavily from multiple local languages, I first situate it into Kenya's linguistic history and later invoke the theoretical model to characterize its typology.

Like any other country south of the Sahara, Kenya is a linguistically rich and diverse country. English and Swahili are co-official languages. English is considered as an official business language primarily used to conduct government functions such as court proceedings, business transactions, and for public speeches. On the other hand, Swahili, which was at first only considered a national language and a lingua-franca, now

co-occurs with English as an official language while serving its primary role as a national language. Both English and Swahili are examinable subjects across primary and secondary level education[9].

Besides the duo, Kenya boasts 40 ethnic languages that corresponds with local ethnic composition. Abdulaziz and Osinde (1997) note that these local languages are defined according to ethnic boundaries within which they are spoken. Notable among them are Kikuyu which is spoken by at least 20% of the population, Dholuo (14%), Luhya (13%) Kalenjin and Kamba (11%) each, Ekegusi (6.5%) and Kimeru (5%) (Meierkord, 2009). The use of these languages would depend on the context and individual speakers involved. For instance, one language may be used exclusively but mixing of one or two other languages is prominent (Abdulaziz and Osinde, 1997). With urbanization and prolific urban population, other mixed codes such as Engsh and Sheng adds to the linguistic landscape of the country. Such multilingual space allows the Kenyan community to draw on repertoire of speech styles and sociolects in crafting their identity and communicative needs. Consequently, such linguistic space has also resulted in code-switching, code mixing and the evolution of mixed languages (Meirerkord, 2009). In Nairobi, for instance, English has had considerable influence on local languages such as Swahili even long after the British rule ended several decades ago. Similarly, the presence of multiple languages in the Kenya's capital has partly led to the evolution of urban languages, such as Engsh and Sheng. In the next two paragraphs I

[9] The training and testing of English and Swahili are enshrined in the constitution of Kenya 2010. English is the language of instruction from primary all the way to college. It is also taught and tested as a subject in both primary and secondary education. Swahili on the other hand is taught as a subject and from primary school and secondary schools. It is an optional subject in Tertiary institutions.

exemplify the two urban codes and later in chapter five use the theoretical framework proposed in chapter two to characterize typology of Sheng.

Barasa and Mous (2017) define Engsh as an urban language spoken in the most affluent neighborhoods of Nairobi. The grammatical frame of Engsh is derived from English, while the lexicon is mainly outsourced from Sheng, Swahili and to some extent urban English slang. Sociolinguistically, Engsh is simply an opposition identity language to Sheng. While the subaltern youth use Sheng to construct their identity, the high-end youths use Engsh to formulate their own social identities that signal their affluent lifestyle. Consider Engsh in example (3) below.

(3)
a) The guy chomoa-d his iphone
DEM guy draw out- PST POSS.PRN iphone
'The man took out his iphone'

b) We were dunda-ing till ma-morning
SUBJ.PRN BE.PST dance-PROG till CL10. SUBJ.PL-morning
'We were clubbing till morning'

c) Our mboch was pigwad mpaka a-ka-faint
SUBJ.PL.POSS househelp BE beat-PST until CL1.SUB-NARR- KA-faint
'Our househelp was beaten until she fainted.'

In (3a-c) we observe that Engsh's grammatical frame is that of English with tense morphemes all derived from English language. The insertional lexicon is outsourced from multiple languages with words such as *dunda* 'dance', *mboch* 'househelp' coming from Sheng while *pigwa* 'beat', *mpaka* 'until' stemming from Swahili. English inflections and in some cases, vocabularies are also inserted. Barasa and Mous (2017:54) note that "Engsh verbs follow the semantics of English tenses". For instance, the Engsh tense markers are directly derived from English past tense allomorphs /d/ /ɪd/ and /t/, progressive aspect morpheme /-(i)ŋ/, and 3SG and present tense allomorphs /-s/ and /–z/.

These cases directly acquired from English. Engsh also allows a closed syllable structure contrary to standard or Kenyan Swahili which have a constraint inhibiting closed syllables (Ferrari 2009:150). Sheng on the other hand uses the grammatical frame of Swahili with lexicon derived from other languages as shall be discussed later at length. Consider example (4) below:

(4)

a. *U-ki-get* *m-zae* *home m-show* *na-come*
2SG.SUB-COND-find CL1-parent home CL1-show PRS.PROG-come
'If you find my parent at home, tell them I am coming'

b. *Ma-sanse* *wa-me-m-nyuria* *otero wa ungem*
CL10-police CL2-PERF-CL1.OBJ-kill robber of Kangemi
'The police have killed Kangemi gangster'

c *U-na-mwok* *ma-pingasa?*
2SG-PRS.PROG-come CL10.PL-what time?
'What time are you coming?'

As highlighted in (4a) through (4c), Sheng uses Swahili as the matrix language with embedded islands from different source languages including Sheng's own innovations. In (4a) the lexical items *get, home, show* and *come* are all borrowed from English while *-zae* is Sheng reanalysis of Swahili *mzazi* 'parent'. In (4b) the items *-sanse* 'police', *otero* 'gangster', *nyuria* 'die/kill' and *ungem* 'Kangemi' are all Sheng's own innovations that are inserted into Swahili grammatical structure. As evident in (4c), Sheng uses syllable rearrangement to invent new word-forms from existing English and Swahili words. The word *mwok* is a syllable reversal from the English word 'come' while *mapingasa* is a syllable reversal from Swahili *Saa ngapi?* 'What time?' Many Sheng speakers are multilingual and proficient in both Swahili and English. These urban speakers ably juggle these various language resources. In the next chapter, I review the theoretical framework

of grammaticalization proposed by Heine and Kuteva (2002) and 4-M Model developed by Myers-Scotton (2002) to characterize Sheng grammar and its development over time.

1.8 Aims, goals and objectives

The primary goal of this dissertation is twofold. First it examines the grammatical nature of Sheng to understand how it radically restructures its grammar, that is, nominal and verbal morphology to give rise to novel forms and constructions that inform its typology. Under this goal, the dissertation seeks to analyze the composite nature of Sheng at the word and sentential level to understand how elements from different languages in contact are incorporated and constrained within Sheng grammar. I revisit distribution of Sheng nouns with those of the lexifier language (Swahili) to ascertain how they interact with the verbal morphology at the sentential level. Within the confines of this goal, I use the structural approach prior discussed to characterize Sheng typology and argue for its status as a fully formed composite language with crystalized grammar contrary to a section of existing literature that Sheng is dialect of Swahili (Kang'ethe-Iraki, 2004), slang or code-mixing style (Mazrui, 1995) or a pidgin or creole (Githiora 2002). I also use grammaticalization theory (Heine and Kuteva, 2005) and Matrix language turnover hypothesis (Myer-Scotton 2002) to account for Sheng grammatical and structural formations. The second major goal of the study is to explore the new emerging identities associated with Sheng and how they redefine its position in the public domain, especially in this post-millennial period.

The study, therefore, seeks to answer three main questions: (1) how does language contact situations in Nairobi influence the lexicon and grammar of Sheng? (2) How does Sheng grammar inform its typology? (3) has Sheng taken on new identities/social

functions? We hypothesize that (1) Sheng is not a simple code-mixing phenomenon but rather an urban vernacular with complex grammatical structure confined within its own grammatical constraints, (2) that the present Sheng spoken in Nairobi has undergone radical restructuring of its grammar especially in the postmillennial period. I envisage that Sheng is a split language[2] whose morphosyntactic mappings display unmarked canonical patterns that are grounded within its own grammatical system. Finally (3), Sheng has assumed new social functions in the postmillennial period. It is not only associated with counterculture but rather assumed new forms of city identities.

1.8.1 Order of dissertation

This dissertation is organized into six chapters. Chapter 1 is an introduction which provides the context and setting for the present study. First, it highlights Sheng in the context of African youth urban and vernacular languages. Second, it describes the historical background of Sheng as a contact language as well as addressing the question of whether it is a mixed language or not. The chapter also characterizes Sheng grammar in the context of other sister languages in Kenya. It concludes by stating the aims, goals and objectives of the study and order of dissertation.

Chapter 2 features theories and goals that inform the basis of this dissertation. I particularly discuss Grammaticalization theory as proposed by Heine and Kuteva (2002) as well as Matrix Language Turnover Hypothesis by Myers-Scotton (2002). The two theories set the stage from which the goals and hypothesis of these dissertation are premised. I conclude the chapter by highlighting the methodological approach and research questions that guide the dissertation.

I use chapter 3 to characterize Sheng grammar in relation to its main lexifier language Swahili, particularly the nominal and verbal morphology of this urban vernacular. The chapter also delves into analyzing cases of grammaticalization in Sheng.

Chapter 4 details the field ethnography and excursions at the center of data collection of this dissertation. The chapter discusses some of the linguistic practices in Nairobi and how these practices inform linguistic ideology and identity construction among young people in the subaltern areas of the city.

Chapter 5 concludes the dissertation by revisiting the goals and major claims of this dissertation and the findings thereof. The chapter also highlights implications of the findings and gives recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER 2: THEORY AND METHOD

2.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the theoretical aspect from which this dissertation is situated. I first start by painting a brief trajectory picture of Kenya's linguistic landscape right from pre-independence to present moment. After which I introduce each of the theories.

2.2 Kenya's Linguistic background

The linguistic complexity in Kenya has a historical context to it. Just before independence, the British rule had fears that the rapid growth of English language fluency among the Africans would be a threat to British dominance and control. As a result, English learning in African schools was restricted by the colonial government in an effort to confine Africans to only indigenous languages. On language policy, the British government through the Phelps-Stokes Commission recommended Swahili to be withdrawn from the curriculum. Swahili appeared to be a threat as well as it was considered as a unification medium for the multiethnic population.

Just after the World War II the colonial government again changed tack by re-introducing English in early years of education while suppressing Swahili (Mazrui, 1995). After Kenyan independence in 1963, English maintained its official status as the newly formed government recommended its use in education while confining the indigenous languages to upcountry use (Nabea, 2009). Right before 1984, English was used as an official language while Swahili maintained its status as a national language (but an optional subject in schools (Kaviti, 2015).

With the introduction of a new curriculum in 1985, Swahili was made a compulsory and examinable subject in both primary and secondary schools. In the early years of education, classes were to be taught in the language of the catchment area of the school. For instance, Swahili was to be used for urban schools while different indigenous languages would be used in rural schools. This declaration afforded Swahili some status that was previously enjoyed by English. In the 2010 constitution of Kenya, both English and Swahili are considered official languages.

With the expanding urban linguistic diversity triggered by urbanization since the 1960's, most African cities have undergone significant language change and shifts mainly as a result of language contact and complex multilingual situations (Githiora, 2002). Historically, the growth of Nairobi as an industrial and business hub saw many rural speakers move to the city in search for better livelihood. Upon arrival, life was not as easy as they had anticipated. As a result, many retreated to informal settlements in the Eastern side of Nairobi. Some of the first and second generation of these migrant workers having been caught up in a linguistic complexity of the city, invented their own medium of communication through urban vernaculars such as Kenyanese Swahili[10] and Sheng. These urban vernaculars gave them a renewed urban identity while solving their communicative needs. This is undoubtedly why Kang'ethe-Iraki (2004:65) notes that "a young mind juggling with so many languages in contact, and mastering none, is likely to weave a composite system from the [linguistic] resources at its disposal to communicate". This, in my opinion, is what has led to emergence of urban vernacular such as Sheng and Engsh in the capital of Kenya. One may ask, what exactly is Sheng or

[10] Kaviti (2015) describes Kenyanese Swahili as an ethnic variation of standard Swahili that is heavily accented with the ethnic language a speaker is from.

Engsh? Are they dialects of existing languages? Or have they evolved into languages of their own? The following section proposes hypothesis and theory that I use to characterize the nature and typology of Sheng as an emergent urban vernacular in Nairobi.

2.3 Theories

This dissertation is situated within two main theories, that is, grammaticalization theory proposed by Heine and Kuteva, (2002)[11] and the Matrix Language Turnover Hypothesis by Myers-Scotton (2002). I draw on these theories to characterize the grammatical nature of Sheng as a composite language under progress. I also use these theories to account for structural novelty observed in this urban vernacular. What follows is a brief description of each of the theories with some selected illustrations from Sheng. This will be followed by a description of dissertation goals, research questions and methodological approach of the present study.

2.3.1 Grammaticalization

According to historical linguists, grammaticalization is not a recent phenomenon (Hopper & Traugott 2003; Heine & Kuteva 2002; Traugott and Dasher, 2002). The term 'grammaticalization' was first coined by Antoine Meillet (a French linguist) who defined it as "*l' attribution du caractere grammatical a un mot jadis autonome*" to mean "the attribution of grammatical character to an erstwhile autonomous word" ((Meillet 1912:13) as cited by Hopper & Traugott, 2003). Apparently, Meillet was not the first to conceive this idea. It is on record that a German philosopher and humanist Wilhelm von

[11] The concept of grammaticalized is not a new phenomenon, it was first popularized by Humboldt (1767-18350; Meillet (1912:385) and Kurlylowicz (1965:69)

Humboldt (1767-1835) had similar thought when he suggested that "grammar of human language was preceded by evolutionary stages of language in which only concrete ideas could be addressed" (quote from Hopper and Traugott (2003;19-20). These suggested stages include pragmatics, syntactic, cliticization and morphological stages. The stages could also allude to continuum of grammaticalization change as well as directionality as it will be discussed later in this section. Kurylowicz (1965:19) defines grammaticalization as a process involving "increase of the range of a morpheme advancing from a lexical to a grammatical or from a less grammatical to a more grammatical status, e.g., from a derivative formant to an inflectional one." Kurylowicz definition adds directionality of change to the original definition suggest by Meillet. Here there is a cline of change from one linguistic form to another, that is, from lexical or less grammatical to a more grammatical form. Elsewhere, Traugott (2002) contextualizes grammaticalization in two ways; primary grammaticalization and secondary grammaticalization. According to him, primary grammaticalization involve changes from lexical form to grammatical forms while secondary grammaticalization involves changes from less grammatical forms to more grammatical forms (p26-27). Hopper & Traugott (2003:7) suggests a continuum of grammaticality as highlighted below.

Content form→grammatical word→clitic→inflectional affix

According to this cline, grammaticalization, as a unidirectional process[12], begins at the level of the lexicon as the source towards grammatical forms which may later diversify in other grammatical forms such as clitics or inflectional affixes. The duo

[12] This is a generalization derived from observation that grammatical change starts from less grammatical to more grammatical (Hopper & Traugott, 2003). They contend that this is empirical and a widely attested phenomenon of change

argues that each item on the right is more grammatical and less lexical. Hopper & Traugott acknowledge that the boundary between categories on the cline are fluid and arrangement may change based on the language (p7). According to Winter-Froemel (2014) this continuum signal path or scale of development from a diachronic point of view. Elsewhere Givon (1979:209) is of a slightly different view that grammar develops out of discourse use, and he proposes different cline, as seen below.

Discourse→syntax→morphology→morphophonemics→zero

Based on Givon's grammaticalization continuum, grammatical change starts at a discourse level from which grammar evolves. Whether the syntax and discourse operate at different levels is an issue of further inquiry. Nevertheless, what is salient in all these definitions is that grammaticalization entails use of lexical items in new grammatical contexts irrespective of their original status. Similar sentiments are shared by Mufwene (2001) who observes that all instances of grammaticalization involve use of lexical forms in new grammatical functions regardless of whether the older uses are strictly lexical or grammatical. Winter-Froemel (2014:508) defines grammaticalization as "a new element entering the grammar of a particular language"

For long a time, grammaticization[13] has been considered as a diachronic process (Mufwene, 2001). However, Lehman (1985) conceptualizes it on two prongs, that is, as a synchronic process and as a diachronic process. Under diachronic context he considers grammaticalization as a process that convert lexical forms into grammatical words or grammatical forms even into more grammatical forms. And on the other hand, he conceptualizes it as synchronic process by considering how it governs ordering of

[13] I use grammaticalization and grammaticization interchangeably

subcategories of grammar. Similar sentiments are shared by Bruyn (1996) who notes "Although grammaticalization is generally conceived as a diachronic process, it is possible to approach it from a synchronic point of view" (p29). Bruyn uses Sranan preposition phrase (PP) to characterize sudden change brought about by grammaticization as opposed to gradual process as it would be the case in diachronic grammaticalization. Consider example (5) below:

(5)

a) *Na a oso baka* (18-20th century)
LOC the house back
'behind the hous' or 'at/in the back of the house'

b) *Na bak fu a oso* (18th -20th century)
LOC back of the house
'behind the house' or 'at/in the back part of the house'

c) *Na baka a oso* (18-20th century)
LOC back the hous
'behind the house'

d) *Bak a oso* (20th century only)
'Behind the house'

(Data from Bruyn (1996))

Precisely, the Sranan PP *na bak fu NP* is not frequent in 18th century period as it would be expected for diachronic development. According to Bryun, the presence of different types of complex PPs in current Sranan is not an outcome of diachronic gramaticization as it is the case of *baka* from nouns (p34). For the sake of this dissertation, I use Mufwene's proposition that just like any other languages, contact varieties, such as creoles and mixed languages, undergo similar grammaticalization processes and add a crucial role in the evolution of such languages (Mufwene, 2001).

Heine and Kuteva (2002)'s definition of grammaticalization theory involves the evolution and development of grammatical forms through time and space. Grammatical

forms can be reinterpreted here as those elements which mainly consist of grammatical meaning or function such as noun phrases, adjectival phrase, verbal phrase among others. Their theory explains how grammatical forms and construction develop diachronically and provide a detailed explanation to why they are structured the way they are. Hopper and Traugott (2003) view grammaticalization in twofold: first as a research framework and second as a linguistic phenomenon. As a research framework they argue that it is more concerned with scholarly questions revolving around how lexical forms and constructions change over time to assume new grammatical functions, more particularly on the correlations between/among morphosyntax, semantic and phonological changes. As a phenomenon itself, they view grammaticalization as a process where a grammatical item becomes more grammatical or assumes a new grammatical function over time.

In Heine and Kuteva's view, grammaticalization is a context induced reinterpretation. In other words, context plays a significant role in informing how less functional categories undergo reanalysis to form newer or more grammatical forms. According to proponents of this theory, it involves four main mechanisms that are interrelated. These include (1) semantic bleaching, (2) extension, (3) decategorialization, and (4) erosion (Heine and Kuteva, 2002:4). In the proceeding section I briefly discuss each one of them.

2.3.1.1 Semantic bleaching

Semantic bleaching or desemantization results when grammatical forms of concrete meanings diverge from their old function or lose their old grammatical functions.

2.3.1.2 Decategorialization

Once a form has lost its original grammatical function through desemantization, it as well "loses in categorial properties of their old uses" (Heine and Kuteva, 2002:3). A good example of decategorialization comes from Ewe, a Niger-Congo language spoken in Nigeria. Consider example (6) below.

(6)

a) *lā le é- si me*
meat be his-hand in
'Meat is in his hand'

b) *lā le é- si*
meat be his-hand
'He has meat'

In the above example, (6a) provides the source of the original structure or what Heine (1996) calls 'the source schema' and (6b) is the target structure. In the original meaning (6a), the locative *me* is overt in the structure signaling the location of the *meat* but in the second construction it loses it categorial property of location, paving way for the possessive construction as demonstrated in (6b). In summary, the construction in (6a) loses its morphosyntactic property by the virtue of locative marker *me* disappearing in new grammatical function like that witnessed in (6b).

2.3.1.3 Extension

Extension, on the other hand, is a mechanism where a form acquires new context of use, or it is conventionalized into new grammatical function where they are frequently used and become more predictable while occurring in these new contexts. In Bizkaian

Basque, for example, non-proximal demonstrative ɑ ‘that’ becomes - ɑ, definite article (Heine and Kuteva 2002). Consider the following.

(7) Bizkaian Basque
a) *Gizon* *a*
Man that
‘that man’
b) *Gizon- a*
Man-the
‘the man’
(Data source: unknown, cited by Heine and Kuteva (2002:109)

Heine and Kuteva add that, in cases where demonstrative determiners transition into marking definiteness, their plural counterpart subsequently develops into marking plurality in definite nouns. While citing Frajzyngier (1997a), Heine and Kuteva agree that in some languages of the world such schema development has led to demonstrative determiner assuming plurality function in grammatical contexts where definiteness is not obligatory.

2.3.1.4 Erosion

This mechanism is mainly phonological in nature. In other words, erosion can be described as loss or reduction in phonetic substance. This however does not occur in isolation. Heine and Kuteva contend that once a form acquires a new grammatical function, it is likely to lose its categorial properties as it cements itself in its new functional context. As a result, it also loses its phonetic qualities.

Overall, these mechanisms are considered to play a significant role in understanding the grammaticalization process. While some of the mechanisms such as erosion may involve loss of grammatical properties in one context, there is always a gain in new contexts in which they apply. As previously mentioned, contexts in which

grammaticalization applies play a significant role in expressing meanings some of which may not be related to previously used forms. Subsequently, Heine and Kuteva (2002) argue that not every reinterpretation translates to grammatical meanings but rather it is only when forms with specific meanings are used to reference other grammatical meanings that we say grammaticalization has occurred. In Kenyanese Swahili[14], for example, the grammatical form *-ko*, a definite place marker on adjectival phrases, has over time grammaticalized to appear as a suffixation on verbs as a subjunctive marking politeness. Consider the following example.

(8)

Swahili	**Kenyanese Swahili**
Mahali ko-te	*Nisaidie-ko*
Place DEF.PLACE-all	Help – POLITENESS marker
'All the place'	'Please help'

In this context, the definite locative marker on adjectival phrase grammaticalizes to assume a new function, as an affix that is appended to a verb marking politeness in Kenyanese Swahili. The use of *-ko* suffix in Kenyanese Swahili is used quite frequently and more predictable in these syntactic constructions.

Mechanisms highlighted in section 2.2 above, play a significant role in laying down a descriptive framework under which grammaticalization is reinterpreted. Heine and Kuteva (2002) are however quick to point out that not every reinterpretation result in the emergence of grammatical forms but rather grammaticalization occurs when forms such as lexical words or meanings are used to reference more abstract grammatical meanings. A good example they cite is the English form 'go to' which is reinterpreted

[14] Kenyanese Swahili is a non-standard variety of Swahili that is based of standard Swahili with blend lexical items from of indigenous languages. It is heavily accented based on one's ethnic language.

from its original meaning of an action verb to reference a futurity aspect as in ‘going to’ or ‘will’. From a historical perspective, the change occurs in a local context that targets purpose meaning in a construction. So, for example when one says *I am going to study French* it does not carry the progressive connotation of then leaving a current location to go study French in a different place. The non-finite complement reference purposiveness in that the speaker is leaving for sole reason of studying French. In the same line of thought, the change in meaning is reanalyzed when the same construction possibly inferences future aspect from that of purposiveness, such that, the speaker is currently leaving to go study French somewhere in the future. The ‘studying of French’ is intended for the future. The transition from purposiveness *BE GOING (TO study French)* to auxiliary *BE GOING TO (study French)* undergoes reanalysis such that the phrase BE GOING TO now references future aspect other than progressive. In other words [I am going [to study French]] is reanalyzed as [I [am going to] study French] as one would simply say *I will study French*. *Going to* phrase can also be subjected to further changes such as phonological reduction, when *going to* is reduced to *gonna*. In Present Day English (PDE) *gonna* is further constrained to reference future intentions, plans or schedule (Hopper and Trauggot, 2003).

The four mechanisms highlighted in (section 2.2.1) are not distinct from each other but rather interconnected and one precedes or paves the way for the other. For instance, *semantic bleaching* or *desemantization* occurs when grammatical forms diverge from their original meaning to assume new functional categories that are predictable in certain contexts of usage. The new categories may assume new grammatical meanings; however, this may take some time before their phonetic, morphological and syntactic

changes can be realized. The process under which grammaticalization is realized is mainly context dependent. Context informs the nature of grammatical forms since meaning can undergo complete reanalysis to reference something different from the original. A case example is the Sheng adverb *poa* ‘good/well’ which has undergone complete grammaticalization from the Swahili adjectival function meaning ‘cool’. The involved context arises from a context induced environment where young people use ‘cool’ to mean better or fine. This is similar with the English slang of using ‘cool’ to mean better. According to Heine and Kuteva (2002), grammaticalization is a unidirectional process meaning that forms change from less grammatical form to more grammatical forms but of course with glaring exceptions. A common example is the use of the noun *back* ‘body part’ which grammaticalizes to mark temporal concept such as *after*, *then* or *earlier* in several languages of the world. For instance, according to Stolz (1992a:16) as cited by Heine and Kuteva (2002), Icelandic *bak* ‘body part’ as in ‘back’ (noun) grammaticalizes to mark temporal concept *bak(i)* ‘behind’ as in time. Consider (9) below.

(9)

Bak jól- um
After Christmas-DA:PL
‘after Christmas’

In Kikuyu, a language spoken in central Kenya, the noun *thutha* ‘back’, ‘behind’, or ‘rear’ grammaticalizes to mark temporal preposition ‘afterwards’. Consider the two examples in (10) below from Barlow (1960:189) as cited by Heine and Kuteva (2002).

(10)

a)*Nî-ngû-kw-îra thutha, tw-oima nja.*

1SG -TAM-2SG-tell afterwards, 1PL-go outside
'I will tell you afterwards, when we go outside'

b) *Thûtha û-cio nd-a-coka gû-tû-ruma*
After DEM again INF-PL.SUBJ-abuse
'After that he did not again abuse us'

In Swahili, the verb *-anza* 'begin' or 'start' has grammaticalized into a more complex grammatical form that denotes 'first' as a numeral count. From a discourse analysis point of view, this can be a place holder, or a discourse marker in literary text. Consider the example below.

(11)

a) *Penina a-me-anza ku-soma*
Penina CL1.3SG-PERF-start INF-study
'Peninah has begun studying'

b) *A-ta-m-hudum-ia m-gonjwa kwanza*
CL1.3SG-FUTURE-CL1.OBJECT-attend-FV CL1.SG-patient first
'He will attend to the patient first.'

On her work on *Possession: Cognitive sources, forces and grammaticalization,* Heine (1997) defines grammaticalization as "a process whereby a linguistic expression E, in addition to its conventional meaning M_1, receives a more abstract and more grammatical meaning M_2." M_1 here is used to reference the meaning of the source schemas while M_2 refers to the new schema meaning they acquire. The schema used here are confined to grammatical interpretation of an entity. According to Shibatani (1996), the function of these schemata can be viewed in terms of situation-based interpretation of meaning. He further argues schemas are interpretations of events and happenings and grammatical schemata in particular correspond to conceptual model constrained within experiential domain. In other words, there is a construal relationship between specific entities and abstract construction. A good example he provides is the 'Give-

constructions' which he argues are used to work as schemas for recipient constructions or what is commonly known as 'benefactive constructions' (Shibatani, 1996). Heine (1997) extends the schema analogy to possessive expressions. She contends that possession as one of the abstract domains can be construed from recurring experiences or events that are expressed by more concrete domains of human experiences like what one actually does, or the location at which one does the action, or who or what accompanies one when they do the action or what exist when the action is done. She proposes a formulaic description of schemas used for the expression of predicative possession as highlighted below.

(12)

Formula	**Label of event schema**
X takes Y	Action
Y is located at X	Location
X is with Y	Companion
X's Y exists	Genitive
Y exists for /to X	Goal
Y exists from X	Source
As for X, Y exist	Topic
Y is X's (property)	Equation

From the formulaic expressions, Heine (1977) proposes an event schema that is relational in nature. For instance, the action schema is construed from the doer-receiver relationship between X and Y. She argues that action schema like one highlighted above is derived from verbs that take objects or in other words transitive verbs. She adds "the possessor is encoded as the clausal subject and the possesee as the object/complement" (p.48). A practical example she provides comes from Mochi dialect of Chaga, a Niger Congo Bantu language (original citation: Claude 1986).

(13)

a) *Wa -nu wa- waḍa ma- fumu*
CL.2-people CL.2-take CL.6-spear
'The people take (their) spears'
b) *Wa- ndu wa- woḍe ma-fumu*
CL.2-people CL.2- CL.6-spear
(i)'The people have taken spears',OR (ii) 'The people have spears'
c) *Wu- woḍe makanju hafoi*
CL.11- waste much
'It (i.e. honey) has much waste'

Grammaticalization in the above example is realized through a 'three stage model' (Heine, 1993). The once specific meaning that was associated by the transitive verb -*waḍa* 'take' undergoes extension, one of the mechanisms of grammaticalization that describe how grammatical elements and construction evolve, to realize the possessive form *woḍe* which has connotations of 'to have' something. In the Mochi example in (13), it is evident that the form *waḍa* which is a verb assumes new grammatical function as a possessive marker *woḍe* by undergoing three stages which are summarized by a three-stage model that reflect realization of meanings through time. What this means is that realization of meaning at stage 3 is preceded by that at stage 2 which is also preceded by meaning at stage 1. Stage 1 is only used to reflect the source of the meaning before extension. Stage two is the in between stage where the meaning at stage 1 and that of stage 3 co-occurs in the same context before it is generalized at stage three. The process by which an existing grammatical form assumes new meaning is through extension mechanisms.

In conclusion, it is apparent that in their effort to negotiate meaning, language users invent new forms of speaking that may be characterized by pragmatic, semantic and grammatical shifts. Grammaticalization is not a one-time phenomenon but a continuous process that parallel speakers' negotiation of meaning. This is also reiterated by Hopper

and Traugott (2003) who observe that as members of speech community acquire innovation, they are subjected to full utilization of signal simplicity and eventually to different types of reduction such as semantic bleaching, morphological bonding and sound loss.

2.3.1.5 Grammaticalization in language contact situation

The majority of scholarly works on grammaticalization have been from a monogenic point of view of language evolution, that is, they have focused more on grammaticalization and transmission of language from a homogeneous speech community such as English only or Swahili only. This then begs the question of whether and how grammaticalization features in language contact situations. Mufwene (2008) notes that grammaticalization can be internally or externally motivated. Internal changes are usually connected to language acquisition among children in a relatively homogeneous speech community and on the other hand external motivation stem from contact or association with another language. With this, Heine and Kuteva (2002) agree that contact situation invoke specific issues related to grammaticalization. Emerging studies among historical linguists have delved into theoretical and practical issues relating to conceptualization and progression of grammaticalization in language contact situations. Pidgin and creoles have been a considerable site for this exploration (see McWhorter 2018; Mufwene 2008).

Developments in pidgins and creole (and by extension mixed languages) have to be understood in terms of the nature of innovations and how discontinuous this novelty is from source languages or languages in contact with these varieties (Hopper and Traugott,

2003:224). The duo further notes that if languages emerging from contact situations such as creoles correspond to discontinuity from their lexifiers, the ultimate assumption would be that grammaticalization is mainly within the creoles. But on the other hand, if the lexifier or one of the source languages is the genesis of structural development associated with emergent languages, then grammaticalization is assumed to be construction of the lexifier language. In cases where none of these assumptions can be alluded to then the origin of grammaticalization can be associated with multiple languages, a phenomenon known as polygrammaticalization[15].

Examples of cases involving grammaticalization arising from lexifier language include that of Tok Pisin (Romaine 1999) and bilingual first language acquisition (Matthews and Yip 2009). According to Romaine (1999), the development of *laik* 'desire' and *klostu* 'near' into markers of 'proximative' in Tok Pisin can be attributed to developments of similar forms in their lexifier language, that is, English (consider *laik* from 'like' and *Klostu* from 'close to'). Romain agrees with Bybee, Perkins, and Pagliuca (1994) as cited by Hopper and Traugott (2003, p. 226) that "source meanings determine the semantic path grams can travel." For instance, the form *klostu* which was originally spatial preposition (cf English 'close' or 'near') grammaticalized in Tok Pisin as an adverbial phrase where it could combine with temporality markers to indicate earlier or later time expressions. Consider example (14).

(14)

a) *Ol tok klostu bai wanem ren pundaun nau*
they talk close FUT which rain fall now
'The said it was about to rain now'

[15] This is a term coined by Craig (1991) to reference a situation where a single form develops multiple grammatical functions in varying linguistic constructions (Hopper and Traugott, 2003).

b)Em tok ol masalai klostu kilim mi
he say PL spirit nearly kill me
'He said that the spirits nearly killed him'

Romaine (1999:337)

In immediate future context *klostu* has been replaced by *laik* and by time it has developed meaning of 'about to' with phonological reduction to *la,* that is, *(laik>la).* Hopper and Traugott note that the function of *laik* coincide with its original meaning of 'want' which has future connotation (Hopper and Traugott 2003).

Elsewhere Matthews and Yip (2009) while investigating the emergence of *already* as a marker of aspect and *give* as a case of replica grammaticalization among Cantonese-English bilingual children agree that language acquisition is a path to substrate influence in development of contact languages. According to the duo the development of *already* is a case of 'ordinary' contact-induced grammaticalization suggested by Heine and Kuteva (2003) which entails a situation where a form in the emergent language is replicated using similar materials as it is in the replica language, repeating the same path of grammaticalization (p 376). Based on the analysis, Hong Kong bilingual children use of *already* as an aspect marker is modeled on Cantonese perfective marker *zo2.* (Note: the numbers mark different levels of tone.) Consider example 15 below.

(15)

Faan1 lai4 zo2, hei2 san1 zo2
Come back PFV rais body PFV
'I'm back, I've got up'

Data source: Matthews and Yip (2009:378)

The use of perfective marker zo2 in (15) can be compared to idiomatic usage of 'already' in the bilingual child speech as indicated in (16).

(16)

I give you to eat apple. Have to cut already first.

According to Matthews and Yip, *already* in (16) is unexpected since the apple is yet to be cut but corresponds the use of perfective marker *zo2* which occurs with modal verb as observed in (17).

(17)

Jiu3 cit3-zo2 sin1
Need cut-PFV first
'You have to cut it first'

Data source: Matthews and Yip (1994:199 as cited by Matthews and Yip (2009)

In this data, bilingual children's development of *already* is a recap of similar development of *already* as a perfective aspect marker in Singapore Colloquial English where it is used in postverbal position to denote perfective sense or completion of action as observe in (17).

Instances where grammaticalization is associated with multiple pathways is also on record. Keesling (1991:327) observes that cases where substrate languages are in stable existence with superstrate languages, the is confirmation that "formulae of equivalence from the subordinate language may be as important as formulae from lexifier language in the process of grammaticalization." What this means is that the path of grammaticalized forms derived from superstrate's lexical items may be relatively informed by similar path through direct calquing of a substrate pattern. Hopper and Traugott (2003) fronts the development of Sri Lanka Portuguese Creole as an example of multiple input towards grammaticalization. According to Hopper and Traugott, the Sri Lanka Portuguese Creole has drawn from the Portuguese the preposition *para* 'for' and switched it as a postposition in an OV structure with a phonetic reduction of p' (p.229).

(Note: Portuguese is the lexifier language with VO structure while Tamil is the substratum language with OV). Consider example (18)

(18)

a) Portuguese
Eu tinha dado o dinheiro a/para Joao
I have given the money to/for John
b) Tamil
Nan calli-yay jon-ukku kutu-tt iru-nt-an
I money-ACC John-DAT give-PAST be-1-SG'
c) Sri Lankan Portuguese
Ew dineru jon-pe jaa-da tina
I money Joh-DAT give-COMP give-PAST
'I had given John the money'
(Romain 1988:40 cited in Hopper and Traugot 2003:230).

In summary, language contact situation can be a catalyst for grammaticalization in the sense that a form undergoing grammaticalization may retain attributes of their lexifiers. Also, grammaticalized forms while they may undergo phonetic reduction in the process of divergence, associate themselves with one or both of the source languages in contact. Lastly, grammaticalization may involve forms which coexist in function with the old forms within similar functional environment. Multiple origin of grammatical structures from language contact situations call for scholarly attention. Sheng, the mixed language of Nairobi, offers a clear example for such study.

2.3.2 The Matrix Language Turnover Hypothesis

This section highlights the second theory I draw on in examining grammatical structure of Sheng. I first begin by providing a brief theoretical background of the theory as proposed by Myers-Scotton (2002) followed by the grammatical framework on which the theory is founded. The rest of the section will be used to discuss the relevance of the theory to the present study.

2.3.2.1 Background

In a bilingual or multilingual speech community, speakers are likely to mix elements from more than one language in their conversations in what is commonly known as codeswitching or code mixing. Typically, the language providing more elements, that is, grammatical frame is referred to as a 'matrix language' and that which contributes other elements such as lexical items is known as 'embedded language' (Myers-Scotton 2002). While codeswitching itself can be a mechanism as well as a process in language contact situation, it has grammatical implications here. In a case of fluent bilinguals, speakers may find themselves code-switching words and phrases within a sentence structure. Over time, this codeswitching may become unmarked choice that signal evolution of a social dialect or style of speaking. Structurally, grammatical constraints are evoked whenever two structures of two or more languages in contact are used within a single construction. According to Myer-Scotton (2002:11) codeswitching patterns can be used to show how grammatical structure and language constraints are interrelated. She proposes a Matrix Language Frame (MLF) to explain such structural configurations found in codeswitching. This is elaborated in the subsection below.

2.3.2.2 Matrix language frame (MLF)

The MLF consists of two major oppositions, that is, the Matrix Language-Embedded Language opposition and the content-system morpheme opposition. In a classic codeswitching situation, the language that contributes more is the matrix language and the other language is referred to as the embedded language. By 'more' we mean a language contributing more abstract structure. Consider the following Sheng example: (19)

*a)U-na-jua sasa kama tu-me-**train**-iw-a lazima u-**observe**..*
2SG-TAM-know now COND 1PL.SUB-TAM-train-APPL-FV must 2SG.PRON-observe
'You know if we are trained, we must observe'

*b)U-e-zi tu enda **ku-ruk-ia** **mtu***
2SG.PRON-NEG-able just go INF-jump-APPL someone
'You cannot just take advantage of someone'

The examples in (19) present mixed constituents between three languages, that is, Swahili, English and Sheng. In (19) the matrix language is Swahili. It provides the grammatical frame from which constituents from other source languages are embedded. The matrix language, that is, Swahili, contributes more grammatical forms that include subject, object, tense, aspect, mood and applicative functions. The sources languages English and Sheng provide content morphemes such as verbs 'train' and 'observe'. The phrases in bold represent bilingual or trilingual complementizer phrase (CP) that show structural dependency relation. Precisely, they consist of morphemes from different source languages. According to Myer-Scotton, there are several constituents that can be derived from the MLF model. The first constituent is that made up of entirely one language. In a bilingual CP, these can either be a matrix or embedded language island. In order for this island to function as a bilingual CP in classic codeswitching, it has to show some structural relation to each other. Consider the following examples from Sheng.

(20)
a) *Jamaa a-li-kuja while having winning mentality.*
Guy 3SG.SUBJ-PAST-come while have.PROG win.PROG mentality
'The guy came with a winning mentality'

b) *Yeaah at least hata leo ni-me-pata mob sana kuliko siku ingine yoyote*
EXCL at least even today 1SG.SUB-PERF-find a lot very than day other any
'Yeah at least even today I found a lot that any other day'

c)*Wee consider vile u-ta-ji-mix na hiyo storo*
2SG.SUBJ consider how 2SG.SUBJ-FUT-REFL-deal with that story/issue

'You consider how to deal with that issue'

In line with Myer-Scotton's argument, (20a-c) represent bilingual CP. The languages in contact include Swahili-English codeswitching. They all consist of morphemes from this language pair. Example (20a) demonstrates a bilingual construction; however, it is only bilingual because it comprises of two separate monolingual CPs, that is, [*Jamaa alikuja*] 'the guy came' and [*while having winning mentality]*. This type of bilingual CP, however, fails to show structural dependency relation. On the other hand, (20b) and (20c) display constituents that show that the two bilingual CPs are in contact. While (20b) consist of only one CP it qualifies as a bilingual CP because it consist of mixed constituents such as a bilingual AdvP [*at least hata leo nimepata*] 'at least even today I got' and a bilingual NP [*mob sana*] . In (20c) the CP constituents are mixed in a special way. In the phrase *utajimix* 'you will deal [with the issue]'there is a mix of morphemes from both of the languages in contact, that is, English and Swahili. This Myer-Scotton calls; Matrix Language +Embedded Language constituent.

2.2.3 Defining Matrix Language Turnover Hypothesis

In her analysis of mixed languages[16], Myer-Scotton (2002:247) proposes that a mixed language or a split language emerge when a Matrix Language turnover is in progress. This is a theory based on the perception that complementizer phrases (CPs) in any given language are structured at the conceptual level by a morphosyntactic frame which she refers to as a 'Matrix Language' (ML). In a classic codeswitching context, this frame is known as the morphosyntactic frame (the language that provides the

[16] Myers-Scotton prefers the term "split languages". She notes "Because of the negative connotations of 'mixed', especially in a volume that emphasizes systematicity, I propose a new name for such languages and will refer to the as split languages" (Myers-Scotton, 2002:246)

grammatical frame during codeswitching). In language contact situation that involves composite codeswitching the ML is multi-sourced. That is, the frame may be made up of conceptual structure from more than one source languages in contact. The outcome of this combination is a composite ML. The composite matrix language is an abstract frame that is activated by convergence and composite codeswitching in a bilingual speech. Convergence is informed by diffusion of lexical structure between two or more languages in contact. According to Myers-Scotton, mixed languages are made of a composite ML that involve morpheme systems from different languages. During codeswitching, the language that provides the grammatical frame is known as matrix language and that whose structures are inserted in the frame is known as the embedded language. The matrix vs embedded language opposition is well exemplified in structures that consist of morphemes from more than one language. For instance, in the following codeswitching sample of Sheng, the matrix language is Swahili, as it provides more abstract structure with functional morphemes. The embedded language is English as it inserts the lexical categories that represents the intention of the speaker.

(21)

*Lakini si ku-baya vile. Ni venye u-na-ji-**represent***
BUT NEG INF-Bad ADV.MOD. BE ADV 2SG-TAM-REFL-represent
*poa, i-na-**matter***
well, CL9-TAM-matter
'But it is not that bad. It is just how you present yourself well that matters.'

In other words, the Matrix Language turnover hypothesis is conceptualized from Matrix Language Framework (MLF) that is structured to explain the linguistic configuration during codeswitching. As aforementioned, the MLF is based on two oppositions, that is, the matrix language vs embedded language and the content vs system morphemes. These two opposition models work in tandem to explain how languages undergo restructuring

during contact interaction. This is further exemplified by two supporting models, that is, Abstract level model and 4-M model. In the next two paragraphs, I provide a brief description of each.

2.2.3.1 Abstract level model

The abstract level model is associated with the nature of the mental lexicon. The model assumes that all lemmas[17] in the mental lexicon comprise of three levels of conceptual lexical structure that contain grammatical information that is required for surface realization of lexical items. The levels include (1) lexical conceptual structure, (2) predicate-argument structure, and (3) morphological realization patterns (p.19). According to Myers-Scotton and Jake (2001:25), the lexical conceptual structure represents the speaker's intent during communication. These semantic intentions activate feature bundles that are mapped onto representative lemmas in the mental lexicon. The predicate-argument structure level deals with the mapping of themes onto grammatical relations. Morphological realization pattern relates to how surface configurations are informed by grammatical relations.

2.2.3.2 4-M model

In addition to Abstract Level model, is the 4-M model. According to Myers-Scotton and Jake (2000a; 2000b, 2001), the model helps to characterize codeswitching structure as well as to elaborate on the distribution of morphemes in a classic codeswitching context. It typifies the morpheme system into three types: (1) the content morpheme, (2) early system morpheme and (3) late system morpheme. The content morphemes assign or receive thematic roles. Examples include verbs and prepositions.

[17] Lemmas are abstract entries in the mental lexicon that underlie morphemes (Myers-Scotton 2002:17)

The early system morphemes on the other hand comprise of morphemes that depends on the heads of their projection for grammatical information. Examples include plural morphemes and gender markers. The late system morpheme subdivided further into two, that is, bridge system morpheme and late outsider system morpheme. The bridge system morphemes connect content morpheme with each other. A good example in English would be *of* as used in *the tower of Babel.* Finally, is the late outsider system morpheme. As its name suggests, their activation happens later on in the construction process. They are activated when larger constituents such as CPs or inflectional phrases are constructed. Both bridge and outsider morphemes are not activated until they are conceptualized at the formulator level when larger constituents are assembled.

2.2.3.3 Further elaboration

At the abstract level the opposition between the matrix and the embedded language relates to underlying linguistic competence in the two or more of these contributing languages. It is the abstract structure that informs the surface representation of morphemes in a code-switching formation. Myers-Scotton (2002) observes that "psycholinguistically, the bilingual's two or more languages do not achieve equal activation in bilingual speech". What this means is that one language is likely to dominate the other in making decision at the "prelinguistic conceptual level" (p. 16). The language that dominates more is that which provide the grammatical frame or system morphemes and the less dominant provides the content morphemes. In order to understand the content vs system morpheme opposition, Myers-Scotton (2002a) proposed

a 4-M model. The model accounts for a composite frame structure informed by morpheme system in language contact situation.

The content vs system morpheme refines the codeswitching phenomenon by indicating grammatical relations between participating languages. Content morphemes represent semantic and pragmatic aspects of what is said. Their lemmas directly connect them to signal intentions of the speaker during communication. In other words, they convey language specific semantic or pragmatic feature bundles that underlie what the speaker intents to say. Myers-Scotton notes that "the lemmas underlying content morphemes are directly elected and their content is salient at the level of the mental lexicon" (Myers-Scotton, 2002:18). On the other hand, system morphemes show grammatical relation within and between the phrasal structures being codeswitched. Just like their name suggests, early system morphemes become salient early at the mental lexicon level. They become activated when the lemmas supporting content morpheme directly points at them. For example, in Sheng the word *madem* 'young women' has the plural marker *ma-* and the noun *dem* 'a woman'. When the speaker's intention is to reference, say two women as opposed to one, the system morpheme *ma-* is activated together with the content morpheme *dem*. It is assumed that such conceptual connection between content and early system morphemes is behind the justification why early system morphemes appear frequently in bilingual clauses within matrix language than late system morphemes (p.76). The late system morphemes, on the other hand, are activated at the Formulator level[18](cf. Levelt 1989). For them to be activated the lemmas

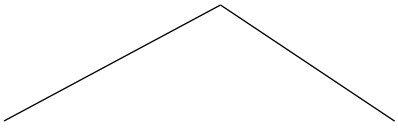
[18] According to Levelt (1989), formulator level is part of speech production system that converts preverbal message into phonetic plan ready to be articulated. This may involve lexicalization, phonological and grammatical encoding.

underlying content and early system morphemes send directions to the Formulator. Such directions also lead to building of larger linguistic units. The late system morphemes are further subdivided into two morpheme types: bridge and outsider system morphemes. The bridge system morphemes synchronize elements in a linguistic structure when the grammaticality for those structures is invoked. For example, in Swahili '*wa*' in *mtoto wa Alicia* 'Child of Alicia' is a bridge system morpheme. The morpheme has to seek grammatical information from the head noun '*mtoto*' for its well formedness. Such bundle features may include noun class type and number. On the contrary, outsider late system morphemes look for details about their form outside their immediate maximal projection. Using feature theory, they can be categorized as [+/- outside information]. A good example is the subject-verb agreement form /-s/.

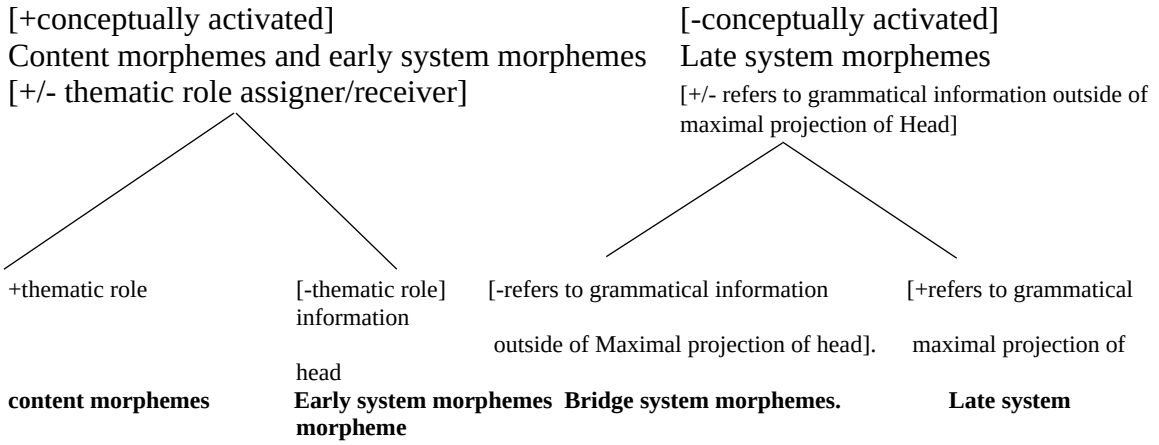
The content-system morpheme opposition reflects how the lexicon is structured at the conceptual level as well as how the lexical elements are accessed during language production process. Further discussion of the 4-Model reveals that, in a codeswitching scenario, content morphemes are presumed to assign or receive thematic roles, that is, [+thematic role]. For instance, all nouns receive thematic roles and majority of the verbs and prepositions assign thematic roles. System morphemes do not display this feature hence [-thematic role]. Figure 2 summarizes the content-system morpheme opposition as informed by the 4-M model.

Figure 2. Feature-based classification of morphemes

+/- conceptually activated[19]



[19] Myers-Scotton (2002:76) notes that "When an element is [+conceptually activated] it is salient as soon as a speaker's intentions are encoded as a language, at the lemma level in the lexicon."



The above feature system is largely informed by universal grammar or linguistic competence and driven by syntactic or semantic structure. In this model, the assumption is that some of the lemmas underlying the morphemes are informed by the speaker's intention while others are not. Those that are evoked by the speaker's intention are conceptually activated at the mental lexicon. The 4-M model opposition observed in figure 2 provides guidance in describing how the four types of morphemes are activated in language production process. During codeswitching, elements of a composite structure are activated differently. Content morphemes are conceptually activated when the lemmas underlying speakers' intention is directed to them. Consider example (22) from Sheng.

(22)

Mazee *u-na-come* *kesho?*
EXCL 2SG-TENSE-come tomorrow
'Are you coming tomorrow?'

In (22), the system morphemes are outsourced from Swahili while the content morpheme is from English. In this case, the speaker's intention is marked by the verb *come* by assigning semantic role of agent of the verb who the speaker wants to show up

the following day. Since *come* is a lexical item, it is conceptually activated at the lexical level and by virtue of it being a content morpheme it is given theta assigner role, that is, it assigns thematic role. By extension, early system morphemes are also activated at the lexical level since they are confined within the maximal projection of the head they modify. In other words, they are coindexed with their heads. For instance, in the word *boys* the lemma pointing to the content morpheme *boy* also activates the bound plural morpheme /-s/, since system morphemes do not assign or receive thematic roles by themselves, they are [-thematic role]. Examples of early system morphemes in English include plural forms, determiners, and articles. This may vary from language to language depending on how they are structured. The feature specifications for late system morphemes are syntactic in nature. They vary based on the feature [+/- look outside]. They are conceptually activated when the lemmas pointing to them seek information outside the maximal projection in order to receive their grammatical marking. The late 'bridge' system morphemes are marked as [-looks out of maximal projection] since they "receive information about their form within their own maximal projection" (Myers-Scotton, 2002:75).

According to Myers-Scotton, the role of the bridge system morpheme is to bind structural units and they do not preempt any conceptual structure. Unlike the early system morphemes, bridge morphemes have no relationship with their head other than uniting content morphemes. The term 'late' is used to reference the fact that the lemmas underlying them do not become salient until the level of the formulate when larger grammatical structures are assembled. The function of the bridge system morpheme is to connect content morphemes together.

Late outsider system morpheme, on the other hand are marked as [+looks out of the maximal projection]. Their form is case-marked by information outside their immediate maximal projection. In larger constituents, such as ones with independent and dependent clauses, outsider morphemes are coindexed with forms outside their heads. For instance, in the construction, *John gave Mary a book and asked her to return it soon*, the pronoun *her* is marked with an accusative case which reference the r-expression *Mary* in the main clause by gender as well as grammatical function, that is, accusative/recipient. In languages that are rich in affixation such as Swahili, coindexing of class markers on verbal stems is an example of late system morpheme. For example,

(23)

Ki*tabu* ***ki****dogo* ***ki****-ta-nunu-l-iw-a*
CL7.SG-book CL7.SG-small CL7-TENSE-buy-APP-PASSIVE-FV
'The book will be bought'

In (23) the classifier affix *ki-* on verb phrase goes out of its maximal projection VP to receive class marker denoted by the NP head book. The *ki-* marked on the adjectival modifier *kidogo* 'small' is however, an early system morpheme since it is tied to its head and occur in the same phrase structure as their head. Its class marking is derived from the head. In other words, lemma pointing to them are activated when the intention of the speaker points to the content morpheme *kitabu* 'book'.

2.4 Method and Procedure

2.4.1 Introduction

The fieldwork for this study took place in subaltern slums of Nairobi Eastlands, popularly known as "*Eastlando*" by the locals, during the period extending from August 2018 to December 2019. Eastlands is one of the historically marginalized urban areas in

Nairobi. Before independence, there was residential segregation of Nairobi metropolitan with the more residents of British and Asian descent occupying the affluent leafy suburbs of western side of the capital while Africans settling to the eastern side, a phenomenon that is still evident in today's city's structural design. Increased urbanization in the early 60's, saw many Africans emigrate from their rural homes to Nairobi in search for jobs and greener pastures. However, upon arriving many did not secure jobs. The high cost of living in the city left them with no option but to occupy the informal settlements in the Eastern side of Nairobi, currently Eastlands. *Eastlando* is a low-income area accommodating mostly low cadre laborers and small-scale businessmen and women. The area houses close to 988000 people based on 2019 census report. Eastlands is composed of approximately 25 residential *Estates*[20] . Majority of these estates are integrated with speakers from different ethnolinguistic backgrounds. Park (2018) notes "As Nairobi's African population grew, Eastlands's estates gradually became divisionalized according to their residents' ethnic origin. The Gikuyu, who moved into Nairobi from surrounding districts, and constituted the majority, mainly settled in Bahati and Kariokor, whereas the major ethnic group in *Makongeni* and *Kaloleni* was Luo" (p.695). Based on my own observation, sub-sections of estates like *Shauri Moyo*, *Kaloleni,* and *Bahati*, were exclusively occupied by speakers affiliated to one ethnic community.

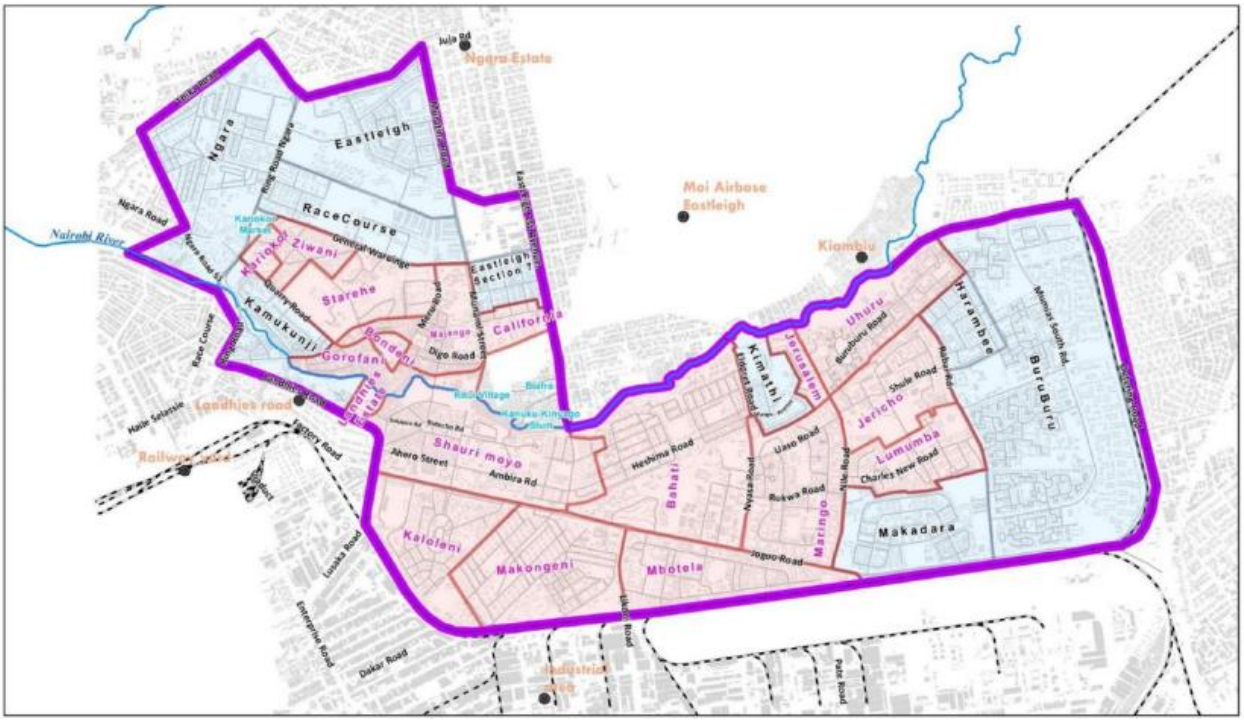
While Sheng is widely spoken in Nairobi and its proximal towns, Eastlands is believed to be the cradle of this code (Bosire 2018; Osinde & Abdulaziz 1997; Spyropoulos 1987). It is also one of the linguistically diverse areas within Nairobi as it comprises of speakers of all ages including second and third generation who are native

[20] Residential housings in Eastlands

Speakers of Sheng (Kaviti 2015; Ferrari 2014). The variety of Sheng spoken in this location is presumed to be ‘original’ by many speakers of Sheng I interacted with. Linguistic innovations emerge from this area before they are transmitted to other areas of the city. This is much similar to Bailey et al. (1993) ‘wave theory’ where linguistic change originates from a highly linguistic context or speech community and spreads outwards. Eastlands is one such area where new words, phrases and linguistic innovations are invented and spread to other areas over time. In many cases, Sheng speakers in this area use Sheng features in all contexts with minimal restrictions compared to other areas. Active speakers of Sheng are predominantly men. While women speak and understand the language, they are cautious in the contexts they use the language.

Within the larger Eastlands, I earmarked 8 residential estates for my data collection. This include, Kariobangi South (KS), Majengo (MJ), Umoja (UJ), Uhuru (UH), Kaloleni(KL), Jerusalem,(JS) Bahati (BH) and Maringo(MR). Kayole (KY) and Kibera (KB), which lie a more distant from the main locality, were also surveyed for comparative purposes. The former 8 estates fall within the boundaries of Makadara and Pumwani constituencies.

In addition to individual interviews, we had 3 focus groups from Uhuru, Kayole and Kariobangi Souths. These groups served as main resource and platform for my ethnographic study.



Map 2.1 Nairobi Eastlands estates (source Nairobi Metropolitan Service Improvement program (NaMSIP)

2.4.2 Participants

I used posters and friendship networks to recruit participants from each of the locations mentioned above. The poster ad consisted of my appeal to speakers to participate in my study with a telephone number for them to text back or call. The choice of language in the poster was Sheng. I deliberately used Sheng to attract potential Sheng speakers. While it is possible that not all Sheng speakers can read and write, a larger population of Sheng speakers are literate with ability to read and write. It is worth noting that this approach did not draw up as many participants as earlier anticipated. However, the friendship networks yielded many participants. Friends whom I knew kept on referring to friends and their other friends.

For a consultant to be included into the study, they were to be; (1) current residents of Eastland, Nairobi, (2) fluent in Sheng, (3) aged between 18-60, (4) must have

lived in East Nairobi for at least 10 years by the time of the study and (5) not be part of vulnerable population at the time of the study.

My initial plan was to recruit 15 male and 15 female participants from each of the locations totaling to N=240. The population sample per each location was to be further sub-grouped according to age ranges of 19-35 and 36-60. The idea behind age-group subdivision was to investigate if there existed any dialectal or grammatical difference in the Sheng used by younger and older speakers. However, this initial plan did not materialize as there were first, very low enrollment of female participants and second, the population I met had an average age of 25. Many female speakers I approached for interview were not willing to participate in our study leaving us with a larger male population sample. One hundred and forty-one participants (M=120; F=21) aged between 18-60 years were interviewed.

In order to assess the extent to which Sheng has assumed new social functions and identities especially in the new millennium period, we conducted critical ethnographic interviews using 3 focus groups at their *bazes*[21] in the Nairobi Eastlands, that is, K-South, Uhuru and Kayole. I further interviewed 3 radio presenters and 1 DJ from Ghetto Radio, one of the local vernacular radio stations in Nairobi. Another data was collected on one upcoming music band of Gengetone in Kibera. The rationale behind this ethnographic was to analyze how linguistic practices in the area interact with each other in advancing their identity and status in Nairobi through use of Sheng. More of this is discussed in detailed in chapter 4.

[21] See chapter 4 for detailed definition and description of bazes

2.4.3 Data and procedure

The study sought to collect naturally occurring spoken data of Sheng in the aforementioned eight locations. My target data was naturally occurring bilingual/multilingual Projection of the Complementizer (CPs) units. The CP is generally a constituent unit in a syntactic phrase. It is "a syntactic structure expressing the predicate-argument structure of a clause, plus any additional structures needed to encode discourse-relevant structure and the logical form of that phrase" Myers-Scotton 2002:54). The CP is the highest unit projected by lexical elements. I use this CP as my unit of analysis for investigating structural realignment in Sheng. To further illustrate this type of bilingual CP, I provide an example below for illustration. For a structure to qualify as a bilingual CP it must demonstrate constituents which are truly in contact. For instance, in the bilingual CP example below, there are mixed elements from two different languages. First is the SUBJ Noun Phrase *Ni-*, Present tense morpheme *-na-*, CL8 NOM marker *vi-*, and content morpheme *-atu* 'shoe' which are all derived from Swahili. Second, is the VP *like*, possessive AdjP *your* and plural morpheme -s all derived from English.

Ni-na-like your vi-atu-s
1SG.SUBJ-PRS-like your CL8-shoe-PL
'I like your shoes'

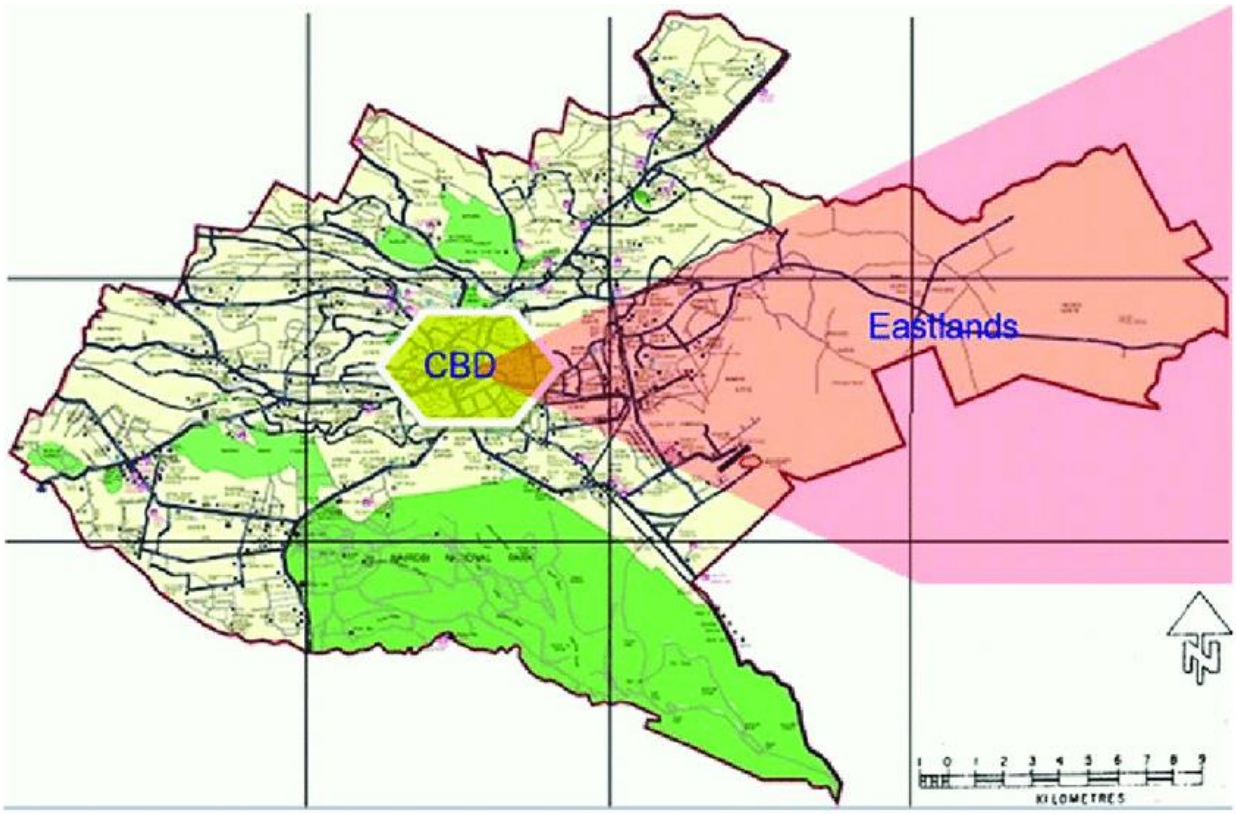
This construction is a good example of a bilingual CP involving mixed elements from Swahili and English that necessitate analysis of matrix-embedded language opposition and content-system morphemes opposition to understand restructuring process in language contact. In other words, it is a unit of analysis for examining how morphemes interact in the grammatical frame of a language that is under progressive restructuring.

I used a sociolinguistic approach (Labov 1972) to collect naturally occurring spoken Sheng data through interviews. My interviews were semi-structured in a way that allowed incorporation of the traditional sociolinguistic procedure (Labov 1972; Wolfram and Schilling, 2013) that focused on less careful or casual speech from the speaker. This was informed by Sankoff (1982:677) who suppose that "primary data for the study of linguistic structure, function, and change is the spoken language, more specifically spontaneous unreflecting speech in its natural context.". We aimed to minimize observer's paradox (Wolfram & Schillings, 2003:406) by following Labov's attention to speech approach. In his study of language, variation and change in Lower East Side of New York City, Labov (1966, 1972b) devised interviews that were designed to yield conversational data that is not affected by attention to speech. According to Labov (1972), casual speech tends to yield more naturalistic speech (vernacular) as compared to formal speech. Since consultants in this area are multilingual, it is easy to shift style or language if they are consciously aware that you are targeting their speech pattern or the way they speak. To avoid this scenario, we adopted Labov's casual speech model and engaged our consultants in topics that were relevant to their own experiences as well as topics modelled around emotional experiences that would detach them from paying attention to speech.

Additionally, I accessed written data through observation and photographing for comparative purposes. Since Sheng is a language that has no official written record (though there are now cases of dictionaries and online websites for Sheng) I wanted to capture how these bilingual CPs are also reflected by speakers in written form just for comparative analysis with my oral data. I captured written Sheng data from posters,

billboards, and graffiti from all the eight locations by taking still images. I incorporated print media from newspapers, ad brochures and matatu stickers, all of which had literature in Sheng. The rest of the data was accessed from online platforms including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube.

My approach to each of the interview varied depending on the level of familiarity. For those that I knew and at least we had had conversation before, the interview was spontaneous as soon as we met for the subsequent meetings. For those that were new to me and we were meeting for the first time, I first started by introducing myself and the study in general and invited them to participate in my study. With an exception of some female participants who declined to be interviewed majority of other participants especially men were generally warm and friendly and always wanted to engage in conversation about Sheng. Many of the youths who participated in the study were exuberant to participate, in fact they found it more fun talking about their own Sheng. Each interview took about 20-45 minutes, though this varied from one interview to another, that is, some interviews were longer than others.



Map 2.2: Map of Nairobi Eastlands adopted from (Makachia, 2013)

2.4.4 Data analysis

In order to analyze the grammatical structure of Sheng, I snipped sections of recorded data that involved unobtrusive conversation lengths of about 1-5 minutes. The audios were transferred to ELAN[22] for transcription and segmentation of different grammatical levels, mostly bilingual CPs. Using Windows Excel file, I compiled Sheng corpus of 336 bilingual CPs[23] for further word internal analysis.

[22] An open-source annotation software/tool l for audio and video recordings. Can be accessed at https://archive.mpi.nl/tla/elan

[23] These are not words but rather sample complementizer phrases that comprise of syntactic units for grammatical analysis.

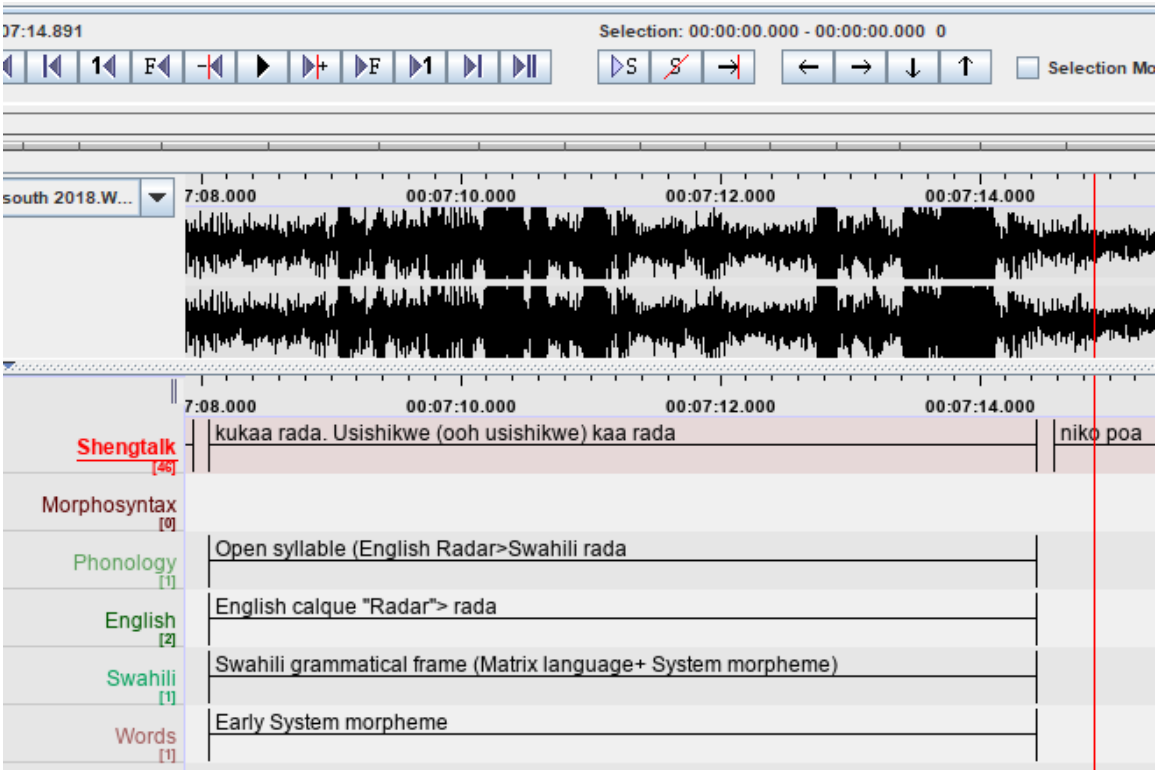


Image 1: ELAN annotation software page

In summary, this chapter aimed at first highlighting the two theories under which the present study is premised, that is, Grammaticalization theory (Heine & Kuteva 2002) and Matrix Language Turnover Hypothesis (Myers-Scotton 2002). The two theories are used to support characterization of Sheng's grammatical changes. Secondly, the chapter underscores the mechanism and approach I used to collect data for the present study. At the center of the data collection was critical ethnography which shall be discussed in detail in chapter 4. The next chapter examines grammatical structure of Sheng with primary focus on nominal and verbal morphology.

CHAPTER 3: SHENG GRAMMAR

3.1 An introduction

Scholarly works on the grammatical structure of Sheng are relatively few. Those available have overly focused on word formation processes and the codeswitching aspect of this variety. Spyropoulos (1987) was probably among the very first scholars to have delved into examining the typology of this urban vernacular. However, her study was centered around vocabulary choice and the social meaning attached to Sheng. According to Spyropoulos, Sheng acquires its lexicon from multiple languages in Kenya. She particularly documented 5 languages from which Sheng borrowed its lexicon. These included Swahili, English, Dholuo, Kamba and Gikuyu. All these languages were primary lexifiers for Sheng. Once borrowed, the lexemes were manipulated to fit into Sheng grammar.

Elsewhere, Ogechi (2005), came close to analyzing the lexical structure of Sheng. In his preliminary study on lexicalization of Sheng, he ascertained how word meaning is assigned in Sheng. While using a lexicalization approach, that is, how words are created to reference meaning, Ogechi examined how complex constructions of Sheng words at phonological and morphological levels are simplified or phonologically reduced to become simple single lexeme. Using corpus of 132 Sheng words, Ogechi also examined lexical patterns in sentence structure as well as their semantic distribution in terms of synonymity. He says, “that at lexical level, there is a high tendency of forming nouns followed by verbs and adjectives than any other parts of speech” (2005:352). These three major parts of speech are canonical to Sheng lexicon since they are content carriers when

compared to other grammatical forms. Out of the 132 lexical items analyzed, 93 were comprised of nouns, 37 of verbs and two of adjectives. Lexicalization of nouns followed certain patterns including first, syllable reversal, e.g. *uji* 'porridge' being pronounced as '*jiu*'. While the meaning of such words stays the same in both Swahili and Sheng, their wordforms are transformed by interchanging the syllable. It is also worth to not that syllable reversal takes place on all lexical forms regardless of the source. For example, a Sheng-derived word such as *finje* 'fifty' can undergo syllable reversal to become *njefi.*

The second word formation process he details is that of truncation. Once a word is borrowed from source language, it is bantunized and part(s) of the syllable, either initial or final, is clipped. The following is an example.

(24) English Swahili (bantunized) Sheng (truncated)
Motor [vehicle]→garimoto. →moti

Another common word-forming process in Sheng is coinage. This is where a new lexical form is innovatively created from existing words in the language without having to borrow externally. Sheng has a significant number of wordforms that are created through this process. For example,

(25)

Bazuu -'a well-built person/ a rich guy'
Sanse – 'police'
Shash – 'weed/marijuana'
Mboch – 'housekeeper'

While these words are Sheng's own innovations, they consist of mixed phonological structure compared to those of standard Swahili (to be discussed in the upcoming section). For example, Swahili, like many other Bantu languages, is known to be an open syllable structured language. In other words, syllables and words must end in a vowel. This is well exemplified by Swahili loan words highlighted below.

(26)

English	**Swahili**
Bus / bʌs/	basi /bɑsɪ/
school /sku:l/.	skuli /skulɪ/
syllable /'sɪlɑbəɬ/	silabi /sɪ'lɑbi/

In (26), all words derived from English obligatorily end in a vowel regardless of whether they are originally closed or open syllable. This is not the case with Sheng, however, as previously observed in (25). The Sheng lexicon appears to tolerate both open and closed syllable formations. For example, *shash* [ʃɑʃ] 'marijuana' and *mboch* [mbɔt͡ʃ] 'househelp' are examples of closed syllable words in Sheng. Whether this is a case of restructuring of syllable constraints in Sheng is a subject for further analysis.

On verbs, Ogechi (2005) notes that they have a higher level of stability. According to his corpus, 73% of verbs observed had no equivalent synonyms and none of the words had changed meaning over time. However, there existed a number of verbs that displayed multiple meanings as follows:

Table 3.0 Sheng forms with extended meanings

Word	Original source meaning	Sheng extended forms and meanings		
Manger	'eat' (French)	*manga* 'eat'	*manga* 'have sex'	*manga* 'beat'
wahi	'ever' (Swahili)	*wahi* 'outsmart'	'beat'	'get'
come	Come (English)	*muok* 'come'	'become rich'	

Verb synonymity is also possible. Ogechi compares word-pairs such as *-hanya*/*-katia*[24] →'seduce a girl', *-susu*/*-nyoora*[25]→urinate; -wahi/-samba 'beat up'

[24] *-hanya* 'cheat' is Sheng own innovation however a section of Sheng speakers are split on the actual meaning of the word as to whether it means 'to seduce a girl' or 'cheat on someone' by dating multiple partners. The actual usage is *hanya hanya* 'go cheating around'. *Katia* on the other hand is derived from Swahili applicative for 'cut'.

[25] *-susu* is derived from Kenyanese Swahili for 'urinate', *nyoora* (Sheng for urinate) on the other hand,is from local substrate language meaning to urinate. In author's native language the word for 'urinate' is *Okhwinyaala.*

Ogechi (2005) concludes by reviewing how Sheng borrows its verbal forms from other languages and how such verbs are adapted to sheng morphology. For example, 'chop' is an English verb that means to cut down into small pieces. When the same word is borrowed into Sheng, it assumes a different meaning of 'study'. Another notable word is *mada* which comes from English '*murder'*. When used in Sheng it takes on the different meaning of 'finish'. Based on Ongechi's data, adjectives were insignificant.

Other linguistic areas of Sheng that have attracted scholarly attention include Sheng morphology and phonology (Bosire, 2008), Sheng as mixed language (Rudd 2008), and a basic characterization of Sheng lexicon (Kangethe-Iraki, 2004).

This dissertation seeks to extend on prior findings, as articulated in previous studies, by adding robust corpus of contemporary Sheng not only to review basic grammatical structure of this variety but also to situate it within existing theoretical frameworks to understand how Sheng grammar is influenced as a result of language contact. Furthermore, the study will extensively evaluate the lexical, nominal and verbal morphology of Sheng with primary goal of characterizing its typology.

As aforementioned, Sheng is a product of language contact situation. Its grammar and structure are highly characterized by classic codeswitching and borrowing. However, there are salient structural changes informed by reanalysis of forms and new innovations at both the lexical and morphosyntactic levels. Sheng exemplifies a composite grammatical frame influenced by its speaker's knowledge of both Swahili, the lexifier language, and other source languages. The following is a sample Sheng sentence involving CS and code-mixing between English and Swahili.

(27)

a) *Na mii wa-see wa-me-ni-greet tu na left..*
And 1SG POSS CL2PL-guy CL2PL-TAM-1SG.OBJ-greet just and left
'And as for me, guys have just greeted me with left (hand)'

b) *ee u-si-ni-gotee na left hiyo-hiyo ni swara*
Ok 2SG.ACC-NEG-1SG.OBJ-greet and left DEM-DEMO BE antelope
'Yeah, don't greet me with left (hand) because that is bad lack'

As observed in (27a-b), Sheng borrows its lexical input from multiple languages including Swahili, English, and indigenous languages as well as its own internal innovations. Borrowed morphemes are first manipulated[26] to fit into Sheng's grammatical frame. The surface morpheme [*mii]* 'me' is adopted from English as the direct object of the verb. However, it undergoes phonological manipulation where the final vowel is elongated. The wordform '*wasee*' consists of Swahili bound morpheme /wa-/ which represents 1SG PL for the class 2 group of nouns. The root morpheme /-see/ 'guy' is derived from Swahili root /-zee/ 'old' but undergoes both semantic and phonological reanalysis to change in meaning and pronunciation. First, the sound [z] in Swahili change to [s] in Sheng and the meaning of the root transforms from 'old' in Swahili to meaning 'young' in Sheng.

In (27b) the word phrase *u-si-ni-gotee* 'don't greet me' consist of Swahili inflectional morphemes as indicated with a Sheng root *-got-* 'greet' a product of Sheng innovativeness. Therefore, it is evident that the internal word structure of Sheng involves content and system morphemes outsourced from multiple languages. Sheng also has idiomatic expressions that are solely confined within the cultural norms and oral history of its speakers. The phrase '*hiyo ni swara*' is a Sheng idiomatic expression common among the subaltern youths that reference 'bad luck'. For instance, if one was to meet an

[26] This can be phonological or morphological

antelope as the first encounter in the morning, it translates to a misfortune or other bad omens as the day progresses. So, Sheng speakers have grammatical knowledge that is shared with complex meanings that would not be easily deciphered by either Swahili or other languages that it borrows from.

3.2 Lexical morphology

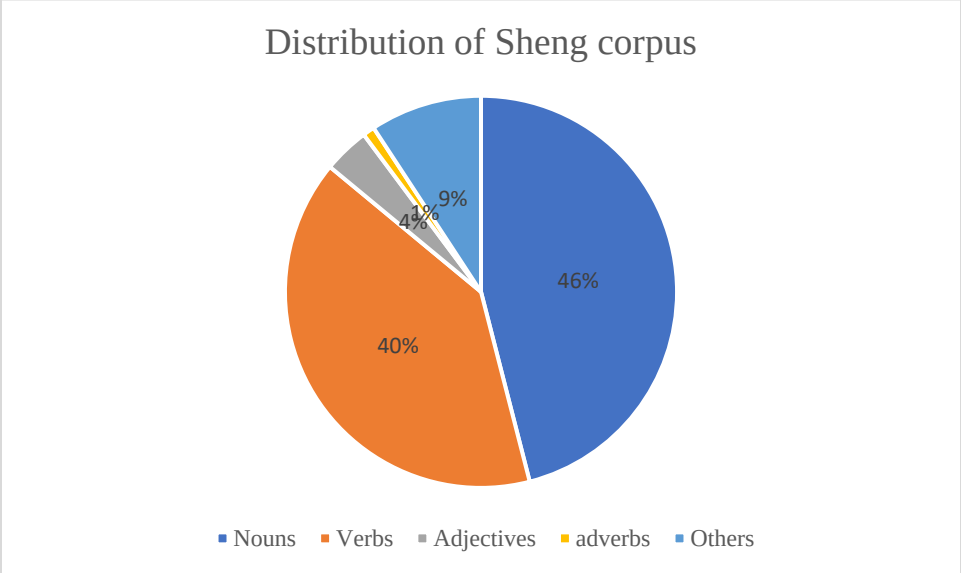
In order to examine the internal structure of Sheng words, I compiled a corpus of 321 Sheng words as used by fluent speakers of Sheng in the Eastlands slums of Nairobi. The words were borrowed from interview conversations with Sheng speakers as well as commercials and ads. Another portion of words was also derived from Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram posts. The majority of the Sheng corpus comprised of nouns and verbs with adjectives coming a distance third. Only 1 per cent featured adverbs. See figure 3.2 below. This is in line with hierarchies of borrowability which suggests that open content morphemes like verbs, adjectives and nouns are more susceptible to borrowing than closed system morphemes such as pronouns and coordinating conjunctions ((Whitney, 1881; Haugen, 1950b; and Muysken, 1981b) as cited by Winford, 2003). Winford (2003) contends that the easy accessibility of content morphemes over system morphemes can be attributed to several reasons. First, their subsystem as part of a language grammar is not as tightly constrained as that of grammatical forms. Secondly, their open endedness of these categories in the target language affords them a higher receptibility. Furthermore, these items occur regularly in isolated environments where they can be easily borrowed. On the contrary, grammatical words are highly structured and constrained which makes them less susceptible to

borrowing. Muysken (1981b) suggests the following hierarchy of borrowability with nouns being highly susceptible while subordinating conjunctions being least borrowable.

Figure 3.1: Borrowability scale (Muysken 1981b).
Nouns→adjectives→verbs→preposition→coordinating conjunctions →quantifies →determiners→free pronouns→clitic pronouns→subordinating conjunctions

Slightly contract to Muysken (1981), Winford (2003) argues that words which assign semantic roles such as prepositions and verbs, are more constrained and resist borrowing due to their complexity when compared to free forms such as nouns. Winford further notes that morphological and syntactic properties of words may also conspire to promote or prevent borrowing. This may account for why lexical types such as verbs and prepositions, which assign theta roles to other arguments tend not to be easily borrowed as nouns would do. My rate of borrowability for Sheng, however, tends to align with Muysken's criteria with content morphemes ahead of the rest with nouns at forty six percent, verbs at forty percent and adjectives at a distant third with 4 percent.

Figure 3.2: Sheng rate of borrowability based on parts of speech



3.2.1 Word formation process in Sheng

Sheng borrows largely from other languages. Katamba and Stonham (2006) agree that languages build their vocabulary by 'pillaging' vocabularies of other languages they are in contact with. Content morphemes are borrowed at a higher rate than system morphemes. Word formation processes, in part, are informed by phonotactic constraints which conspire to maintain well formedness of foreign words when adapted to the Sheng grammatical frame. Loan words undergo both morphological and phonological processes to fit into Sheng morphosyntax, a process Abdulazi and Osinde (1997) calls 'Shengnization'. Shengnization gives foreign words a Sheng identity in terms of form and sound. The following are morphophonological word formation processes forms undergo when borrowed into Sheng.

3.2.1.1 Truncation

Truncation is the trimming of word forms through deletion of phonological or morphological units at the end of a word. Sheng speakers truncate many of the borrowed words to give them Sheng identity or make them sound Sheng like. According to Bosire (2008) truncation is motivated by the need to disguise the pronunciation of a word but not necessarily to make the shorter. A word many undergo several morphological processes after truncation to make it adaptable to Sheng phonology. For instance, many borrowed words from Swahili are shortened at the end and modified by other final sounds such as /i/ /ʃ/ or /o/ through suffixation.

(28)

Original	**Source**	**Sheng**	**Gloss**
Mtoto	Swahili	mtoi	child
mtumba	Swahili	mtush	secondhand clothes
Trouser	English	Trao	Trouser

Mrembo	Swahili	mresh	beautiful woman
Negotiation	English	nego	speak
Nakuru	Maasai	Naks	Proper noun (Nakuru town)

Truncation in Sheng appears to take different shapes and possibilities. Consider the following.

3.2.1.1.1 Truncation of final sounds

In this type of truncation, final syllables, and suffixes, if any, are clipped. For instance, the word 'negotiation' in English is borrowed in Sheng and truncated to *nego* with a new meaning of 'speak'. Other examples are highlighted in (29) below.

(29)

Source	**original**	**Sheng**	**Gloss**
Swahili	mimi	mi	'I'
Unknown	shashola	shash	'weed'
Swahili	utapeli	utape	'trickery'
English	government	gava	'government'

3.2.2.1.2 Truncation of final syllable(s) with suffixation

Some words once borrowed are truncated and a new sound is suffixed to give it Sheng phonetic shape. Consider the following words.

(30)

Source	**Original**	**Sheng**	**Gloss**
a) English	Virgin	Vajo	virgin
b) Swahili	darasa	daro	class
c) Swahili	mrembo	mresh	beautiful woman
d) English	Mother	madhe	mother
e) Swahili	mzazi	mzae	parent

Based on examples in (30), it appears that the final syllables of outsourced words are truncated and suffixed with -o as observed in (30a-b). It is not clear why the final vowel in original words is deleted but one could argue that truncation targets sounds or phonetic materials after the CVC root. For instance, the words *darasa* 'class' and *virgin* undergo truncation process highlighted in table 3.1.

Table 3.1
Truncation process of the final syllable (with suffixation)

Input	**Deletion of post VC material**	**Vowel suffixation**	**output**
Darasa	dar	dar+o	daro
Virgin [vɑdʒɪn]	Virg [vɑdʒ]	virg[vɑdʒ]+o	Vajo [vɑdʒo]

The word *mzae* ‘parent’ in (30) appears to be an outlier here. This could be attributed to moraic nature of a minimal word or syllable. Since Swahili word *m.za.zi* ‘parent’ has three syllables, truncation tends to target the CVC syllable by deleting both final C and post CVC material -*i.*

Besides -o, other dummy suffixes include consonant -*sh* [ʃ] and -*ny* [ɲ]. Many Sheng words use affix -*sh* as dummy suffix after truncation. Consider the following:

(31)

Swahili	**Sheng**	**Gloss**
Maringo	Marish	‘place name’
Mrembo	mresh	‘beautiful woman’
Mtumba	mtush	‘second hand clothes’
Gikomba	Gikosh	‘place name’
Kinyanjui	Kinyash	‘proper name’

Elsewhere, the dummy -*ny* is used. Consider the following.

(32)

Original	**Source**	**Sheng**	**Gloss**
Uhuru	Swahili	Uhunye	‘Proper name’
Sponsor	English	Sponyo	‘sugar daddy’
Mkate	Swahili	mkanyo	‘bread’
Matako	Swahili	matanye	‘buttocks’
Ndizi	Swahili	ndinyo	‘banana’

3.2.2.1.3 Truncation of initial syllable

Some loans words are truncated at word initial. While such words exist, they were rare in my corpus data. The English word ‘tomorrow’ is truncated to *moro* in Sheng. Another word is *Jerusalem* (place name) which is truncated to *Salem*.

3.2.2.1.4 Truncation of both initial and final syllable with affixation

Words denoting place or location can be truncated at both word initial and word final with addition of dummy affixes. Consider the following.

(33)

Place names in Swahili	**Place names in Sheng**
Kisumu	Odhush/Odhumo
Kaloleni	Ololo
Kenyatta	Onyato
Makongeni	Okong’o

Other clipping examples of this type included English ‘wallet’ which is truncated and subsequently suffixed as *olenje* in Sheng. From the above examples, it appears that truncation reduces the multi-syllabic word of the source language to a CVC root which is simultaneously prefixed and suffixed with dummy affixes to give them Sheng phonetic shapes. Whether the phonetic choice of the vowel suffixed at the beginning and the end is o-, is subject to further analysis since words such as *olenje* ‘wallet’ display an -e suffix. It has been argued in literature that the final suffix is lengthened to compensate for deleted syllables (Bosire, 2008). However, I did not find this to be the case in my analysis of Sheng spoken in the Eastlands. It should be noted that not all place names are truncated in this version. Others undergo different type of truncation. For instance, *Rongai* ‘proper name’ becomes *Ronga,* Kibera ‘proper name’ becomes *kibich*, Nairobi is *Nai* and so forth.

3.2.2.1.5 Other truncation cases

Some truncation processes do not conform to either of the above-mentioned types. They display random behavior in how words re truncated and affixed. For instance, city names in Kenya are truncated and affixed differently. Kericho is truncated and affixed as *Orich*, Nakuru becomes *Naks* with the final syllables being deleted and affixed with -s. Eldoret becomes *eldy* (pronounced as [eldi]). Some other neighborhoods in the city are reduced to only one syllable. For instance, Kariobangi becomes *K* (pronounced as [kei]) and Dandora becomes *D* (pronounced as [di].

3.2.2.2 Compounding

This is a word formation process that involves combination of roots. For instance, the free morpheme *black* may combine with *board* to form a compound word *blackboard*. Sheng also characterizes a similar process in creation of new words where two independent words join to form a new word. Examples of such include, *yutdem* which is a combination of *yut,* 'youth', and *dem*, 'female' or 'woman' to reference a young woman. Another compounded word is *yutman* which combines *yut* 'youth' and *man*, to refer to a 'male youth' or 'a young man.' Another Sheng compound is *nyamchom* 'barbecue' which is derived from two Swahili words *nyama* 'beef' and *choma* 'roast'. *Gengeton* 'a variety of local hip hop music' is made of *genge* which refers to Kenyan dancehall music and the English *tone* which refers to sound pitch.

Carstairs-McCarthy (2002) also adds that a smaller category of phrasal words may function as compound words. These types of compound words involve items that have the internal structure of phrase but structurally function as words. The big question

here is how can one tell the difference between a compound word or a phrase? Carstairs-McCarthy responds to this as follows.

> A definite answer is not always possible, but there are enough clear cases to show that the distinction between compounds and phrases is valid. Consider the expression a green house, with its literal meaning, and a greenhouse, meaning a glass structure (not usually green in color!) where delicate plants are reared. There is a difference in sound corresponding to the difference in meaning: in the first expression the main stress is on house, while in the second the main stress is on green. This pattern of semantic contrast between expression stressed in different places is quite common. (Castairs-McCarthy 2002:59)

For example, 'toy factory' when stressed on the second word, that is, factory, they are phrases but when the stress falls on the first word, that is, 'toy' it is a compound word. Another way of making this distinction is through semantic criterion where *TOY factory* is 'a factory that is a toy' while *toy FACTORY* is 'a factory where toys are manufactured with the former representing a phrase and the latter referencing a compound word. Carstairs-McCarthy, however, cautions against relying on sematic criterion since meaning can be "more or less idiosyncratic" (2002:60). Similarly, Sheng uses semantic criterion to characterize similar phrases such as *odi wa Maranga* which is a particular band of musicians as opposed to *Odi* who belongs to *Murang'a* (name of a county). Other similar compound words include *cheza chini* 'ignore' or 'hide' which combines the verb *cheza* 'play' and adverb *chini* 'down'.

3.2.2.3 Syllable reversal

Also known as metathesis, syllable reversal is a prominent word formation process in Sheng. A morpheme or a syllable in an existing word may be reversed or switched to give it a new phonological twist. Given that Sheng developed as a secret language, used by young speakers when they wanted to hide meaning from older folks or outgroup members. Therefore, syllable reversal is one way of making the language

mysterious and exclusive to only members of the in-group. Table 3.2 provides examples of such metathesized words.

Table 3.2
Examples of metathesized words from Swahili to Sheng

Original word	**Source**	**Sheng**	**Gloss**
hakuna	Swahili	*hanaku*	'There is not'
junior	English	*mnaju*	'junior'
mother	English	*mdhama*	'mother'
come	English	*muok*	'come'
jioni	Swahili	*manijio*	'evening'
njumu	Sheng	*munju*	'shoe'

It appears that this word formation process follows a specific pattern. For bisyllabic words, the syllables are reversed from right to left. For instance, in the Swahili word *ku.bwa* 'big' the syllables are reversed to *bwa.ku* in Sheng. For tri-syllabic words, however, the initial syllable is retained, and the remaining syllable are swapped. For example, in the Swahili word *hakuna* 'there is not' the first syllable *ha-* is retained and the subsequent two syllables are switched, that is, *-ku.na.* becomes *-na.ku.* resulting to the word *ha.na.ku.* It appears that metathesis targets content morphemes and not system morphemes. However, more research is needed to verify if this is the case for all words. Elsewhere, Kanana and Ny'onga (2019) note that for cases where the reversed word may resemble an existing word in the source language, modification is invoked to make a distinction. For instance, they provide a Sheng example of *yape* 'also' which is derived from Swahili *pia* [pija] 'also'. The word *yape* undergoes syllable modification where the final vowel /i/ is changed to /e/ to avoid formation of *yapi* 'which.PL' in Swahili. So, the original word *pia* pronounced as [pija] first becomes *yapi* and undergoes final syllable modification to become *yape.*

Syllable reversal may also be accompanied by suffixation of a dummy affix. It is not apparent why this happens, but literature has it that it gives Sheng speakers a different style of speaking that accords them unique identity (Kanana and Ny'onga, 2019). The common dummy suffix that is used with metathesized words is /-z/. Examples observed from my data involve the following:

(34)

Original	**source language**	**Sheng**	**Gloss**
Mtu yangu	Swahili	Mtunguyaz	'my friend'
Mlevi	Swahili	mvilez	'a drunkard'

3.2.2.4 Extension of meaning

Existing words or those from source languages may assume new functions once they have been borrowed into Sheng. For instance, the word *wainame* which is a Swahili word for 'bend.PL' is used by Sheng speakers to connote 'to have sex'. The following are further examples from my corpus.

(35)

Word	**Source**	**original meaning**	**Sheng meaning**
Chora	Swahili	write	escape
Moto	Swahili	fire	extremely good/beautiful
Iva	Swahili	ripe	good looking
Sleki	English (slack)	laziness	absent minded
Chrome	English	metal type	alcohol
Matawi	Swahili	leaves	khat
Chorea	Swahili	draw.APPL	hibernate

Some Sheng words have also taken on new meanings. A notable example is *manga* which had an original meaning of 'to eat' but has so far reanalyzed to mean 'to have sex'. The word *buda* was once used in specific contexts to refer to a father or male parent but presently it refers to any male.

3.2.2.5 Reduplication

Reduplication is one of the widely studied areas in phonology and morphology. An affix or a segment of the word is realized by phonological material borrowed from its base. For instance, in Warlpiri, an Australian language, the word *kurdu* 'child' can be reduplicated to a new form *kurdukurdu* with the plural meaning of child, that is, *children*. The copied form can function as an affix with morphological function of pluralization, causativization, or augmentation among others. Reduplication can be partial or complete/total. Total reduplication involves copying of the entire segment of the base. Partial reduplication on the other hand involves partial copying of the base. This can be the prefix, root, or suffix. The color black in Maori for example is 'pango' and any shade of black or blackish is 'papango' (Katamba & Stonham 2006). Here the first syllable of the base is the only segment that is copied to form a new word that partially related to the original word in meaning.

Like many other Bantu languages, Sheng displays word formation through reduplication. The output of reduplication may consist of meaning that is related to the original form or completely different. For instance, *hanyahanya* 'cheating with multiple partners' is a reduplicated word that is derived from Sheng word *hanya 'cheat'.* Another word is *teketeke* 'quick/fast' which is derived from *teke* 'a kick' (probably of a donkey or horse). The meaning of reduplicated form may be analogical to the swift nature of a donkey's kick. Both of these are examples of total reduplication in Sheng. *Mutaratara* 'plan' is a case of partial reduplication in Sheng. The word is borrowed from Kikuyu word *mutara* meaning 'plan'. Another reduplicated form is *kimandazimandazi* 'take someone for granted'. *Mandazi* is a Swahili word for 'deep fried bun'. Sheng borrows

this form and reduplicates, most of the base form. T the meaning is the same in both Kikuyu and Sheng, the reduplicated form is common among Sheng speakers.

3.2.2.6 Idiomatic expressions

Sheng is overly expressive when it comes to figurative language. Idiomatic forms are ubiquitous in spoken Sheng. Many of them exist in the form of phrasal verbs which Sheng uses to restructure meaning using poetic license (Bosire, 2008). My corpus reveals that Sheng speakers may use certain expressions to describe situations and behaviors that normal words cannot adequately express. Some of the messages coded in idiomatic expression relate to content such as sex, drug use, *baze* 'community of practice' talk among other basic communications. The following are examples of commonly used expressions.

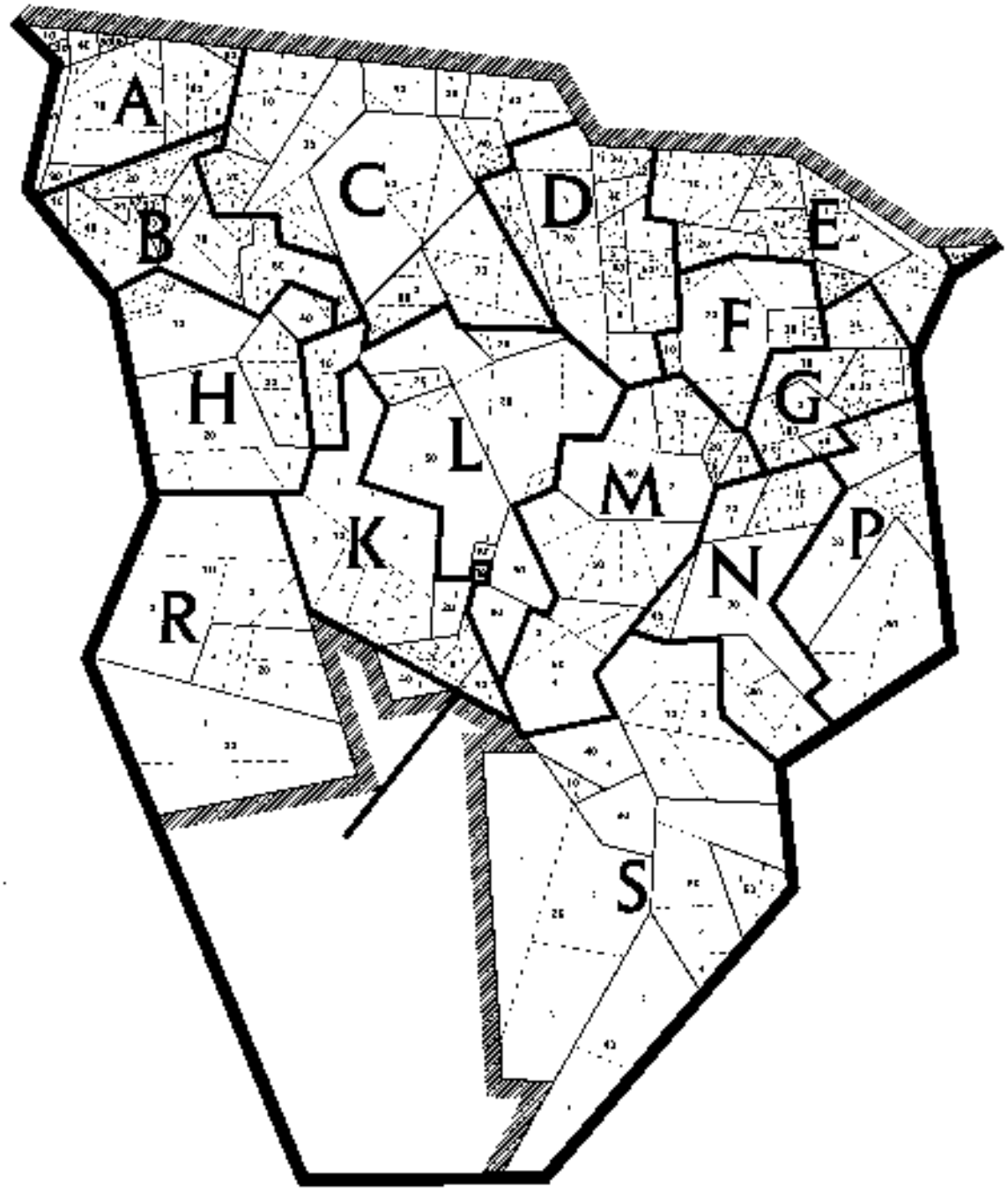
(36)

Idiom	**Literal translation**	**Sheng meaning**
kaa rada	seat on radar	be informed/stay informed
cheza kama wewe	Play/dance like yourself	deal with a situation
piga maji	Beat water	get drunk
Piga kuni	Beat firewood	have sex
cheza chini	play on the ground	hide a secret
tupa mbao	throw the wood	lose

The phrasal verb *kaa rada* 'be attentive' for instance, is derived from the context of operating the ship where the captain has to stay up to date with the radar to know his position and surrounding. Sheng borrows the word together with its contextual reference to assume the meaning of 'being informed' or 'aware of one's surroundings'. The youths in the inner city would use this phrase to warn their colleagues of a looming danger or threat. It is common to find police patrolling the neighborhood and, in most cases, abusing and brutalizing the innocent youth. A language that codes messages to warn them of the impending danger is inevitable.

3.3 Sheng Morphosyntax

In order to understand the typological distribution of Sheng, a thorough analysis of its nominal and verbal morphology is invoked here. Like any other Bantu language, Sheng echoes the noun class system of its sister languages like Swahili and other Niger-Congo languages. The Bantu linguistic group comprise of hundreds of languages with close to 220 million speakers. Congo-Kinshasa is one country that is estimated to have highest number of Bantu languages. Swahili is one of the languages with the highest number of speakers. Guthrie (1948) classified Bantu languages into 15 groups running from A-S as highlighted in map 3.1.



Map 3.1: Bantu zonal classification (Lowe and Shadeberg 1996)

Swahili is categorized into G group (G40 to be precise). Other languages highlighted in Kenya include Kamba (E55) and Kikuyu (E51). Maho (2003) updated Guthrie's classification by including other dialectal variations that were omitted by

Guthrie. According to Rudd (2008), such dialects included Sheng (G40E) in which he notes that the initial letter and number represent original Guthrie classification and the upper-case E denoting a new language variety.

Bantu languages share common grammatical features. One of these features is the noun class system. Nouns in a given language are grouped into a closed set of class that are either constrained grammatically by inflectional affixes that are marked on adjectives, verbs, adverbs, and other grammatical elements (Contini-Morava, 2000). While the noun class system is not universal, it is common to Bantu languages. Based on Meinhoff (1932), Bantu languages have a total of 22 nominal classes. Katamba (2003) notes that 23 groups of nouns have been reconstructed from Proto-Bantu. However, modern languages of Bantu descent have "between 21 for Ganda (the highest) and zero for Komo (D23) with Kako (A93) having only three classes" (Katamba, 2003:108). A significant number of Bantu languages have a reduced number of classes as analyzed by different historical linguists. Bleek (1869) as cited by Katamba (2003) assigned 12 nominal groups from which many different Bantu languages have developed their classes. In the next section I provide a comparative analysis of nominal and verbal morphology between Sheng and its lexifier language Swahili to elucidate on structural differences.

3.3.1 Nominal morphology

The morphosyntactic structure of Sheng can be characterized by comparing it with that of Swahili. According to existing scholarship, it is argued that Sheng derives its grammatical frame mainly from its principal lexifier language, that is, Swahili (Myers-Scotton, 2002,; Abdulazi and Osinde, 1997; Rudd, 2008; Kaviti, 2015). Swahili is one of the Sabaki subgroup of the Northern Coast Bantu. It is a lingua franca in several countries

in East and Central Africa. Many speakers of Swahili are also fluent in other languages. The Swahili noun class system is structured around duality of singular and plural forms. For example, if class 1 comprise a set of singular forms, class 2 will have their plural counterparts. Nouns in class 3 make their plural in class 4 and so forth. According to Contini-Morava (2003) Swahili noun classes are characterized by prefixes attached to the root of the noun. These prefixes occur in pairs of singular and plural. For instance, **M**-toto (SG) => **Wa**-toto (PL). The **M** signals class 1 nominal marker and **Wa** class 2 nominal marker. The other classification Contini-Morava posit is the grammatical agreement between subjects and their pronouns, demonstratives, verb arguments and other coreferential elements within syntactic structure. Table 3.3. and 3.4 highlight different grammatical concords that mark agreement with subjects in different classes in Swahili and Sheng respectively.

Table 3.3
Swahili noun class and concordial affixes

Class	**Nom**	**Noun**[27]	**SUBJ**	**OBJ**	**ADJ**	**GEN**	**PREP**	**REL**	**Demonstratives**		
									Prox	Ref	Dist
1	m-	mtoto ‘child’	a-/yu-	-m-	m-	w-	w-	-ye	huyu	huyo	yule
2	wa-	mtoto ‘children’	wa-	-wa-	wa-	w-	w-	-o	hawa	hao	wale
3	m-	mti ‘tree’	u-	-u-	m-	w-	w-	-o	huu	huo	ule
4	mi-	miti ‘trees’	i-	-i-	mi-	y-	y-	-yo	hii	hiyo	ile
5	j-/ji- / ∅	jiwe ‘stone’	li-	-li-	ji-	l-	l-	-lo	hili	hilo	lile
6	ma-	mawe ‘stones’	ya-	-ya-	ma-/me-	y-	y-	-yo	haya	hayo	yale
7	ki-	kijiko ‘spoon’	ki-	-ki-	ki-	ch-	ki-	-cho	hiki	hicho	kile
8	vi-	vijiko ‘spoons’	vi-	-vi-	vi-	vy-	vi-	-vyo	hivi	hivyo	vile

[27] These nouns include their nominal prefix. But original nouns are bare e.g. -toto ‘child’, -ti ‘tree’, -jiko ‘spoon’ etc

9	n-/ny-/m-/Ø	Nyundo ‘hammer’	i-	-i-	N	y-	i-	-yo	hii	hiyo	ile
10	n-/ny-/m-/Ø	Nyundo ‘hammers’	zi-	-zi-	Ø	z-	zi-	-zo	hizi	hizo	zile
11	u-	Uteo ‘basket’	u-	-u-	m-	w-	u-	-o	huu	huo	ule
14	u-	Uzuri ‘goodnes’	u-	-u-	m-	w-	u-	-o	huu	huo	ule
15	Ku-	-tembea Walking(N)	ku-	-ku-	ku	kw-	ku-	-ko	huku	huko	kule
16	pa-	Pahali ‘place’	ku-	-pa-	pa	p-	pa-	-po	hapa	hapo	pale
17	Mu-	Mahali ‘place’	mu-	-m-	m-	mw-	mu/m-	-mo	humu	humo	mle
18	Ku-	Kuhali ‘place’	ku-	-ku-	ku-	kw-	ku-	-ko	huku	huko	kule

Table 3.4
Sheng noun class and concordial affixes

Class	**NOM**	**Noun**	**SUBJ**	**ADJ**	**OBJ**	**POSS**	**PREP**	**REL**	**Prox**	**ref**	**Distal**
1	m-	*mtoi* ‘child’	a-	m-	-ye-	w-	w-	-ye	huyu	huyo	yule
2	wa-	*watoi* ‘children’	wa-	Wa-	-wa-	w-	w-	-o	hawa	hao	wale
3	m-	mti ‘tree’	i	m-/Ø	Ø	w-	y-	Ø	huu	huo	ule
4	mi-	mamiti ‘trees’	zi	Ø	Ø	y-	z-	Ø	hizi	hizo	zile
7	ki-	*kijiko* ‘spoon’	i	Ki-/Ø	Ø	y-	y-	Ø	hii	hiyo	ile
8	vi-	*mavijiko* ‘spoons’	zi	Ø	Ø	z-	z-	Ø	hizi	hizo	zile
9	n-/ny-/ m-/Ø	*Kalamu* ‘pen’	i	Ø	Ø	y-	i-	Ø	hii	hiyo	ile
10	n-/ny-/ m-/Ø	*Makalamu* ‘pens’	zi	Ø	Ø	z-	z-	Ø	hizi	hizo	zile
11	u-	Ukuta ‘wall’	i-	Ø-	Ø	y-	z-	Ø	hii	hiyo	ile
12	ka-	Kadem ‘Woman’	ka-	ka-	-ka-	k-	ka-	-ko	haka	hako	kale
13	tu-	*Tudem* ‘women’	tu-	tu-	-tu-	tw-	Tu-	-tw	hutu	hutwo	tule
15	Ku-	*Kutembea* ‘walk.N’	ku-	Ø	-ko-	kw-	ku-	-ko	huku	huko	kule

16	pa-	Pahali DF ‘location’	ku-	pa-	-po-	p-	Pa-	∅	hapa	hapo	pale
17	ku-	*Kuhali* ‘location. IND’	ku-	ku-	-ko-	kw-	ku-	∅	huku	huko	kule

3.3.1.1 Noun Class 1 and 2

Going by Contini-Morava’s semantic classification, noun class in Swahili is denoted by nominal prefix attached to the stem of the noun both for singular forms and plural forms. Noun class 1 and 2 typically consists of nouns that reference animates. The nominal prefix for class one is M- / MW-while that for class two is WA. Consider (37) below.

(37)

SG	**PL**	**Gloss**
mchezaji	**wa**chezaji	player
mwalimu	**wa**limu	teacher
mtoto	**Wa**toto	child
mwimbaji	**wa**imbaji	singer

Nominal prefixes for singular form oscillate between M- and MW-. M is attached to roots that mostly start with a consonant while MW attaches to stems that have a vowel. This however is not the case for plural forms which all take the WA- prefix. However, not all nouns in this class characterize these prefixes. Consider the following nouns.

(38)

SG	**PL**	**Gloss**
a)baba	baba	father
b)mbu	mbu	mosquito
c)ng’ombe	ng’ombe	cow
d)seremala	maseremala	carpenter
e)kiwete	viwete	disabled

While the nouns in (38) are classified in class 1/2, they appear not to follow the nominal classification like that highlighted in (37). This is clarified by Contini-Morava

who uses sentential concords to fix the difference observed between (37) and (38). Nouns in this class denote animate things. Their classification is well analyzed by observing grammatical agreements between subject nouns and other syntactic elements such as possessive pronouns, adjectives, demonstrative, verb arguments among others. Contini-Morava (1994) notes that animate grammatical prefixes index syntactic elements marking animate nouns. In other words, classification of Swahili noun class cannot only be marked by the nominal morphology but syntactic agreement as well. The sets of sentences in (39) makes this clear.

(39)

a) *M-zazi* *a-ta-fik-a* *kesho*
Nom.SG-parent CL1.SG-FUT-arrive-FV tomorrow.
'The parent will arrive tomorrow'

Wa-zazi *wa-ta-fik-a* *kesho*
Nom.SG-parent CL2PL-FUT-arrive-FV tomorrow
'Parents will arrive tomorrow'

b) Baba *a-ta-fik-a* *kesho*
Father(SG) CL1.SG-FUT-arrive-FV tomorrow
'Father will arrive tomorrow'

Baba *wa-ta-fik-a* *kesho*
Father (PL) CL2.PL-FUT-arrive-FV tomorrow
'Fathers will arrive tomorrow'

c) *Mbu* *a-me-m-uum-a* *m-toto*
Mosquito CL1.SG-PERF-OBJ.SG-bite NOM.SG-child
'A mosquito has bitten the child'

Mbu wa-me-wa-uma wa-toto
Mosquito.PL CL2.PL-PERF-OBJ.PL-bite NOM.PL-child
'The mosquitoes have bitten the child'

The noun stem *-zazi* 'parent' in (39a) takes nominal prefix m- in singular and wa- in plural. In the contrary, the subjects *Øbaba* 'father' and *Ømbu* 'mosquito' in (39b) and (39c) respectively appears to have Ø morph. This difference in nominal markers is

consolidated through grammatical concords between subject NPs and verbal phrase within the same syntactic construction. In (39a-c) all the subject NPs take the noun class agreement marker *a-* in singular and *wa-* in plural. This appears to be the default way of classifying nouns in Swahili. In this class set, the adjectival prefixes correspond with the nominal prefix, that is, M-/MW- for singular and WA- for plural. For instance, *Mwanafunzi **m**chafu* 'untidy (disorganized) students' vs *Wanafunzi **wa**chafu* 'untidy students'

Sheng appears to share similar noun distribution with Swahili for class 1/2 and 3/4. However, there are also glaring differences as it shall be highlighted in the upcoming sections. But first, let us consider the noun classification for Sheng and Swahili in this group.

(40)

Sheng			Swahili		
CL1	**CL2**	**Gloss**	**CL1**	**CL2**	**gloss**
Ø-Bazenga	ma-bazenga	'rich guy'	Ø-tajiri	ma-tajiri	'rich person'
M-zito	wa-zito	'well-built guy'	M-ratibu	wa-ratibu	'coordinator'
Ø-Safara	ma-safara	'poor'	m-gonjwa	wa-gonjwa	'sick'

In (40) above, nominal marking between Sheng and Swahili appears to be similar. It is not uncommon to find irregularity of nominal prefixes for Bantu languages in this class. For example, the *Ø/ma, m/wa* are evident in both languages for this class as observed in the data. Based on my Sheng corpus data, Sheng is in the process of regularizing the nominal markers for class 2 by using generic plural marker **ma-**. For nouns that take M- in class CL1/2, their plural is denoted by WA- nominal prefix. All other nouns in this set take MA- nominal prefix. Consider data below.

(41)

CL1 (SG)	**CL2 (PL)**	**Gloss**
M-denge	wa-denge	'women'

m-supa	wa-supa	‘beautiful woman’
Ø-mode	ma-mode	‘teacher’
Ø-mokoro	ma-mokoro	‘mother’
Ø-sanse	ma-sanse	‘police’
Ø-yutman	ma-yutman	‘youth (M)’ (cf yutdem (F))

Grammatical agreement in sentential constructions take on the a-/wa- prefixes. This is also the case with other grammatical elements such as subject agreement markers on VP, object markers and adjectival concords. Consider the examples below

(42)

Sheng

a) *M-see* *y-ule* *a-na-dishi*
CL.NOM-guy CL1.SG-DEM CL1.SUBJ-PRS-eat
‘That guy is eating’

Wa-see *wa-le* *wa-na-dishi*
CL2.PL-guy CL2.PL-DEM CL2.PL-PRS-eat
‘Those guys are eating’

b) *Y-ule* *konkodi* *ni* *m-fiam*
CL1.DEM conductor BE.PRS CL1.ADJ-bad
‘That conductor is bad’

Wa-le *ma-konkodi* *ni* *wa-fiam*
CL2.DEM CL10.PL-conductor BE.PRS CL2.ADJ-bad
‘Those conductors are bad’

Swahili

c) *M-zee* *yu-le* *a-na-kul-a*
CL1-old CL1.SG-DEM CL1.SUBJ-PRESENT-eat-FV
‘That old man is eating’

Wa-zee *wa-le* *wa-na-kul-a*
CL2-old CL2.SG-DEM CL2.SUBJ-PRESENT-eat-FV
‘Those old men are eating’

Demonstrative and subject prefixes grammatically agree with their respective subject nouns in this class pair for both Swahili and Sheng. In (42a-c), the demonstrative prefix

y-/wa and subject prefix **a-/wa** both agree with the subject nouns they modify, that is, *msee* ‘guy’, *konkodi* ‘conductor’ and *mzee* ‘old man’, the head of the subject phrase.

3.3.1.2 Noun class 3/4

The nominal affixes for class 3 and 4 are *m-* and *mi-* respectively for both Sheng and Swahili. However, Sheng appears to be transitioning to class set 9/10 where the plural is marked by class 5 nominal prefix *ma-*. For example

(43)

Sheng

SG	**PL**	**Gloss**
M-chongo	ma/mi-chongo	‘verbal insults’
M-tush	ma/mi-tush	‘secondhand clothes’
M-koko	ma/mi-koko	‘handcart’
M-hadhara	ma/mi-hadhara	‘problem’

Swahili

Mti	miti	‘tree’
Mpira	mipira	‘ball’
Mkebe	mikebe	‘tin’
Mpaipai	mipaipai	‘pawpaw tree’

Class 3/4 varies in a distinctive way between Sheng and Swahili when it comes to grammatical agreement with other syntactic elements within the same grammatical projection. Consider the following example.

(44)

Swahili

a) *M-tumba huu u-ta-nunu-li-w-a*
CL3-secondhand clothes DEM.CL 3 CL3.SUBJ.SG-FUT-Buy-APPL-PASS-FV
‘The secondhand clothe will be bought’

b) *Mi-tumba hii i-ta-nunu-li-w-a*
CL4-secondhand clothes DEM.CL 4 CL4.SUBJ.SG-FUT-Buy-APPL-PASS-FV
‘The secondhand clothes will be bought’

Sheng

c) *M-tush* *hii* *i-ta-buy-i-w-a*
CL3-secondhand clothes DEM.CL 3 CL3.SUBJ.SG-FUT-Buy-APPL-PASS-FV
'The secondhand clothe will be bought'

d)*Ma-mitush* *hizi* *zi-ta-buy-i-wa*
CL10-secondhand clothes DEM.CL 10 CL10.SUBJ.SG-FUT-Buy-APPL-PASS-FV
'The secondhand clothes will be bought'

The Swahili nominal marker in (44a) is *m-*, marking class 3 singular forms (e.g. *M-tumba* 'secondhand clothes') and *mi-* for class 4 counterparts. (e.g. *Mi-tumba* 'secondhand clothes'). However, this is not the case with Sheng. As highlighted in (44d) the same subject noun takes the generic plural marker *ma-* which is the new nominal marker for class 10 as it shall be discussed later. Typically, in Swahili the demonstrative pronoun in this class set is ***huu*** in singular and ***hii*** in plural. However, in Sheng examples (44c-d), the demonstrative pronoun correspondence is for class set 9/10, that is, ***hii/hizi.***

3.3.1.3 Noun class 5/6

Typically, Swahili nouns in this class take ji-/j- Ø nominal markers for class 5 (or singular forms) and ma- for class 6. Consider the following.

(45)

SG	PL	Gloss
J-ino	meno	'tooth'
Ji-we	mawe	'stone'
Ji-cho	macho	'eye'
Ø-gari	magari	'car'
Ø-Jani	majani	'leaf'
j-ambo	mambo	'issue'

The general nominal marker for plural is *ma-*. The case of *Ji-no* 'tooth' changing to *me-no* 'teeth' is a case of vowel coalescence. Consider the following.

(46)

a) J-ino→ma+ino→ meno
b) J-iko→ma+iko→meko

c) J-ambo→ma+ambo→mambo

When the plural marker /ma-/is annexed to the root that has an /i/ initial vowel it merges to become /e/, that is, a+i=e. On the other hand, when *ma-* is annexed to a root with /a/ initial vowel, the two vowels merge into one as highlighted in (46c) above. The grammatical concords for this class take different shapes depending on the syntactic elements being co-referenced. The subject concords are *li-/ma-*, adjectival prefixes are *ji-/ma-*, the object prefix is *-lo-* and prepositional prefix are *li/ya*. There exist some grammatical variations when it comes to Sheng use of nouns classified in this group. Consider syntactic constructions in (47).

(47)

Sheng		
SG	**PL**	**Gloss**
Ø-gari m-pya	Ma-gari m-pya[28]	new car
CL5.NOM-car CL10-new	CL6-car CL10-pya	
Ji-we bigi	ma-we bigi	big stone
CL5-stone big	CL6-stone big	
Swahili		
Ø-gari ji-pya	ma-gari ma-pya	new car
CL5.NOM-car CL5-new	CL6-car CL6- new	
Ji-we Ø-kubwa	ma-we ma-kubwa	big stone
CL5.NOM-stone	CL6-stone CL6-big	

In reference to the Sheng examples in (47), it appears Sheng is in the process of regularizing the adjectival concords for both singular and plural forms into *m-*. Compared with Swahili example in (47) above, Sheng adjectival concord appears to mark both singular and plural forms using *m-*. So *gari **ji**-pya* 'new car' and *ma-gari **ma**-pya* 'new

[28] m- adjectival concord is retained to due to phonotactic constraint in both Sheng and Swahili (as well as many other Bantu languages) that a minimal root should be bimoraic. -pya is is a single mora.

cars' in Swahili becomes *gari mpya* and *magari **m**-pya* in Sheng. One would argue that Sheng is in the process of regularizing the plural forms where only the nominal plural marker is sufficient to carry plurality onto the adjectives. So instead of having *ma-gari ma-pya* 'new cars' as observed in Swahili above, Sheng opts for *Magari mpya* 'new cars'. Double plural marking as one observed in standard Swahili construction is reduced for Sheng. So, it is very common to have constructions such as the ones in (48) below with all grammatical marking taking form of class 10.

(48)

Sheng	**Swahili**	**Gloss**
a) Jiko **y**angu	Jiko **l**angu	'my oven'
Majiko **z**angu	majiko **ya**ngu	'my ovens'
b) Basi **i**le	basi **li**le	'that bus'
Mabasi **zi**le	mabasi **y**ale	'those buses'
c) Koti **i**ko…	Koti **li**ko…	'the coat is on….'
Makoti **zi**ko…	koti **zi**ko…	'the coat is on….'

Sheng restructures its grammatical agreements for class 5/6 to assume that of class 9/10. Overall, Sheng appears to move all class 5 nouns and their grammatical markings to class 10. The possessive prefixes are in the process of transitioning from ***l-*** to ***y-*** for subject markers in class 5 and ***y-*** to ***z-*** for those in class 6. So, constructions like *Dimba la soka* 'soccer match' in standard Swahili, would be *game ya soka* 'soccer match' in Sheng. Similarly, Sheng is also changing the Swahili demonstrative prefixes for this class to those in 9/10 class. For instance, the *l**i-*** and ***ya-*** in Swahili is changed to ***i-*** and ***zi-*** in Sheng (cf. 48b above).

3.3.1.4 Noun class 7/8

According to the semantic classification suggested by Contini-Morava (1994), Swahili nouns in this class consists of small artifacts and animals, people with physical

disability such as *kiwete* (disabled human being), pieces of things and small body parts such as *kidole/vidole* (finger/fingers). The classifications of singular nouns in this group take *ki-* or *ch-* nominal prefix while their plural counterparts take *vi-/vy-*. Consider the following examples from Swahili.

(49)

Class 7/SG	**Class 8/PL**	**Gloss**
Ki-jiko	vi-jiko	'spoon'
Ki-kombe	vi-kombe	'cup'
Ki-dole	vi-dole	'finger'
Ki-tabu	vi-tabu	'book'
Ch-ombo	vy-ombo	'instrument'
Cheti	vy-eti	'certificate'

Nearly all other grammatical elements are conjugated with ki- in singular and vi- in plural except for palatalized forms. For instance, when ki- (nominal prefix) is attached to a possessive stem -angu (my/mine) the product is always *ch-* pronounced as [tʃ], that is, *ki+angu → kyangu → changu*. In other words, /k/ is palatalized to become [kʲ] which later assimilates to ch-[t͡ʃ] because of the shared place of articulation. Canonically, Swahili does not tolerate sound sequence of *ky-* [kj]. Whenever this occurs, it must palatalize to ch- [tʃ]. Similarly, when the possessive forms that coreference nouns in plural, that is, vi- is annexed to a possessive stem, say, *-angu* 'my' the product is *vyangu*, *vi+angu.* For instance *vi- + angu →vi-angu →vyangu.* Consider the following examples in (50).

(50)

a) *Ki-jiko* *ch-angu*

CL7.NOM-spoon CL7.1SG.POSS-mine

'My spoon'

b) *Vi-jiko* *vy-angu*
CL8.NOM-spoon CL8-1PL.POSS
'My spoons'

c) *Ki-jiko* *ki-li-pot-e-a*
CL7.NOM-spoon CL7.SUB-PAST-lost-APP-FV
'The spoon got lost'

Vi-ji-ko *vi-li-pot-e-a*
CL8NOM-spoon CL.8SUBJ-PAST-loss-APP-FV
'The spoon got lost'

d) *Ki-jiko* *ki-li-cho-pot-e-a*
CL7.NOM-spoon CL7.SUBJ-PAST-REL-loss-APP-FV
The spoon which got lost'

Vi-jiko *vi-li-vyo-pot-e-a*
CL8.NOM-spoon CL8.SUBJ-PAST-REL-loss-APP-FV
'Spoons which got lost'

Analytic comparison of this class in both Swahili and Sheng raises some important observations as far as differences and similarities are concerned. While the nominal concords for this class remain the same in both languages, agreement markers vary significantly. While preserving the nominal prefix as Swahili, Sheng speakers appear to be falling back to CLASS 9/10 when conjugating possessive forms as observed in example (51) below. Swahili uses *ch-* and *vy-* prefixes for possessives while Sheng uses *y-* and *z-* prefixes.

(51)

Sheng	**Swahili**
Ki-dole y-a mine	*Ki-dole* *ch-angu*
CL7.NOM-finger CL9-GEN mine	CL7.NOM-finger CL7-1SG.POSS
'My finger'	'my finger'
Vi-dole *za* *mine*	*Vi-dole* *vy-angu*
CL8.NOM-finger CL10-GEN mine	CL8.NOM-finger CL8-1SG.POSS
'My fingers'	'My fingers'

Sheng speakers also do not follow concordial agreements when marking subjects in both verbal and nominal phrases. The subject prefixes in verbal morphology assumes those of classes 9/10. Thus, in grammatical positions where Swahili uses *ki-* Sheng uses *i-* and that for *vi-* it uses *z-*(see 52). For the adjectival prefix, Sheng uses *y-* and *z-* where Swahili uses *ch-* and *vy-* respectively. Consider the following examples.

(52)

Sheng	**Swahili**
Ki-buyu y-ake i-me-do nini?	*Ki-buyu ch-ake ki-me-fanya?* nini?
CL7-container CL9-POSS CL9.SUBJ-PERF-do REL	CL7-container CL9-POSS CL9.SUBJ-PERF-do REL
'What has his/her container done?'	What has his container done?
Vi-buyu z-ake zi-me-do?	*Vi-buyu vy-ake vi-me-fanya nini?*
CL7-container CL10-POSS CL10.SUBJ-PERF-do REL	CL8-container CL8-POSS CL8.SUBJ-PERF-do REL
'What have his containers done?'	'What have his containers done?'

A closer examination of relative pronoun in (50d) and (53) below reveals that the relative construction in Sheng is changing in such a way that the demonstrative replaces the relative pronoun. Alternatively, the demonstrative generalizes to assume the function of the relative pronoun.

(53)

Sheng	Swahili
I-le spoon i-li-Ø-lost	*Ki-jiko ki-li-cho-pot-e-a*
CL9-DEM spoon CL9-PAST-lost	CL7-sppon CL7SUBJ-PAST-REL-loss-APP-FV
'The spoon which disappeared/waslost'	'The spoon which disappeared/was lost'

In (53), the Sheng and Swahili constructions elicit the same meaning. The construction in Sheng is interpreted as having a head noun with a relative clause despite relative marker in Sheng. We assume that Sheng is reanalyzing the demonstrative particle for dual function, first to mark position/distance and secondly to mark the relative

pronoun beyond its maximal projection as observed in (53)'s Sheng example. Whether Sheng retains a relative pronoun with a ∅ morph is a subject for further discussion.

3.3.1.5 Noun class 9/10

Class 9 and 10 play a significant role in our effort to paint a picture of grammatical changes underway in reconstruction of Sheng grammar from that of its main lexifier, Swahili. I analyze this class in comparison with other classes to understand how Sheng re-allocates its nouns to a catch-all class set 9/10. More often than not, Swahili marks class set 9/10 with /∅/ or /N/ nominal affix for both singular and plural respectively. The singular forms are placed in class 9 and their plural counter parts are grouped in class 10. Before proceeding, the Bantu nasal prefixes need some comment here. According to Choti (2015) there are two types of nasal prefixes in Bantu group of languages, that is, bilabial /m/ and underspecified /N/. In Swahili, for example, the nasal /m/ is realized as a nominal marker for class 1, 3 and 18, while on the other hand /N/ is common with class set 9/10, 1SG subject (ni-) and 1SG object (-ni-). Choti observes that "Bantu /N/ exhibits a variety of asymmetries in its realization such that its behavior in a single language may not reveal the full range of its phonological properties" (2015:37). In Swahili, /N/ is associated with a range of segmental alternations. When the nasal prefix /N/ appears before vowel initial stems, it is realized as a palatal nasal / ɲ/ or velar nasal /ŋ/ in many Bantu languages. For example, in class 9/10 of Swahili, the /N/ is realized as /ɲ/. Consider the examples below.

(54) Surface formation of /N/ before vowel-initial stem

Underlying /N/	**Surface forms**	**Gloss**
a) /N-ɛmbɛ/	nyembe [ɲ-ɛmbɛ]	'CL10-razor'
b) /N-imbɔ/	nyimbo [ɲ-imbɔ]	'CL10-song'

c) /N-uki/	nyuki [ɲ-uki]	‘CL10-bee’
d) /N-ɔrɔrɔ/	nyororo[ɲ-ɔrɔrɔ]	‘CL10-soft’
e) /N-ɛupɛ/	nyeupe [ɲ-ɛupɛ]	‘CL10-white’

Adopted from Choti (2015)

The nasal prefix /N/ also assimilates to place of articulation of a following obstruent. When /N/ appears before a stem with an initial consonant, it assimilates to the place of articulation of the consonant. Consider the following examples from Swahili.

(55)

Underlying /N/	**Surface forms**	**Gloss**
/N-bili/	mbili [mbili]	‘two’
/N-vua/	mvua [ɱvua]	‘rain’
/N- dani/	ndani [ndani]	‘insider’
/N-gombe/	ng’ombe [ŋɔmbɛ]	‘cow’

According to Choti, /N/ undergoes devoicing when it precedes voiceless stops. Consider (56) below.

(56)

Underlying /N/	**Surface forms**	**Gloss**
/N-pira/	mpira [m̥piɾa]	‘ball’
/N-ta/	nta [n̥ta]	‘ear wax’
/N-kama/	ni kama [n̥kɑmɑ]	‘it’s like’

As previously mentioned, many of the nouns in this class set 9/10 have no surface nominal prefix in both singular and plural. Those that involve the nasal prefix /N/ alternate into different variants depending on phonological constraints. For example, /N/ can be realized as /m, n, n̥, ɱ, m̥, ŋ, ɲ/ in different phonological contexts.

The class set 9/10 is a universal recipient for loan words in both Sheng and Swahili. Due to it receptive nature, many neologism, loan words and technological terminologies are placed in this group.

Examples of nouns in these group include,

(57)

SG	**PL**	**Gloss**
Simu	simu	‘phone’
Kompyuta	Kompyuta	‘computer’
Televisheni	Televisheni	‘television’
Baiskeli	Baiskeli	‘bicycle’

Using grammatical classification, Swahili nouns in class 9 must agree with other syntactic elements using the *i-* prefix and those in class 10 must agree using *zi-* prefix. For example,

(58)

CL9(SG)	CL10(PL)
Nguo i-me-raru-k-a	*Nguo zimeraruka*
∅-nguo CL9SUBJ-TAM-torn-APPL-FV	∅-nguo CL9SUBJ-TAM-torn-APPL-FV
‘Cloth is torn’	‘clothes are torn’

For possessive forms, the nouns agree with their modifiers using **y-** in class 9 (singular) and **z-** in class 10 (plural). For instance,

(59)

CL9 (SG)	CL10 (PL)
*Kompyuta **y**-angu*	*kompyuta **z**-angu*
Computer CL9-1SG.POSS	Computer CL10-1SG.POSS
‘My computer’	‘My computers’

For adjectival marking, the class does use the nasal prefix /N/ rule mentioned in (55-56). Adjective roots with vowel-initial take the /*ny-/* nasal prefix in class 9. Those with obstruent, except for voiceless velar stop and the voiceless labiodental fricative, agree in place of articulation of the following stop. The underlying /N/ deletes before voiceless obstruents (see 60c).

(60)

a)	Sindano/N-embamba/	sindano nyembamba	‘thin needle’
	Kompyuta /N-eusi/	kompyuta nyeusi	‘black computer’

b) Simu /N-dogo/	Simu ndogo	‘small phone’
Kalamu /N-pya/	kalamu m.pya[29]	‘new pen’
Sahani /N-zuri/	sahani nzuri	‘good plate’
Safari /N-refu /	safari ndefu	‘long journey
c) Nyumba /N-kubwa/	nyumba kubwa	‘big house’
Chupa /N-fupi/	chupa fupi	‘short bottle’

It appears to me that the /N/ prefix in adjectival concordial agreement assimilate to agree in place of articulation with the following voiced stop to form prenasalized consonants. For example, in the word *mbili* ‘two’, /N/ assimilates to /m/ to agree with the voiced bilabial stop in the adjectival stem -*bili* ‘two’ to form class 10 adjective *mbili* ‘two’ with prenasalized consonant /mb-/. When the following bilabial stop is voiceless N is realized as /m/ but does not form a prenasalized consonant but a syllabic /m/, consider *mpya* [m.pja] ‘new’ vs *mbili* [mbi.li] ‘two’.

Cases where /N/ prefix cannot assimilate like those in (60c) the /N/ is dropped, that is, underlying /N/ deletes before voiceless obstruents. However, some other Bantu languages like Bemba have indicated cases where the nasal prefix /N/ assimilates to agree with stem initials /k/. The following Bemba example was adopted from Choti (2015).

(61)

/N-kú-la/ [ŋkúl-a]. ‘eat’

While this is not common in Swahili there are rising cases of this assimilation in Sheng as it shall be discussed later.

[29] The (.) represents syllable break

3.3.1.6 Class 9/10 in Sheng

Sheng appears to largely make use of class 9/10 as a default class for many of the nouns that are borrowed and or outsourced from various Swahili noun classes. As Bosire (2008) puts it, it is a catch-all class not just for the case of Swahili loan words but also for Sheng neologism. All those reduced classes (cf. table 1 and 2) are converged to class 9/10. In the following sections, I compare grammatical relations between class 1/2, 3/4, 5/6 and 11 with those of class 9/10 to demonstrate the shift of Sheng from Swahili grammatical structure.

3.3.1.6.1 Comparing class 3/4 and 9/10

Most Swahili nouns in class 3/4 assume *m-* and *mi-* nominal marker for singular and plural nouns respectively. While Swahili marks class 3/4 nouns with *m-* and *mi-* nominal markers respectively, Sheng marks the plural nouns of class 3/4 with class 6 nominal marker ma-. For instance, the plural of *mkono* 'arm' in Swahili is *mikono* 'arms'. In Sheng, the singular stays *mkono* 'arm' but the plural is double marked with both Sheng generic marker ma- and Swahili class 4 plural marker mi-, that is, *mamikono* 'arms'. Myers-Scotton (2002) describes this as a case of double morphology or 'mistimings' (p.92). According to her, in classic codeswitching, "the speaker may wish to express their intentions by using an embedded language noun along with the concept of plurality. However, when the lemma for that noun is accessed, at the same time, its plural affix 'slips in' too" (2002:92). In our case, the embedded Swahili noun *-kono* 'arm' comes along with its concept of plurality from Swahili with CL4 plural marker *mi-* which is again affixed with Sheng generic plural marker *ma-* to give rise to *mamikono* 'arms' a

concept referred to as double morphology (see above). Consider more examples in (62) below.

(62)

Sheng		**Swahili**		**gloss**
CL3(SG)	CL10(PL)	CL3 (SG	CL4(PL)	
m-ti	ma-miti	mti	miti	‘tree’
m-pira	ma-mipira	mpira	mipira	‘ball’
m-zigo	ma-mizigo	mzigo	mizigo	‘luggage’
m-kate	ma-mikate	mkate	mikate	‘bread’

As observed in (62), Swahili marks plural of class 3 nouns in class 4 by appending *mi-* nominal prefix to the stem while Sheng marks its plural in class 10 by appending the generic plural ma- of class 10 to the already embedded plural form of class 4 nouns. This is a case of double morphology or ‘mistimings’ discussed in the previous section. This is a case of convergence where all nouns in class 3/4 are shifting to class 9/10. Using grammatical classification, it is also evident that Swahili class 3 nouns agree with class 9 concords. Consider example (63).

(63)

Sheng	**Swahili**
M-zuka hi-i ni noma	*M-ziki hu-u ni m-zuri*
CL3-music DEM-CL9 BE Ø-great	CL3-music DEM-CL3 BE CL3-great
‘This music/hit is great’	‘This musi/hit is great’
Ma-mizuka hi-zi ni noma	*Mi-ziki hi-i ni mi-zuri*
CL9-music DEM-CL9 BE Ø-great	CL4-music DEM-CL9 BE CL3-great
‘This music/hit is great’	‘This music/hit is great’

In (63), I have juxtaposed constructions of Sheng and Swahili to show how grammatical agreements are in the process of shifting to a different class. Swahili uses grammatical concords u- (singular) and i- (plural) on demonstratives marking subjects in class 3/4. Sheng on the other hand use i-/zi concordial agreements for class 9/10 to mark the same

noun(s). In our case above, we note *mzuka (*Sheng word for 'music' or 'talent') taking on the i- subject prefix on the demonstrative in singular and *zi-* in plural.

Still on (63), another observation is made. Typically, class 9/10 nouns demonstrate both null prefix as well as nasalized prefix /N/ (which is realized in different morphs (cf. 64)) for both singular and plural. Sheng appears to regularize all plural nouns in class 10 to take on the ma- prefix. Nouns that are adopted in this class together with other nominal prefixes such as those in class 3, consist of double plural marking for original class as well as the new class 10.

(64)

a) Sheng's innovative nouns in class 9/10

SG	**PL**	**Gloss**
Ndom	mandom	'marijuana'
Wera	mawera	'job'
Ofe	maofe	'office'
Obama	maobama	'alcohol'

b) Example of reclassified nouns from class 3/4

SG	**Gloss**	**PL**	**Gloss**
Mti	'tree'	mamiti	'trees'
Mkate	'bread'	mamikate	'loaves of bread'
Mzinga	'liquor'	mamizinga	'liquors'
Mchoro	'plan'	mamichoro	'plans'
Mita	'a million'	mamita	'millions'

3.3.1.6.2 Comparing class 5/6 and 9/10

As earlier mentioned, class 5/6 has *Ø/ji/j* nominal prefixes for singular and *ma-* for plural. However, for Sheng, class 5/6 is dissolved, and its nouns reassigned to class 9/10. Class 9 is the destination for class 5 nouns while 10 is the destination for class 6

nouns. Notably, all corresponding nouns in class 5/6 of Swahili assume grammatical agreement for class 9/10 in Sheng.

The plural form of class 6 has been reclassified by Sheng as the generic plural marker. For Sheng, most neologisms and nominal innovations are placed in classes 9/10. Consider the following Sheng words.

(65)

SG	**PL**	**Gloss**
Ndom	mandom	'marijuana'
Ngoto	mangoto	'finger ring'
Shuksha	mashuksha	'marijuana'
Wera	mawera	'job'
Ndula	mandula	'shoe'
Kebin	makebin	'head'
Githaa	magithaa	'time'
Pekejeng	mapekejeng	'sex'
Ashu	maashu	'ten-shilling coin'
Maikrofon	mamaikrofon	'microphone'

Former class 5/6 nouns which are reclassified into class 9/10 in Sheng maintain their nominal prefixes. The *Ø/ji/j* nominal prefix in class 5 and ma- prefix in class 6 are all adopted in their original form. I postulate that, other than the nasalized prefix /N/ discussed earlier, many nouns in class 9 consist of *Ø* prefix which are similar to those in class 5. What Sheng is doing is to simplify the irregularities that are witnessed in Swahili noun class system into a more regularized format consisting of fewer class systems.

(66)

a) Nouns reclassified from class 5/6 in Sheng

CL5	**CL6**	**Gloss**
Ø-Jina	ma-jina	'name'
Ø-Tawi	ma-tawi	'leaf'
Ji-we	ma-we /majiwe	'stone'
Ji-ko	ma-jiko	'stove'
j-ino	ma-jino	'tooth'

b) Original class 9/10 nouns

N-dula	ma-ndula	‘shoe’
Ø-Stenje	ma-stenje	‘radio’
Ø-Keja	ma-keja	‘house’
Ø-githaa	ma-githaa	‘time’

Based on example (66), it appears class 9 is unrestrictive when it comes to nominal prefix. Both /j-, ji- and Ø / of class 5 and /N/ prefix are adopted into class 9. It is not clear for the present study on whether the/ ji-, j- / from class 5 are reanalyzed to form a new stem when they are adopted to class 9, just like we noticed with the case of plural formations of class 4 being reclassified into 10 in (see 64b).

3.3.1.6.3 Comparing class 7/8 and 9/10

Nouns in class 7 and 8 take the nominal prefixes ki-/ch- and vi- respectively in Swahili (cf. 49). Sheng, however, is in the process of reclassifying some of the nouns in this group to group 10. While nouns in class 7 maintain their nominal prefix ki-/ch-, those in 8 reclassify erstwhile plural prefix vi- with the stem. The generic class 10 prefix ma- is then added to this complex form. and appended to class 9 generic marker *ma-*. Consider example (67) below.

(67)

CL7	**CL10**	**Gloss**
Ki-kombe	ma-vikombe	‘cup’
Ki-kapu	ma-vikabu	‘bag’
Ch-oo	ma-choo	‘toilets’
Ch-ura	ma-chura	‘toad’

Class 7/8 nouns are in the process of merging into class 9/10 based on grammatical classification[30]. Those in class 7 take all concordial agreements for class 9 and those in class 8 assumes those in class 10 as highlighted in (68).

(68)

Sheng

Ki-kombe i-medunda chini	*Ma-vikombe zi-medunda chini*
CL7-cup CL9.SUBJ-TAM-fall down	CL10-cup CL10.SUBJ-TAM-fall down
'The cup has fallen'	The cups have fallen'
Ch-oo y-angu ni poa	*ma-choo z-angu ni poa*
CL7-toilet CL9.POSS BE good	CL10-toilet CL10.DEM BE good
That toilet is great	'Those toilets are great'

In (68) the reclassified class 7 and 8 agree with the class 9 subject prefix i- and class 10 prefix zi- respectively. The possessive forms for these group of nouns assume y- and zi- prefix for class 9 and 10 respectively.

3.3.1.7 Noun class 11 and 9/10

Using semantic classification, Swahili class 11 nouns comprise of objects with defined shape. Nouns in this class take u- nominal marker and ∅ in plural. Consider the following examples.

(69)

SG	**PL**	**Gloss**
Uteo	∅-teo	'flat basket'
Ufunguo	∅-funguo	'key'
Ufuo	∅-fuo	'coastline'
Ukuta	∅-kuta	'wall'

[30] The merging of nouns is based on grammatical concords agreements and not nominal markers. While class 7 nouns would retain ki- when they merge into class set 9/10, it is mainly their grammatical agreement (concords) that shift merge into the other class. E.g. *Kikombe cha* 'cup of' in Swahili class 7 would become *Kikombe ya* in Sheng class 9. The same applies to class 8 and class 10 in Swahili-Sheng pair respectively.

Based on grammatical classification, the grammatical concords of this class correspond to those of class 10 in Sheng.

Example (70) provides grammatical marking of nouns in this class for both Sheng and Swahili.

(70)

Swahili	**Sheng**
a) *U-funguo w-ake u-me-potea*	*U-funguo y-ake i-me-lost*
CL11-key CL11-3SG.POSS CL11-PERF-loss	CL11-key CL9-3SG.POSS CL9-PERF-loss
'His/her key got lost	'His/her key got lost'
b) *Ø-Funguo z-ake zi-me-potea*	*Ma-funguo*[31] *z-ake zi-me-lost*
CL10-key.PL CL10-POSS CL10-PERF-loss	CL6-key CL10-POSS CL10.SUBJ-PERF-loss
'His/her keys got lost'	'His/her keys got lost'

As observed from (70), Swahili marks the plural forms of class 11 in class 10. Sheng on the other hand, is in the process of merging class 11 to class set 9/10 as all of its grammatical concords corresponds to those in class 9/10 (see table 3.4.1 below). The absence of an even class marking the plural noun-counterparts of 11 could be attributed to the fact that, class 11 plural forms are marked by class 10 both by nominal concords (that is ø) and grammatical concords. Consider table 3.4.1 below. I have copied it here for ease of access.

---

[31] Clarification of class 6 prefix ma- is needed here. It is a characteristic of Sheng to classify foreign nouns in class 9/10. The use of ma- in pluralizing class 11 nouns is a case of convergence where the supposed class 12 plurals are formed in class 10. Consider the following Sheng construction.

Hi-zi ma-ugonjwa z-a covid ni nomaree
DEM-CL10 CL10-disease CL10-GEN covid BE dangerous
'These covid diseases are very scary'

In the above construction, the grammatical concords, that is, demonstrative and genitive agree with the class 10 subject head *maugonjwa* 'diseases'. This is contrary to Swahili which would agree with class 6 grammatical concords as highlighted below.

Ha-ya ma-gonjwa y-a covid ni hatari
DEM-CL6 CL6-disease CL6.GEN covid BE dangerous
'These covid infections are dangerous'

Table 3.4.1
Grammatical concords of Sheng class 11 (compared with class 9/10)

Class	NOM	Noun	SUBJ	ADJ	OBJ	POSS	PREP	REL	Prox	ref	Distal
9	n-/ny- / m-/ø	*Kalamu* 'pen'	i	ø	ø	y-	i-	ø	hii	hiyo	ile
10	n-/ny- / m-/ø	*Makalamu* 'pens' ø-kuta/ maukuta (cf. ukuta) 'walls'	zi	ø	ø	z-	z-	ø	hizi	hizo	zile
11	u-	Ukuta 'wall'	i-	ø-	ø	y-	z-	ø	hii	hiyo	ile

While many Bantu languages mark their singular nouns in one class and plural in the following class, there are glaring gaps cross-linguistically. For instance, Swahili does not have class 12 and 13 and classes beyond 18. However, some other sister languages such as Lunyore, Lulogooli, and Sheng display class 12 and 13 as well as class 20 for Bena language.

3.3.1.8 Noun class 14

This class consist of non-countable and abstract nouns in Swahili. Typically, they do not have a plural given on their semantic classification. They relate to things that are abstract hence not easy to count physically. Consider (71) below.

(71)

CL14	Gloss
U-jinga	'stupidity'
u-kweli	'truth'
u-puzi	'nonsense'
u-maskini	'poverty'
u-rafiki	'friendship'

While it is ungrammatical to pluralize these nouns due to its semantic category in Swahili (that is, abstract nouns) Sheng appears to create their plural forms in class 10 by affixing class 14 singular prefix to the root and then inflecting this base with the generic class 10 plural *ma-*. Consider example (72)

(72)

Sheng (SG)	**Sheng (PL)**	**Swahili (SG)**[32]	**Gloss**
u-daku	ma-udaku	u-daku	'gossip'
u-mbea	ma-umbea	u-mbea	'gossip'
u-sumbufu	ma-usumbufu	u-sumbufu	'sturbonness'
u-jinga	ma-ujinga	u-jinga	'stupidity

In (72), Sheng appears to be in the process of regularizing classes so that it has unified plural formation despite the semantic classification of these nouns. The postulation is that, while the nouns in class 14 are considered abstract and uncountable, one could still count instances of each. The concordial agreement of class 14 assumes those of class 9. Consider the following syntactic construction from Sheng speaker

(73)

U-jinga y-a Victor Naaman i-na-bo
CL14-stupidity CL9-GEN Victor Naaman CL9-TAM-bore
'Victor Naaman's joke is boring'

Ma-ujinga z-a Victor Naaman zi-na-bo
CL10-stupidity CL10-GEN Victor Naaman CL10-TAM-bore
'Victor Naaman's jokes are boring'

It is evident from (73) that Sheng speakers take Swahili class 14 nouns and reformulate their plurals in two classes, that is, class 6 and 10. In effort to regularize the class, the grammatical agreements have to align with those of class 9/10. In (73) the class 14 noun *ujinga* 'stupidity' is conjugated by class 9 possessive prefix /y-/ as well as

[32] There is no corresponding plural for these forms in Swahili

subject prefix /i-/. The same agreements are marked for class 10 where the nominal prefix ma- is appended to the new stem */-ujinga/* composed of the class 14 prefix plus the original root, to make a class 10 noun *maujinga 'stupidity.PL'*. The grammatical agreements also assume Sheng's class 10 where the plural *maujinga 'stupidity'* is marked by class 10 possessive prefix *z-* and subject prefix zi- on the verbal morphology.

3.3.1.9 Class 12/13

Class 12/13 is a new introduction in Sheng's nominal system. Nouns classified in this class are used for marking diminutives. In Sheng, all nouns that denote diminutive state are marked in class 12 for singular and class 13 for plural. Consider the following examples:

(74) a) Sheng

SG	PL
Ka-vulana ka-na-kuja	Tu-vulana tu-na-kuja
CL12-boy CL12.SUBJ-PRS-come	CL13-boy CL13.SUBJ-na-kuja
The 'small' boy is coming	The 'small' boys are coming

b) Compare with Swahili;

Ki-ji-vulana ki-na-kuj-a	Vi-ji-vulana vi-na-kuj-a
CL7-CL5-boy CL7-PRS-come-FV	CL8-CL5-boy CL8-PRS-come-FV
'The 'small' boy is coming'	'The 'small' boy is coming'

The following table highlights grammatical concords for this class.

Table 3.4.2
Sheng class 12/13 concords

Nom Prefi	**Subject**	**Adject**	**OBJ**	**GEN**	**PREP**	**Rel.**	**Prox**	**Ref**	**Distal**
KA	Ka-	Ka-	ka-	k-	ka-	-ko	haka	hako	kale
TU	Tu-	Tu-	tu-	Tw-	tu-	-two	hutu	hutwo	tule

Apparently, Swahili do not have this class set as it marks its diminutives in class 7/8 as it shall be highlighted in the next section.

3.3.1.9.1 Diminutive and Augmentatives

Typically, Swahili diminutives and augmentatives are formed in different class sets. For instance, the diminutive for the noun *meza* ‘table’ is first augmented with class 5 marker *ji-* to form augmentative *jimeza* ‘big table’ which is later affixed with class 7 marker *ki-* to form diminutive *kijimeza* ‘small table’. In other words, formation of augmentatives feeds into formation of diminutives in Swahili. Like any other Bantu language diminutives in Swahili are used to denote entities that are perceived by the speaker as small both in fact or pejoratively. Unlike Swahili, English marks diminutives by many forms, for example, by adding certain suffixes to a noun e.g. -ette, in words like, novelette, cigarette, kitchenette (X-small); -let in words like booklet, wavelet -small wavelet (x-small); -ling in words such as ducklings (young ones of a duck) among many others.

3.3.2.1.9.2 Diminutives and Augmentatives in Swahili

Swahili marks its diminutives in class 7/8 and augmentatives in class 5/6. Production of diminutives may involve some word formation processes. In order to mark diminutives, Swahili invokes the use of ki-/vi- (Class 7/8) nominal prefixes as well as class 5 j/ji nominal prefixes. For instance, to form a diminutive for *simu* ‘phone’, the base has first to be affixed with class 5 marker *ji-* to form *jisimu* ‘giant phone’, which also happens to be the augmentative for *meza* ‘table’, and finally the augmentative is affixed with class 7 marker ki- to form diminutive *kijisimu* ‘small phone’. Consider the following example in a sentence.

(75)

a) *Ki-ji-simu* *ch-ake* *ki-li-pot-e-a*
CL7-CL5.DIM-phone CL7-POSS CL7.SUBJ-PAST-loss-APP-FV

‘His small phone got lost’

b) Vi-ji-simu vya-ke vi-li-pot-e-a
CL8-CL5.DIM-phone CL8-POSS CL8.SUBJ-PAST-loss-APP-FV
‘His small phones got lost’

The formation of diminutives is achieved through multiple affixation Swahili first appends class 5 nominal prefix /ji/ to the main stem of the noun which is reanalyzed to create a new stem that is affixed with class 7 nominal prefix ki-. As observed from (75), grammatical agreement in the syntactic structure assumes that of class 7/8.Whether /ji/ is assumed to be an affix or reanalyzed by the stem as a new stem is a question for further study. For the scope of this study, we assume that it is a class 5 affix that work in tandem with class 7 nominal prefix to form diminutives. Example (76) illustrates the process of forming the diminutives in Swahili.

(76)

Noun	**CL5 /ji/ affixation**	**CL7 ki-affixation**	**Diminutive**	**Gloss**
Ø-Simu	jisimu	ki-jisimu	kijisimu	‘phone’
Ki-tabu	jitabu	ki-jitabu	kijitabu	‘booklet’
Ø-Meza ------>jimeza.		---------->ki-jimeza	---------->kijimeza.---->	‘small table’
Ø-Gari	jigari	ki-jigari	kijigari	‘small car’
N-umba	jinyumba	ki-jinyumba	kijinyumba	‘small house’
Ji-cho	jicho	ki-jicho	kijicho	‘small eye’
Ki-dole	jidole	ki-jidole	kijidole	‘small finger’

The plural forms for Swahili diminutives are formed in class 8 and follow the same pattern as of prefixation with CL 5 ji- and then inflection of this new stem with the class 8 vi-. As observed in (75b) the class 5 nominal prefix is attached to the stem of the noun and appended with class 8 prefix vi-. The grammatical agreements for diminutives assume that of class 7/8. So, it is prudent to postulate that all diminutives are those nouns of class 7/8.

Augmentatives, on the other hand, refer to entities that considered bigger than normal or they are exaggerated in some way. Swahili augmentatives are formed in class 5/6 and assume grammatical agreement of the same class. In their formation, class 5 nominal prefix *ji-* is appended to the stem of the noun to form class 5 augmentatives and ma- is annexed to CL5 stem to form class 6 augmentatives. Consider example (77) below.

(77)

Noun stem	**CL5 /ji/ affixation**	**CL6 ma- (SG)**	**Gloss**
simu	ji-simu	ma-jisimu	'big phone'
-tabu	ji-tabu	ma-jitabu	'big book/tome'
meza ------>	ji-meza. ---------->	ma-jimeza -	'big table'
gari	ji-gari	ma-jigari	'big car'
N-umba	ji-umba[33]	ma-jumba	'big house'
Ji-cho	ji-jicho	ma-jicho	'eye'
-dole	ji-dole	ma-jidole	'big finger'

3.3.2.1.9.3 Diminutives and Augmentatives in Sheng

Unlike Swahili, Sheng forms their diminutives in class 12/13. The overall goal of Sheng, at least for the present study, is to simplify complex grammatical formation. The formation of diminutives and augmentatives in Swahili are in one way complex and irregular. For instance, Sheng speaker may find it difficult to explain why *nyumba* 'house' become *jumba* 'augmentative for house' and not **jinyumba* (see footnote). This and other related complexities may have led to Sheng speakers to assume a new class for diminutives and augmentatives.

[33] The formation of 'jumba' augmentive for 'house' is that of coalescence. When front vowels come into contact with back vowels they delete. For instance, i+u=u. So instead of have ji+umba (*jiumba) i deletes to form *jumba*

Diminutive nouns in Sheng are marked by *ka-* nominal prefix in class 12 and *tu-* nominal prefix in class 13. The grammatical agreements in sentential construction are highlighted in table 3.4.3 and exemplified in (78).

Table 3.4.3
Diminutive concords in Sheng

Nom Prefi	**Subject**	**Adject**	**OBJ**	**GEN**	**PREP**	**Rel.**	**Prox**	**Ref**	**Distal**
KA	ka-	ka-	ka-	k-	ka-	-ko	-ka	-ko	ka-
TU	tu-	tu-	tu-	tw-	tu-	-two	-tu	-two	tu-

This class accommodates all nouns except that they must follow grammatical agreements of class 12/13. Say, nouns from class 3/4 like *mti/miti* 'tree' must agree with its syntactic constituents like possessives using class 12/13 concordial agreement. Consider example 78 below**.**

(78)

Ka-*mti* ***k-****angu*
CL12.NOM-tree CL12-1SG.POSS
'my (small) tree'

In this construction, class 3 noun *mti* 'tree' takes the nominal concord **ka-** while maintaining class 3 internal structure formation (*m-ti* 'tree') to agree with the possessive concord **k-** to form a grammatical construction based on class 12 nominal head.

(79)

****Ka-****dem* ***y-****angu*
CL12-woman CL1.1SG-POSS
'my girlfriend'

A formation like (79) would be frowned upon by Sheng speakers as ungrammatical. The following is a construction of noun derived from class 1/2.

(80)

a) *Ka-le ka-dem k-a Dando ka-na maringo*
CL12-DEM CL12.NOM-girl CL12-GEN Dandora CL12.POSS-has pride
'That Dandora girl has pride'

b) *Tu-le tu-dem tw-a Dando tu-na maringo*
CL13-DEM CL13.NOM-girl CL13-GEN Dandora CL13.POSS-has pride
'Those Dandora girls have pride'

While the noun *dem* 'girl' belongs to class 1/2 in standard Swahili, it is reclassified into class 12/13 in Sheng. The class 12 nominal prefix *ka-* is annexed to the noun *dem* to form *Kadem* diminutive for *dem* 'girl'. The rest of the constituents in the entire construction must agree with the noun by conjugating affixes that match the newly formed class (see 40).

Diminutives in Sheng play multiple functions. According to Gibson et al (2017), diminutives in Bantu have wider functions cross-linguistically. In their study of 'patterns and developments in the marking of diminutives in Bantu', Gibson and his colleagues postulated that "diminutives in Bantu often expressed physical smallness. However, they can also be used to encode individuative, pejorative or other connotative meanings, e.g. referring to group membership, off-spring, young age and/or deficiency'' (pg. 344). For Sheng speakers diminutives are not only used to reference small entities but also something that is appreciated in terms of positive affection. For example,

Table 3.4.3.1
Diminutive and their semantic associations

Diminutives	**Semantic associations**
Kadem 'woman'	prettiness
Kajunia 'young one'	Good-looking, affable
Kakitu 'something small'	bribe
Kakiu 'thirst'	Alcoholic thirst

Augmentatives in Sheng have in the past been assumed not to follow Bantu formation like that of Swahili. In his dissertation, Bosire (2008) argues that Sheng augmentatives use adjectival description of size such as one highlighted in table 3.4.4.2.

Table 3.4.3.2
Augmentatives as adjectival description of size

Noun	**Adjectival description**	**SG**	**PL**	**Gloss**
m-see 'guy'	Mbigi 'big"	Msee mbigi	Wasee wabigi	'big guy'
m-ti 'tree'	Msoo 'big'	Mti msoo	Miti soo	'big tree'
Chipo 'chips'	Mwitu "a lot"	Chipo mwitu	Chipo mwitu	'huge fries'
Gari 'car'	Bwaku 'big'	Gari bwaku	Magari mabwaku	'big car'

While this is true synchronically, Sheng is gradually converging to regularity in augmentative formation. Based on my conversation with Sheng speakers, a class of augmentatives is in its early formation. A section of Sheng speakers uses *gu-* prefix to denote augmentatives in singular and *ma-* in plural. Consider the following examples recorded from Sheng speakers in Kayole.

(81)

Gu-see gu-kubwa gu-na behave kaa g-wenda
CL20.AUG-guy CL20-big CL20-have behave like CL20-insane person
'A big guy behaving like an insane person'

In (81) the use of *gu-* is an innovative form for class 20 in Sheng. While analyzing the noun class system of Bena (G63) Morrison (2018) maintains that Bena speakers assign certain referents to varied classes. Among them is the augmentative of a 'frog' which appears in 2 classes, that is, class 5 and 20. Consider the example below.

(82)

U-gú-ngodofu gu-kómi gú-la gu-idzig-ága pa-lú-leenga pá-la
AUG-20-frog 20-big 20-DIST 20-fall-NARR 16-13-water 16-DIST
'That big frog fell into the water there'

In (82) the prefix *gu-* resurfaces as marker for augmentative in Bena. I postulate that Sheng is also in the process of adopting *gu-* prefix in marking augmentative nouns which can be classified in class 20. While the use of plural application for (81) is rare among Sheng speakers, our postulation is that it will likely take the formation in (83) based on its use by a section of speakers in the Eastlands Nairobi, which is believed to be the source of Sheng innovations.

(83)

Ma-jisee ma-kubwa ya-na behave kaa m-eenda
CL6-guy CL6-big CL6-has behave like CL-madman
'Big guys behaving insanely'

3.3.1.10 Class 15: Deverbal nouns

English derives its verbal nouns either syntactically or morphologically. A verb can be a noun when it is in the subject position. That is, it meets all the syntactic requirements of that position in a constituent. For instance, '*The cut on his face looks ugly'* Here, *cut* is used as a noun and not as a verb as it occupies the subject position of the syntactic phrase. Additionally, unlike the verb, it cooccurs with the determiner *the*. Another syntactic reason is that *the cut* becomes one of the arguments of the verbs *look*. Morphologically, nouns may also be derived from verbs by appending derivational affixes such as -ing. For instance, *I will do the swinging*. In this construction, the gerund does not signal progressive aspect but rather a deverbal noun derived from the verb *swing*.

Swahili and Sheng, have a special class that represents all nouns derived from verbs. This is class 15. Both Sheng and Swahili use infinitive marker *ku-* to derive nouns from any verb.

(84)

Sheng	**Gloss**	**Swahili**	**Gloss**
Ku-hepa.	‘to escape’	ku-jenga	‘to build’
Ku-dishi	‘to eat’	ku-soma	‘to study’
Ku-sota	‘to be broke’	ku-kunywa	‘to drink’
Ku-doz	‘to sleep’	ku-potea	‘to get lost’
Ku-ngeta	‘to rob’	ku-iba	‘to still’
Ku-boeka	‘to be bored’	ku-cheza	‘to dance’

Noun derivation in both Sheng and Swahili is achieved by appending class 15 nominal prefix ku- which is also an infinitival marker in Swahili. So, in (84) ku- +verb → deverbal noun. The grammatical agreements for class 15 for both Sheng and Swahili are highlighted below.

Table 3.6
Grammatical concords for class 15

Nom Prefi	**Subject**	**Adject**	**OBJ**	**POSS**	**PREP**	**Rel.**	**Prox**	**Ref**	**Distal**
Ku	Ku-	Ku-	ko-	Kw-	ku-	-ko	huku	huko	kule

(85)
Hu-ko ku-zubaa kw-ako ni kw-a udu
DEM-CL15 CL.15-lack attention CL15-2SG.POSS BE.PRS CL15.GEN silly
‘That inattentiveness of yours is silly’

3.3.1.11 Class 16,17 and 18

These classes are grouped together since they only have one referent noun, that is, a locative noun. The noun in this class is used to describe location of something from the relative position of the speaker. Class 16 consists of a definite location. What this means is that the speaker and the addressee are both aware of the locative position that is being referenced by the speaker. This position is marked by PA- nominal marker as in the example below

(86) Swahili

Pa-hali *pa-le* *ni* *pa-ke*
CL16.DEF-location CL16-DEM BE.STATIVE.PRS CL16-POSS
'That (definite) place is his'

In (86) all grammatical elements must agree with class 16 nominal marker *pa-*. The demonstrative and possessive forms in (86) are all conjugated with pa- prefix to mark definiteness of the nominal class. Class 17 consists of an indefinite location. Both the speaker and the addressee ascribe no definiteness to the place being referred to. While it points to a position within their vicinity the position is not definite. The nominal prefix for this class is ku- in Swahili. However, Swahili rarely uses this prefix as PA- prefix is prevalent than KU-. Sheng on the other hand use definite marker PA- for all locatives.

(87)

Ku-hali *hu-ku* *ni* *ku-zuri*
CL17.IND-place DEM-CL17 BE CL17-good
'This (indefinite) place is good'

All other grammatical elements such as adjectival and adverbial phrase must agree with the nominal class prefix ku-

Lastly class 18 consists of a locative noun that reference an enclosed location. Places that are enclosed such as a classroom, a hole, a car, a bottle and so forth are marked by *m-* prefix on adjectives and verbal agreements. Consider example (88a). The use of class 18 concords on nouns and verbal agreements are rare and appear to drop in Sheng conversations. Consider example (88b) in Sheng.

(88)

a) *Mahali* *m-le* *ni* *m-chafu*
CL18.Place CL18-DEM BE.STATIVE CL18-dirty
'That (enclosed) place is dirty'

b) *Place* *ile* *ni* *chafu*
CL 10.Place CL10-DEM BE.STATIVE dirty

'That place is dirty'

3.3.2 Verbal morphology

Like many other Bantu languages, Sheng exhibits rich inflectional as well as derivational morphology. A typical verb phrase consists of an obligatory verb stem which may be preceded or followed by one or more bound morphemes. Typically, prefixes that specify person, number, subject and object as well as time, aspect, and negation preced the verbal stem. Post verbal stem features include extensions and derivational affixes that give rise to new words or different senses of the verb. For example,

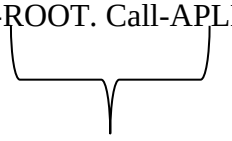
(89)

Sheng	**Swahili**
Tu-na-relax-ish-a mwili	*Tu-na-pumz-ish-a mwili*
1PL-PRS-stem-CAUS-FV body	1PL-PRS-stem-CAUS-FV body
'We are relaxing our body'	'We are relaxing our body'

In Sheng (as well as Swahili) the verb is a complex unit that is affixed with grammatical elements that are syntactically mapped onto it from within or outside its maximal projection. The Sheng verbal structure can also be analyzed in terms of the root, stem and base. The root is the irreducible core of the verb. Typically, this is in form of -CVC- syllable structure. The stems is part of the verb that exists before any inflectional affixes are added. Stem can be further divided into bases and final vowel (FV). The base is any verb unit to which any affix can be attached. It is the base from which different forms of the verbs are derived (Schadeberg, 2003). In other words, the stem and the root comprise of the base. Consider example (90) from Sheng.

(90)

Tu-chap-ia-n-e
1PL.SUBJ-ROOT. Call-APLL-RECIP



stem
'Let's call each other'

For the purposes of this dissertation, I am going to analyze the verbal structure of Sheng in comparison to that of its lexifier, Swahili. Morphological distribution of a finite verb in Sheng mirrors those in other Bantu languages and more particularly Swahili, one of the languages it heavily borrows from. Like many other Bantu languages, Sheng morphemes are concatenatively organized in the following structure.

(91)

(Initial)-Subject-Negative-T(A)- Object-root-Extension(s)-Final-Suffix
(Nurse, 2003:90).

All grammatical slots to the left and right of the root are inflectional in nature. The initial position, while optional in different Bantu languages, is comprised of negation and relative prefixes. According to Nurse (2003), this position may be occupied by other categories cross-linguistically since it is the position under which "new material often become grammaticalized" (p. 92). The subject position is occupied by prefixes marking heads of the syntactic phrase. The negative slot is where the negative affix occurs. However, it is also possible for negation to occur in the initial position the initial position (compare 92b and c). Consider the following Swahili examples.

(92)

a) A-me-fik-a
SUBJ-PERF-root-FV
'He/she arrived'
b) Ha-ja-fik-a
NEG-IMPERF-root-FV
'He/she has not arrived'
c) A-si-fik-e
2SG.SUBJ-NEG-root-FV

'He should not arrive'

The T(A) represents tense and or aspect. This is a grammatical affix marking the relationship of verbal act and time. Swahili and Sheng marks T(A) through four major tenses represented by the acronym 'NAMELITA' where -NA- is present tense, -ME- is perfective tense (with -JA- as imperfective), -LI- as past tense, and -TA- as future tense. The root is the core part of the verbal phrase that carries the lexical meaning. The extension comprises of affixes that mark additional arguments of the predicate such as applicatives, stative, reciprocal, reversive, passive and causative among others. The Final position may be occupied by negation and tense in some Bantu languages. Cross linguistically, specifically among Bantu languages, the suffix position is reserved for imperative material or any foreign or innovative material. Bosire (2008) modifies Nurse's template by contending that the root, extension, final segments and suffix make up the stem while the inclusion of subject to the stem forms a macro-stem. This, according to him, is the 'Bantuistic' template that feature in many Bantu languages. See (93).

(93)

Initial-Subject-Negative-TAM-[$_{ms}$Object-[$_{s}$Root-Extensions-Final-Suffix (FV]][34]

Sheng and Swahili assume this order but with slight variation in the negative construction where the negative and subject marking may cooccur together by a single morph that is bimorphemic (see 94b and d).

(94)

Sheng
a) *U-si-ni-beb-an-ish-e*
2SG.SUBJ-NEG-PRS-1SG.OBJ-carry-RECIP-CAUS-FV
'Do not make me lie to each other'

[34] TAM = Tense Aspect and Mood, MS=macro stem, S=stem and FV =Final vowel

b) Hu-ja-ni-beb-an-ish-e
2SG.SUBJ.NEG-IMPERF-1SG.OBJ-carry-RECIP-CAUS-FV
'You have not made me lie to each other'

Swahili
c) *u-si-ni-dang-an-ish-e*
2SG.SUBJ-NEG-1OBJ-carry-REC-CAUS-FV
'Do not make me lie to each other'
d) *Hu-ja-ni-dang-an-ish-a*
2SG.SUBJ.NEG-IMPERF-1SG.OBJ-carry-RECIP-CAUS-FV
'You have not me lie to each other'

3.3.2.1 Subject and Object markers

Sheng follows similar distribution template in (100) when marking subjects on verbal stem. Subject prefixes agree with class of the subject head. (Compare table 3.4 and 3.5 in section 3.3.1) Example (95) highlights verbal subject pronoun prefixes for class 1/2.

(95) Subject pronoun prefixes for Sheng and Swahili

Subject	**Sheng**	**Swahili**
	SG/PL	**SG/PL**
1st person	ni/tu	ni/tu
2nd person	u/m	u/m
3rd person	a/wa	a/wa

(96)

Sheng	**Swahili**
Ni-na-kam	Ni-na-kuj-a
1SG.SUBJ-PRS-come	1SG.SUBJ-PRS-come-FV
'I am coming'	'I am coming'

These subject affixes occupy the subject position as highlighted in (96). Both Sheng and Swahili use the same subject affixes. The Sheng object markers on the other hand slightly varies from those of Swahili (see 97).

(97) Object pronouns for Sheng and Swahili

Object	**Sheng**	**Swahili**
	SG/PL	**SG/PL**
1st Person	ni/tu	ni/tu
2nd Person	ku/wa	ku/m
3rd Person	m/wa	m/wa

For instance, the second person plural pronoun prefix of Sheng differs from that of Swahili as observed in (98). Sheng uses /-wa-/ while Swahili uses /-m-/. Consider the following pairs.

(98)

Sheng			Swahili		
*Ni-na-**wa**-like*	*nyii*	*wote*	*Ni-na-**m**-penda*	*ninyi*	*wote*
1SG-Tense-2PL.OBJ.-like	EMPH.you	all	1SG-Tense-2PL.OBJ.-like	EMPH.you	all
'I love you all'			'I love you all'		

Sheng is in the process of leveling both second- and third-person plural pronoun prefixes compared to Swahili which uses *-m-* for 2PL and *-wa-* for 3PL.

Below is a summary of the object markers as realized on the Sheng verbal structure. The one in brackets indicates optionality or the language is in the process of eradicating the marker.

(99)

Object	Sheng	Swahili
	SG/PL	SG/PL
1st Person	ni/tu	ni/tu
2nd Person	ku/wa	ku/m
3rd Person	(m)/wa	m/wa

3.3.2.2 Tense and Aspect in Sheng

Tense and aspect are inherent properties of a verbal construction in many Bantu languages. I go by Katamba and Stonham (1993)'s definition that tense and aspect add specifications to event, state or action denoted by the verb. To put it differently, tense

denotes time of the action, state, or event denoted by the verb in relation to a certain moment. It is assumed that the 'moment' is the actual time of speech. If the event happened before time of speech, it is past, during the speech it is present and if it will happen after speech time it is future tense.

Sheng shares similar tense marking with Swahili. The marker for tense on verbal structure is *-li-* for past, *-na-* for present, and *-ta-* for future. Consider the following illustration from both Sheng and Swahili.

(100)

Sheng	**Swahili**
Bazu u-li-promise ku-ni-jenga	Jamaa u-li-ahidi ku-ni-saidia
Man 2SG-PAST-promise INF.-1SG.OBJ- build	Man 2SG-PST-promise INF.-1SG.OBJ-help
'Man, you promised to help me'	'Man, you promised to help me'

Aspect on the other hand marks the event or action as complete (perfective aspect), or incomplete (imperfective aspect). These two aspects can be marked on different tenses as well, that is, past perfect, past continuous, present perfect, present continuous and so forth. Both Sheng and Swahili display six aspect as follows.

(101)

	Sheng	Swahili
Simple perfect:	*Onyi a**sha**come*	*Onyino a**me**fika*
	Onyi 3SG-PERF-arrive	Onyino 3SG-PERF-arrive
	'Onyino has arrived'	'Onyino has arrived'
IMPERF_CONT.	*Alikuwa a**na**dance….*	*Alikuwa a**na**cheza….*
	3SG-PST-BE 3SG-CONT-dance	3SG-PST-BE 3SG-CONT-dance
	'S/he was dancing…	'S/he was dancing…..'
COND. IMPERF		
	*A-**nge**-come, a-**nge**-ni-get*	*A-**nge**-fika, a-**nge**-ni-pata*
	3SG-COND-come, 3SG-COND-PRS-get	3SG-COND-come, 3SG-COND-PRS-get
	If he would have come, he would have found me'	' If he would have arrived, he would have find me'
Habitual	*Yee anacomi-**ng**i*	*Yeye **hu**-ja*
	'3SG-PRS-come-HAB	'S/he HAB-come

	‘S/he comes’	‘S/he comes’
Sequential	*A-**ka**-zima alafu a-**ka**-washa* 3SG-SEQ-off then 3SG-SEQ-lighten ‘S/he turned off the light and on again again’	*A-**ka**-zima kisha a-**ka**-washa* 3SG-SEQ-off then 3SG-SEQ-lighten ‘S/he turned off the the lights and on
Simultaneous	*ni-**ki**-ji-tupa a-li-kuwa a-ki-fi-ka* 1SG-SIM-REFL-throw 3SG-PST-BE 3SG-PST-PERF-arrive ‘When I left, he was arriving’	*Ni-**ki**-ondoka alikuwa a**ki**fika* 1SG-SIM-REFL-leave 3SG-PST-BE 3SG-PST-PERF-arrive ‘When I left, he was arriving’

As illustrated in (101), Sheng and Swahili appear to share similar verbal markings for all aspects except simple perfect and habitual aspect. According to my interrogation with informants, it appears that the simple perfect marking *-sha-* is a case of gradual shift from -me- by Sheng speakers. However, the two are presently used interchangeably. Of significant interest, is the total shift of habitual aspect marking from Swahili *-hu-* to Sheng *-ng-*.

3.3.2.3 Habitual aspect

This aspect is used to mark events or actions that are constantly repetitive. It denotes actions that are habitual. English marks this aspect by simple present tense, as in, ‘He goes to the store every day’. Swahili marks habitual aspect by appending the *hu-* prefix to the verb stem. On the contrary, Sheng uses a serial construction of tenses to mark habitual. First, is the use of present tense suffix *-na-* that is obligatory before the stem and the *-ng-* marker in the Final position of the Bantu template in (91). Compare habitual aspect in example (102).

(102)

Sheng	**Swahili**
Mii ni-na-kuja-ng-a huku	*Mimi hu-ja huku*
1SG.SUBJ 1SG-PRS-come-HAB-FV here	1SG. SUBJ HAB-come here
‘I come here (everyday)’	‘I come here (everyday)’

The combination of present tense affix *-na-* with habitual aspect marking *-ng-* is unique to Sheng but only when compared with Swahili which lacks such a construction as observed in (102). Other Bantu languages mark habitual aspect as Sheng does. Lunyore, spoken in Western Kenya likewise inflects for habitual aspect with the morpheme /-ng-/ in Final position, following the stem., spoken in Western Kenya, habitual aspect is also marked in the final position after the stem.

(103) Lunyore habitual marking

A- Ø-lima-ng-a *amatuma*
3SG-PRS-cultivate-HAB-FV white corn
'S/he harvests maize'

3.3.2.4 Derivational extensions

According to Schadeberg (2003) a typical Bantu verb phrase consists of an obligatory stem which may be preceded by a nominal, noun class, tense and negation prefixes. This takes the shape of NPx=$[B\text{-}F]_{stem}$ where NPx is noun class or Nominal prefix, = is the stem initial boundary, B the base and (-) word internal boundaries and F is the final vowel. A simple base (B) contains only a radical or root (R) while the base B may consist of R and extensions (E). These extensions play a significant role in verbal derivation in Bantu languages. I will use Schadeberg's summary of verb extension to analyze Sheng verbal extensions in comparison to those of Swahili.

While elaborating on "Bantu grammatical reconstruction" by (Meeussen 1967; Bastin and Mumba 1998; Meinho 1899; 1906;, Meinhof and Warmelo 1932; Doke 1935 and Guthrie 1967-71), Shaderberg (2003:71) provides a summary of proto Bantu (PB) reconstructed verbal extension from which different Bantu languages have developed. In (104) I provide side by side comparison of PB reconstructed forms with those of Sheng and Swahili.

(104)

PB function	**Sheng**	**Swahili**	**Grammatical**
*-i-/-ici-	-ish/ (-i-)	-i-/-sh-	Causative
*-ɪl-	-il-	-i	Dative/applicative
*-ɪk-			impositive
*-ɪk-			neuter
*-am-			positional/stative
*-an-	-an-	-an-	possessive/reciprocal
*-ag-/-ang-	-ng- (habitual)		repetitive
*-al-			extensive
*-at-			tentive (contactive)
*- ʊl-; -ʊk-	-ul-/-uk-	-ul-/uk-	separative tr.; intr. reversive
* -ʊ-/-ibʊ-	-w-	-w-	passive

Schaderberg notes that the canonical extension has the structure of -VC-. These extensions may vary widely based on a productivity scale, where some are more productive than the others (Schaderberg, 2003:72).

3.3.2.4.1 Causative -ish

When this causative extension is added to a Bantu stem it gives the semantic impression of ‘cause to X’. Causativization is a grammatical function changing rule. It increases the valency of the predicate, making it to adopt new arguments with new theta roles (Katamba & Stonham 2006:274). Like other Bantu languages, when causative extension /-*ish*/ is added to a Sheng intransitive stem, it gives the semantic impression of ‘cause to X’ where X is the meaning of the verb.

(105)

a) *A-li-chacha*
3SG.SUBJ-PST-excitement
‘He laughed’
b*) a-li-m-chach-ish-a*
3SG-PST-3SG.OBJ-stem-CAUS-FV
‘He made him to laugh’

As with other Bantu languages, when the causative extension *-ish* is added to a transitive stem, the subject of the simple verb becomes the object of the derived causative predicate. Consider the following derivation

(106)

a) *Mtoi* *a-na-manga* *chakula*
Child 3SG-PRS-eat food
'The child is eating food'

b) *Juma a-na-m-mang-ish-a* *mtoi food*
Juma 3SG.SUBJ-PRS-3SG.OBJ-eat-CAUS-FV child food
'Juma caused the child to eat food'

In (106a) the simple verb has the agent-patient correspondence but when causative *-ish* is introduced to the stem as in (106b) a few grammatical changes are observed. First, the new NP (Juma) assumes the theta role of agent and grammatical role as subject while the original agent (mtoi 'child') is relegated to the object position. The original direct object becomes indirect object.

3.3.2.4.2 Applicative -i-/-e-

Also known as benefactive, applicative extensions indicate that an event or action denoted by the predicate is carried out on behalf of someone or something. It can also be used to indicate an action is done towards someone. Applicative may also indicate a place where an action was done. As a result, applicative applies to transitive predicate. The object of the transitive verb can achieve the semantic functions of beneficiary, place, time, cause, reason, and instrument (Shadeberg, 2003:74) The applicative in Sheng takes the shape of -V- and it oscillates between -e- and -i-.

(108)

Sheng applicative **gloss**

Mes-e-a dem	‘like a girl’
Rap-i-a mse	‘sing for the guy’
Chez-e-a chini	‘dance from below (also hide secret)’
Ruk-i-a mtu	‘jump on someone (also become inconsiderate)’
Got-e-a wasee	‘greet people’
Beb-e-a ganji	‘carry money on behalf of’

Stems with roots that end in a vowel show introduction of lateral -l- before the final vowel in the applicative forms.

(109)

Verb		**applicative**	**Gloss**
Kaa	‘sit’	kalia	‘sit on’
Lia	‘cry’	lilia	‘cry on behalf of’
Loa	‘be wet’	lolea	‘wet on behalf of’

(110) A sample sentence with applicative

a) Juma a-na-kal-i-a kiti
Juma 3SG.SUBJ-PRS-sit-i-APPL-FV seat
Juma is sittin on a chair

b) Mama a-li-m-lil-i-a mtoto
Mother CL1.SUBJ.SG-PST-3SG.OBJ-cry-APPL-FV child
‘The mother cried for the baby’

Literature has it that there could be a possibility that /-li-/ and /-i-/ could be allomorphs of the same phoneme realized in different environments (Wilson, 1970; Kabugi 1988 as cited by Bosire, 2008). However, this has be proven not to be the case as /-li-/ is also possible in other extensions such as stative cases as seen in (111).

(111)

Verb		**Stative**	
Kaa	‘sit’	kalika	be able to sit/sittable
Lia	‘cry’	lilika	be able to cry
Loa	‘wet’	loleka	wettable
Paa	‘fly’	palika	flyable

When the applicative -i- is used with intransitive predicate, it creates a sense of emphasis as observed in (112).

(112)

APPL	**Gloss**	**Example**	**Gloss**
Shik-a!	'hold'	Shik-a hapa	'Hold here'
Shik-i-a	'hold for'	Shi-i-a hapa	'Hold on here'
Shik-il-i-a	'hold on fast'	Shik-il-i-a kwa nguvu	'Hold on firm'

Data source (with my own modification): Bosire (2008:81)

The debate on whether /-il-/ or /-i-/ is underlying is far from over since Schadeberg (2003) posits the copy of the reconstructed form *-il- as the underlying form, while Ashton (1944:214) as cited by Bosire (2008) contends that it is both /-i-/ and /-il-/. The argument aims to favor /-i-/ as the underlying form since the rule that posit -il- as underlying and deletes in the environment preceding final vowel would require further evidence for l-deletion in cases such as those observed in (111).

3.3.2.4.3 Stative/positional -ik-

When stative extensions are used with intransitive verbs, they create the meaning of' 'be in a position' (Shadeberg, 2003). It can also create the semantic notion of destruction. For example.

Base form	**Gloss**	**Stative**	**Gloss**
Vunja	'break'	vunjika	'breakable'
Haribu	'destroy'	haribika	'go bad'
Imba	'sing'	imbika	'singable'

Consider the following sample sentence.

(113)

Hi-cho ki-kombe ni cha ku-vunj-ik-a
DEM.CL8 CL8-cup BE ASSOC-a INF-break-stative-FV
'That cup is brittle/breakable'

Stative extensions can also be used with an experiencer verb to create a notion of experiencing an action such as *sik**ik**a* ‘be heard’, *onekana* ‘be seen’, *pik**ik**a* ‘cookable’ . Sheng (as well as Swahili) use the affix -ik- or /-ek- to mark stativity.

(114)

Verb	**Gloss**	**Sheng stative**	**Gloss**
Gwar-a	‘refuse’	Gwar-ik-a	‘refusable’
Got-a	‘greet’	Got-ek-a	‘greetable’
Dem-a	‘eat’	Dem-ek-a	‘eatable’
Kemb-a	‘greet’	Kemb-ek-a	‘greetable’
Ach-a	‘leave’	Ach-ik-a	‘be left’ (as in breakup)

According to Mchombo (1993b) stative is a morpholexical process. When it applies to a transitive verb it reduces it to an intransitive one. For example,

(115)

Got-e-a msee	→	got-ek-a ‘greetable’
Greet-APP-FV guy		greet-STATIVE-FV
‘greet a guy’		‘Greetable’

In (115) the predicate *gotea* loses its argument *guy* to become intransitive *goteka* once the stative extension -ek- is added. In Mchomba’s words “its application eliminates the agent and links the patient role with the subject’ (Mchomba, 1993b:24). This can also be referred to as a valency reducing rule.

In derivational morphology, the stative affix can be used to derive stative verbs from nouns. Consider example (116).

(116)

Noun	**Gloss**	**stative verbs**	**Gloss**
Babi	‘rich guy’	babika	‘become rich’
Msupa	‘beautiful girl’	supika	‘become beautiful’
Mrembo	‘beautiful girl’	rembeka	‘become beautiful’
Mdosi	‘rich guy’	dosika	‘become rich’

The surface representation of the stative extension appears to vary in different environments. Stems that end in a vowel introduce the lateral /-l-/ between the stem and the stative affix. Consider example (117).

(117)

a) statives with lateral /-l-/

Sahau ‘forget’	sahau-**lik**-a	‘become forgotten’
Rarua ‘tear’	raru-**lik**-a	‘become tearable’
Twaa ‘inaugurate’	twa-**lik**-a	‘become inauguarable’

b) statives without /-l-/

imb-a ‘sing’	imb-ik-a ‘singable’
omb-a ‘beg’	omb-ek-a ‘able to beg’
ruk-a ‘jump’	ruk-ik-a ‘jumpable’
vuk-a ‘cross’	vuk-ik-a ‘crossable’

Alternation between -ik- and -ek- could be attributed to vowel harmony in the base. Stems with high vowels agree with stative /-ik-/ which has a high vowel. On the other hand -ek- agree with mid vowels. Consider (118).

(118)

/-ik-/		/-ek-/
Ting-ik-a	‘scoreable’	som-ek-a ‘readable
Finy-ik-a	‘squizzable’	nyol-ek-a ‘shaveable’
Pit-ik-a	‘passable’	sem-ek-a ‘speakable’

3.3.2.4.4 Reversive/inversive -uk-/-u-

The reversive extension when affixed on a verb stem, reverses the meaning of the event or action denoted by the verb. For instance, *tinga* ‘close’ becomes *tingua* ‘open’. In Sheng the reversive is marked by -uk- for intransitive verbs and -u- for transitive verbs.

3.3.2.4.4.1 Reversive intransitive -uk-

The extension /-uk-/ occurs with an intransitive verb to indicate the reverse or opposite notion of the original verb. Consider (119).

(119)

Verb	**reversive**

Fuma ‘cover’	fumuka ‘uncover’
Funga ‘close’	funguka ‘open’
Tega ‘lay a trap’	‘teguka’ ‘snap’
Ziba ‘patch up’	zibuka ‘unpatch

(120) Examples in a sentence

a) Shuka i-li-fum-uk-a a-ki-lala
Bedsheet CL9-PST-cover-REV-FV 3SG-PROG-sleep
‘The bedsheet uncovered while he was sleeping’

b) M-tego y-ake i-li-teg-uk-a
CL3-trap CL9-POSS CL9-PST-trap-REV-FV
‘His trap snapped’

The reversive -uk- is also a grammatical role-changing derivation. It raises the object of the transitive verb to the subject position. Consider the following.

(121)

a) a-li-fung-a keja
3SG.SUBJ-PST-Close-FV. house
‘S/he locked the house’

b) Keja i-li-fung-uk-a
House 3SG.OBJ.-PST-open-REV-FV
‘The house was unlocked’

3.3.2.4.4.2 Reversive transitive -u-

This extension is affixed to a transitive verb to give rise to a reversive meaning of the action or event. The verb with this extension must take a direct object. For instance, *tinga bao* ‘score a goal’ becomes *ting-u-a bao* ‘make a goal save’. Sheng and Swahili use -u- to mark reversive as observed from (122).

(122)

Tega	‘set a trap’	tegua	‘undo the trap’
Tinga	‘close’	tingua	‘open’
Bamba	‘overwhelm’	bambua	‘bore/underwhelm’
Panga	‘arrange’	pangua	‘rearrange’

There is an existing argument in literature on whether -*u*- is underlyingly /-*ul-/* or /-*u-/*. Bosire (2008) contends that since /-ul-/ occurs in other constructions such as the combination of the reversive and applicative, it should be the underlying representation. Thereafter, -*l*- is lost when a final is added in reversive construction. Example (123) shows that when reversive and applicative are applied on a verb stem, the lateral -*l*- resurfaces.

(123)

Reversive		**reversive + applicative**	
Pengua	'rearrange'	peng-ul-i-a	'open for'
Tegua	'unset a trap'	teg-ul-i-a	'unset the trap for'
fichua	'reveal'	fich-ul-i-a	'reveal for'

3.3.2.4.5 Passive -w-

Passive is a common grammatical changing rule crosslinguistically. When the passive extension is affixed to the verb stem, it re-orders the arguments such that the patient functions as the subject and the erstwhile subject is relegated to the oblique position (Katamba and Stonham, 2006). In Sheng, the passive extension is marked by -w- or -iw-. Consider example (124) below

(124)

a) Mtoi a-na-chop gazeti
Chile 3SG-PRS-read newspaper
'the child is reading the newspaper'

b) Gazeti li-na-chop-**iw**-a (na mtoi)
Newspaper CL5-PRS-read-PASS-FW
'The newspaper is read by the child'

The declarative statement in (124a) has the agent who is also the experiencer of the predicate. The newspaper is the object of the transitive verb *chop* 'read'. When the passive extension -*iw*- is affixed to the transitive stem as observed in (124b), it shifts the

grammatical relations when the object of the transitive verb *chop* ‘read’ is raised to the subject position and the subject relegated to the oblique position. The predicate becomes intransitive, *chopiwa* ‘be read’.

When the passive *-w-* is used in Sheng it changes how the predicate assigns roles, that is, the patient functions as the subject and the agent is placed after the verb or deleted all together.

(125) Passives in Sheng

Verb		**passive**	
Bamba	‘excite’	bamb-w-a	‘be excited’
Chez-a	‘play’	chez-w-a	‘be tricked’
Mang-a	‘make love’	mang-w-a	‘be made love to’
Rombos-a	‘dance’	rombos-w-a	‘be danced’
Sak-a	‘search’	sak-w-a	‘be searched for’
Hand-a	‘arrest’	hand-w-a	‘be arrested’

3.3.2.4.6 Reciprocal /-an-/

When reciprocal extension *-na-* is added to the stem of a Sheng verb it depicts the meaning of doing an action, event or something for one another. Consider the illustration in (126)

(126)

a)	Rukia	‘castigate’	ruki-an-a	‘castigate each other’
b)	Saksua	‘pickpocket’	saksu-an-a	‘pickpocket each other’
c)	Tinga	‘score’	ting-an-a	‘score for each other’
d)	Jenga	‘help’	jeng-an-a	‘help each other’
e)	Ranyo	‘urinate’	ranyoana	‘urinate on each other (especially kids)’

‘

3.3.2.5 Ordering extensions

Extensions in Bantu languages interact with each other when affixed to the same stem. According to Katamba and Stonham (2006) when more than one grammatical function changing process applies in a sentence, the morphological rules interact

concurrently with syntactic operations. This is in line with Baker (1985) as cited by Katamba & Stonham (2006:288) who proposed the Mirror Principle that "morphological derivations must directly reflect syntactic derivation and vice versa.". A closer examination of Sheng causativisation and passivisation reveal this to be the case. Consider the following construction:

(127)

a) Subject Verb
Wa-toi wa-na-klad-i
3PL-kid CL2-PRS-dress-FV
'Kids are dressing up'

b) Causative
Subject verb Object
Masa *a-na-clad-**ish**-a* *wa-toi*
Mother 3SG.SUBJ-PRS-dress-up-CAUS-FV CL2-kid
'The mother is dressing the kids up'

c)Causative – passive construction
Subject verb oblique NP
*Wa-toi wa-na-clad-**ish-iw**-a* *na masa*
CL2-kid CL2.3PL-PRS-dress up-CAUS-PASS-FV by mother
'The kids are being dressed by the mother'

According to the construction in (127) it is evident that the causative and passive extensions are ordered. When the causative applies as observed in (127b), the subject in (127a) *watoi* 'kids' assumes the object position of the verb *kladi* 'dress up' while the new Subject (the causer) takes the subject position in (127b). When passive rule applies on the same stem as observed in (127c), the object NP of the verb is promoted to the subject position while the subject is relegated to the oblique position or deleted all together. The verb changes from transitive *kladisha* 'dress someone up' to intransitive *kladishwa* 'be dressed up'. It is apparent that causative rule and passive rule are in feeding relationship where the causative must apply first before the passive rule applies. This also affects

morpholexical ordering of verbal extensions where the causative -*ish*- is closer to the stem than the passive -*w*- since the former feeds or is a prerequisite to the latter.

Similarly, the causative and reciprocal appear to be in a feeding relationship. In Sheng, the causative rule must apply before the reciprocal rule applies. Consider example (128) below.

(128)

a) *Dem a-na-m-l-ish-a chali yake.*
Girl 3SG.SUBJ-PRS-3SG.OBJ-eat-CAUS-FV boyfriend her
'The girl is feeding her boyfriend'

b) *Dem na chali wa-na-l-ish-an-a chakula*
Girl and boy 3PL-PRS-l-CAUS-RECIP-FV food
'The girl and the boy are feeding each other'

From the above cases we can argue that Sheng follows other Bantu languages in following the hierarchical nature of verbal extensions where causative precedes passive and reciprocation. It appears that the reversive extension assumes a position closer to the stem, followed by causative, reciprocal, and passive in that order. Consider the following examples showing order of extension.

(129)
Reversive:
a)A-li-pang-u-a nyumba
3SG.SUBJ-PST-arrange-REV-FV
'S/he disorganized the house'
Reversive before Causative:
b)) A-li-pang-u-l-ish-a nyumba[35]
3SG.SUBJ-PST-arrange-REV-CAUS-FV
'S/he caused the disorganization of the house'

[35] Stems with roots that end in a vowel show introduction of lateral -l- before the final vowel in the applicative forms. The presence of reversive -u- could be triggering the introduction of -l-.

c) *A-li-pang-ish-l-a nyumba
3SG.SUBJ-PST-arrange-CAUS-REV-FV
*S/he caused the
Reversive, Causative and passive
d)Nyumba i-li-pang-ul-ish-w-a
3SG.SUBJ-PST-3SG.OBJ-arrange-REV-CAUS-PASS-FV
'The house was disorganized'

From the above set of examples, certain extensions have to precede others, any reversal like that observed in (c) leads to ungrammatical construction.

3.4 Is Sheng a case of matrix language turnover underway?

3.4.1 Introduction

In this section, I use the matrix language turnover hypothesis highlighted in (section 2.2.2) to characterize Sheng as a case of multilingual speech that implies composite grammar or gradual shift to a new morphosyntactic frames. That is, it is a case of mixed language that involves separation and recombination of abstract grammatical frame across more than one language as suggested by Myers-Scotton (2002). I use the 4-M model and Abstract model proposed by Myers-Scotton (2002) to analyze and compare the morpheme system of Swahili (the lexifier language) and that of Sheng (the contact language). Matrix language turnover occurs when the morphosyntactic frame structuring the language has changed or changing (Myers-Scotton, 2002). When this happens, part of the late system morphemes is borrowed from the embedded language or substrate language. The late system morpheme is important in language change due to its role in the larger syntactic relations in the grammar of the shifting language. Importantly, are the late outsider system morphemes as they bind different clauses together since they are grammatically co-referenced with forms outside their immediate maximal projection (cf section 2.2.3.2)

3.4.2 Matrix language convergence

A grammatical frame that displays mixed grammatical forms from more than one language is considered mixed and is a sign of morphosyntactic restructuring. In section 2.2.3 I discuss in detail the matrix language framework with focus on composite codeswitching between languages in contact. Similarly, I introduce the Abstract Level model and 4-M model in section 2.2.3.1 and 2.2.3.2 respectively to conceptualize how restructuring of grammatical system take place. I further use the morpheme classification to categorize the Sheng morphemes systems going forward.

According to Myers -Scotton, a language is considered split (mixed) if nearly all of its morphosyntactic frame and system morphemes are derived from a source language other than that from which the main lexicon is derived. That is, a mixed language shows a split system of features (Myers-Scotton 2002:249). Based on the 4M model, part of this system can be characterized into morpheme distribution as highlighted in the following section. For the sake of reference, I will revisit system morpheme with primary focus on Swahili (the lexifier language) and Sheng.

3.4.2.1 Early system morphemes

As earlier discussed, the early system morphemes appear within the same syntactic projection as their heads. They are constrained by their heads in terms of their grammatical information. Examples of early system morphemes include gender, number and person. According to the 4-M model, the lemmas they represent are noticeable at the lexicon level. In English for example, the determiner *an* representing the feature number in the phrase *an apple* is selected the moment the speaker's intention is directed to the

apple before speech production. Swahili being a highly agglutinative language[36], early system morphemes are marked by prefixes. For example, in class 1, the prefix for gender class in singular and plural animates is marked by **m-** and **wa-** respectively. Similarly, **m-** and **wa-** is marked on adjectives (ADJ) but unlike the noun class prefixes, the adjectival prefixes reference information outside their immediate projection, hence the term "outsider system morpheme" (to be discussed later). Consider the table below.

Table 3.6
Sheng examples of early system morphemes

Noun		Class	Noun class prefix
Mtoto	'child'	1	M
Watoto	'children'	2	WA
Mkebe	'can'	3	M
Mikebe	'cans'	4	MI
Jiwe	'stone'	5	∅/JI
Mawe	'stones'	6	MA
Kisu	'knife'	7	KI
Visu	'knives'	8	VI
Ndizi	'banana'	9	∅/N
Ndizi	'bananas'	10	∅/N

In Swahili, and many other Bantu languages, classification of nouns is determined both semantically and syntactically. Syntactic classification is much determined by concordial agreement of the nouns with other elements within a syntactic configuration. Consider example (130) below.

(130)

a) ***M-****toto* ***yu-****le* ***m-****refu* ***a-****na-kula*
CL1-child CL1-DEM CL1-tall CL1.SUBJ-PRS-eat
'That tall boy is eating'

b) ***Wa-****toto* *wa-le* ***wa-****refu* ***wa-****na-kula*
CL2-child CL2-DEM CL2-tall CL2.SUBJ-PRS-eat
'Those tall boys are eating'

c)***Ki-****tabu ki-le* ***ki-****moja* ***ki-****me-nunuliwa*

[36] A language which tends to have a more one-to-one matching between morphemes and morphs.

CL7-book CL7-DEM CL7-one CL7.SUBJ-PERF-buy
'That single book has been bought'

d) ***Vi-****tabu vile* ***vi-****wili* ***vi-****me-nunuliwa*
CL8-book CL8-DEM CL8-one CL8.SUBJ-PERF-buy
'Those two books have been bought'

e) ***Ø-****seremala yu-le* ***m-****fupi* ***a-****na-kula*

CL5-carpenter CL1-DEM CL1-short CL1.SUBJ-PRS-eat

'That short carpenter is eating'

f) ***Ma-****seremala* ***wa-****le* ***wa-****fupi* ***wa-****nakula*
CL6-carpenter CL2-DEM CL2-short CL2.SUBJ-PRS-eat

'Those short carpenters are eating'

By now you should have noted that Swahili forms singular in one class and plural in the following class. The nominal (NOM) prefix on the noun determines the noun class category (see table 3.3) as well as grammatical agreements with other elements within the same syntactic construction (see example 130). According to Myer-Scotton (2002), their marking on nouns such as **m-** on ***m****toto* 'child' in (130a) relates to conceptual information within their maximal projection while their affixation on adjectives, such as **m**- on ***m****refu* 'tall' is governed outside their immediate projection, that is, the adjectival phrase. In (130a-b) the NOM prefix for singular forms is *m-* while that for plural *wa-*. In (130c-d) KI and VI are NOM prefixes for CL7 and 8 respectively. Example (130e-f) shows some exception. The NOM prefix for the subject *seremala* 'carpenter' is marked by CL 5 null prefix *Ø* in singular and CL 6 nominal prefix *ma-* in plural. By using nominal classification, these would be categorized into class 5/6 as indicated in table 3.4, however, due to semantic classification, grammatical agreement with other elements in (130e-f) have to follow CL1/2 concords since *Seremala* 'carpenter' is animate and falls into class 1/2.

In Swahili, NOM prefixes and ADJ prefixes, are of significant importance to the present study in relation to the 4M model to be discussed in the upcoming sections. On the one hand, the NOM prefix such as M-/WA in class 1/2 and M-/MI in class 3/4 are conceptually called upon when semantic intentions relating to number and gender (class) point towards them. Typically, they are early system morphemes. On the other hand, the ADJ prefixes such as M on ***m-****refu* 'tall' in (130a-b) and ***ki-*** on ***ki-****moja* in (130c-d) are examples of late system morpheme as they agree with elements outside their maximal projection.

Of peculiar interest to Swahili is the 'bridge system' morpheme, which unlike English or French concord markers, they integrate separate content morphemes by deriving grammatical information from the head. Consider examples from table 3.6.1 below. In Swahili, the bridge system morpheme is marked by the associative morpheme /- *a*/ as observed from table 3.6.1. The associative morpheme /-*a/* must seek information from the head of the phrase to be grammatical. Note that, in the third and fourth examples in the table the associative -*a* 'of' agrees with the grammatical concord of the CL7 noun *kitabu* 'book', to become *cha*. When it comes to CL8 in the fourth example set of the table, the associative -a changes to *vya* 'of' to agree with the plural form *vitabu* 'books'.

Table 3.6.1
Grammatical agreement of associative -a with head of projection

Noun Class	**Associative -a**	**Gloss**
1	M-toto w-a mama CL1-child CL1-ASS mother	'Child of the mother'
2	Wa-toto w-a mama CL2-child CL2-ASS mother	'Children of the mother'
7	Ki-tabu ch-a m-toto CL7-book CL7-ASS CL1-child	'Book of the child'
8	Vitabu vya mtoto	'Books of the child'

	CL8-book CL8-ASS CL1-child	
9	N-dizi y-a m-toto CL9-banana CL9-ASS CL1-child	‘Banana of the child’
10	N-dizi z-a m-toto CL10-banana CL10-ASS CL1-child	‘Banana of the child’

3.4.2.2 Late system morpheme

Late system morphemes are of two types: bridge and ‘outsider’ late system morphemes (see Section 2.2.3.5). Their difference is brought about by the feature “[+/- looks outside its own immediate maximal projection for information about its forms]” (Myers-Scotton 2002:75). Since I have highlighted the bridge system morpheme in the previous section, I will now turn focus to late ‘outsider’ system morphemes. These morphemes derive their grammatical information beyond the constituents in which they are found. In other words, they coindex with elements outside their maximal projection. According to 4-M model their information is availed when larger phrasal constituents such as inflectional phrases are conjoined. An example in English would be the subject-verb agreement /-s/ and clitics.

In Swahili, and by extension other Bantu languages, the late outsider system morphemes are marked by subject, object, relative, demonstratives and possessive affixes. This can be attributed to the fact that they agree with forms or other grammatical elements outside their immediate clause. In Swahili, affixes mark grammatical relations between elements in the same syntactic configuration. For instance, the subject prefix i- in (131b) represent grammatical information of class and number of the subject *mikeka* ‘mats’ as observed from (table 3.6.2).

(131)

a) *M-keka u-ta-shon-w-a kesho*
CL3-mat CL3.SUBJ-FUT-weave-PASS-FV tomorrow
'The mat will be woven tomorrow'
b) *Mi-keka **i**-ta-shon-w-a kesho*
CL4-mat CL4.SUBJ-FUT-weave-PASS-FV tomorrow
'The mats will be woven tomorrow'

Table (3.6.2)
Late system morphemes in Swahili

Class	Subject	Object	AdjePref	Poss	Prep	Rel. prefix
1	a-/yu-	-m-	m-	w-	w-	-ye
2	wa-	-wa-	wa-	w-	w-	-o
3	u-	-u-	m-	w-	w-	-o
4	i-	-i-	mi-	y-	y-	-yo
5	li-	-li-	ji-	l-	l-	-lo
6	ya-	-ya-	ma-/me-	y-	y-	-yo
7	ki-	-ki-	ki-	ch-	ki-	-cho
8	vi-	-vi-	vi-	vy-	vi-	-vyo
9	i-	-i-	N	y-	i-	-yo
10	zi-	-zi-	∅	z-	zi-	-zo
11	u-	-u-	m-	w-	u-	-o
12	ya-	-ya-	ma-	y-	y-	-yo
14	u-	-u-	m-	w-	u-	-o
15	ku-	-ku-	ku	kw-	ku-	-ko
16	ku-	-pa-	pa	p-	pa-	-po
17	mu-	-m-	m-	mw-	mu/m-	-mo
18	ku-	-ku-	ku-	kw-	ku-	-ko

Table (3.6.3)
Late system morphemes in Sheng

Class	**Subject prefix**	**Adj Prefix**	**Object prefix**	**Poss prefix**	**Prep prefix**	**Rel. affix**
1	a-	m-	-ye-	w-	w-	-ye
2	wa-	wa-	-wa-	w-	w-	-o
3	i	m-/∅	∅	w-	y-	∅
4	zi	∅	∅	y-	z-	∅
5	i	∅/n	∅	y-	y-	∅
6	zi-	ma-	∅	z-	z-	∅
7	i	ki-/∅	∅	y-	y-	∅
8	zi	∅	∅	z-	z-	∅
9	i	∅	∅	y-	i-	∅
10	zi	ma-	∅	z-	z-	∅
12	ka-	ka-	-ka-	k-	ka-	-ko
13	tu-	tu-	-tu-	tw-	tu-	-two

Moving forward, I will juxtapose grammatical marking of late system morphemes between Swahili and Sheng to show how Sheng is restructuring from its lexifier language, Swahili.

3.4.2.2.1 Subject prefix

For the SUBJ prefix in CL1/2 there exists no significant difference between Sheng and Swahili as can be observed from table 3.5.2 and 3.5.3. Both Sheng and Swahili use a/wa prefixes to mark subject agreements on verbs. For CL 3/4 the Swahili uses u- and i- prefixes to mark subjects in singular and plural respectively (See table 3.6.2). However, Sheng appears to be restructuring class 3/4 to class 9/10 as exemplified in (132) below.

(132).

a) Std Swahili	b) Sheng
M-ti ***u****-ta-kat-w-a*	*Mti* ***i****-ta-kat-w-a*
CL3-tree CL3-FUT-cut-PASS-FV	CL3-tree CL9-FUT-cut-PASS-FV
'The tree will be cut'	'The tree will be cut'

In (132b), it is apparent that Sheng uses SUBJ prefix of CL9 to grammatically mark or coindex the subject *mti* 'tree' which belongs to CL3 of Swahili. CL3/4 nouns are progressively being conflated to CL9/10. Furthermore, the subject morpheme system of class 5/6 is gradually shifting to that class 9/10 as exemplified in (133).

(133) Std Swahili	Sheng
a)*Tunda li-ko* *jikoni*	*b) Fruit i-ko* *kitchen*
Fruit CL5-BE.STATE kitchen	Fruit CL9-B.STATIVE kitchen
'The fruit is in the kitchen'	'The fruit is in the kitchen'

(134)

a)*Ma-tunda ya-ko jikoni*	*b)Ma-fruits zi-ko* *kitchen*
CL6-fruit CL6-BE.STATE kitchen-LOC	CL6-fruits CL10-BE.STATE kitchen
'The fruits are in the kitchen	'The fruits are in the kitchen

The presence of *Ma-* prefix in (134b) could be multimorphemic as it is the generic plural marker in Sheng as well as NOM class marker of CL6. Its categorization could lie in early system morpheme or late system morpheme depending on whether it is used as NOM prefix or ADJ prefix.

Similarly, the concordial marking in CL7/8 is as well shifting to morpheme system of class 9/10. The ki/vi subject marker in standard Swahili is realized as i/zi in Sheng. Consider example (135) below.

(135)

Std. Swahili	**Sheng**
a) *Ki-tabu cha-ke ki-me-pot-e-a*	*ØMbuku y-ake **i**-me-lost*
CL7-book CL7-POS CL7.SUBJ-PERF-lost-APP-FV	CL9-book CL9-POSS CL9-ASP-loss
'His/her book is lost'	'His/her book is lost'
b) *Vi-tabu vy-ake vi-me-pot-e-a*	*ØMbukus z-ake **zi**-me-lost*
CL8-book CL8-POS CL8.SUBJ-ASP-lost-APP-FV	CL10-books CL10-POSS CL10-ASP-loss
'His/her books are lost'	'His/her books are lost'

As indicated in section 3.3.1.5, CL 9/10 is marked by /Ø/ or /N/ nominal prefix. The conflation of agreement morphemes in class 9/10 is evident by /Ø/ marking on the Sheng word *mbuku* 'book' as illustrated in Sheng example in (135a). However, in (135b) of Sheng's example, the plural form comes with the English plural morpheme /-s/. This a double marking of plural since the class 10 /Ø/ prefix and English plural marker /-s/ are both annexed on the Sheng noun *mbuku* 'book'. In dueling languages, Myers-Scotton terms this as a case of 'mistiming' or double morphology. This occurs in a classic codeswitching when a speaker's intentions aim at a pluralized noun from an embedded language. Plurality is conceptualized with the borrowed noun. However, the noun has to be morphologically constrained withing the matrix language frame which gives it another

plural marking. There are increasing cases in Sheng where the plural generic marker /ma-/ in Sheng is used alongside English or Swahili plural markers. Consider example (136).

(136) Sheng double marking of plural

Singular	Plural	Gloss
maik	mamaiks	'microphone'
boi	mabois	'boy'
fon	mafons	'phone'
mchele	mamichele	'rice'
kitabu	mavitabu	'book'
mti	mamiti	'tree'

Based on the early system morpheme hypothesis, Myers-Scotton contends that "only early system morphemes may be doubled in classic codeswitching" (2002:92). The reason she provides for this is that plural forms, like any other early system morphemes, are conceptually activated together with their heads (content morpheme) when lemmas point to them at the lexicon level. In other words, they are salient at the same level as their heads. Muysken (2000:175) appears to counter System Morpheme Hypothesis when he cites violation of the principle with past participle use. According to him, these are late outsider morphemes since the verb form is syntactically motivated within the matrix language. Consider example (137) from Swahili-English codeswitching.

(137)

a) *Tu-ko* *confused*
CL2. SUBJ-BE confuse-PAST
'We are confused'

b) *wa-tu* *wa-ko* *trained*
CL2.NOM-person CL2.SUBJ-BE train-PAST
'People are trained'

c) *a-na-kuwa* *offered* *tu*
CL1.SUBJ-PRS-BE offer-PAST just
'He/she is just being offered'

Data: Muysken (2000:175)

The double morphology, however, does not only come about from the embedded language only during codeswitching but also the matrix language. As observed in (136) Swahili derived nouns such as *mamichele* 'many rice' and *mamiti* 'trees' receive double plural marking. The *ma-* is generic plural derived from CL6 and -mi- in *ma**mi**chele* and *ma**mi**ti* is the standard Swahili plural form for class CL4.. This could be a case of substrate influence or Sheng's own innovativeness of marking plural using morpheme system from more than one source.

Class 11/14 of Sheng appears to maintain its concordial agreement as that of Swahili in Class 11. However, there seems to be a gradual shift in progress in class 14 when the generic plural applies. For instance,

(138)

Std Swahili	**Sheng**
a) *ØUjinga w-a Victor Naaman*	*ØUjinga w-a Victor Naaman*
CL11-stupidity CL11-ASS Victor Naaman	CL11-stupidity CL11-ASS Victor Naaman
'Victor Naaman's stupidity'	'Victor Naaman's stupidity'
b) *ØUjinga **w**-a Victor Naaman*	*Ma-ujinga **z**-a Victor Naaman*
CL12-stupidity CL12-ASS Victor Naaman	CL10-stupidity CL12-ASS Victor Naaman
'Stupidities of Victor Naaman'	'Stupidities of Victor Naaman'

In example (138b), unlike Swahili, Sheng marks its plural on abstract entities. This comes with the change in subject prefix agreement marker on the associative -a 'of' from CL11/14 w- to CL10 z-. This can be clearly illustrated in the following Sheng example.

(139)

a) *Ø-ukweli i-na-uma*
CL11-truth CL10-PRS-hurt
'Truth hurts'

b) *Ma-ukweli zi-na-uma*
CL6-truth CL10-PRS-hurt
'Truth hurts'

In (139) it appears Sheng is in the process of shifting the entire concord set to class 9/10. The use of associative particle w- prefix in (138a) could be brought about by dialectal difference where change is still in progress.

Sheng has an additional class in comparison to Swahili. Class 12/13 is used to classify diminutive nouns. The nominal markers ka-/tu are also agreement prefixes that represent subjects on verbs. While Swahili forms its diminutives in class 7/8, Sheng uses additional class for diminutive. Semantically, nouns in this class do not only reference diminutives but also value or affection attached to a given noun. This is not always the case in Swahili which only uses diminutives to reference belittling.

(140)

Sheng		**Std Swahili**	
a) ***Ka****-rembo*	***ka****-me-kam*	***Ki****-ji-rembo*	***ki****-me-fika*
CL12-beautiful	CL12-ASP-arrive	CL7-CL5-beautiful	CL7-ASP-arrive
'The beautiful lady has arrived'		'The 'tiny' beautiful lady has arrived	
b) ***Tu****-rembo*	***tu****-me-come*	***Vi****-ji-rembo*	***vi****-me-fika*
CL13-beautiful	CL13-ASP-arrive	CL8-CL5beautiful	CL8-ASP-arrive
'The beautiful ladies have arrived'		'The tiny slim beautiful ladies have arrived'	

In (140), I have juxtaposed Sheng and Swahili examples to foreground the distinction between diminutives in both languages. As illustrated in (140a-b), Sheng uses *ka/tu* both as a NOM marker and as SUBJ marker exclusively within the new class. On the contrary, Swahili uses CL7/8 nominal and SUBJ prefixes to mark diminutives. When used as a nominal marker, it is an early system morpheme as they become salient together with their heads, and when used as SUBJ marker it is a late outsider morpheme. The stark difference in the morphosyntactic frame observed in the Sheng and Swahili examples is clear evidence that restructuring of the morpheme system in Sheng is in progress and actual matrix language turnover is underway.

3.4.2.2.2 Tense

Tense morphemes are examples of late outsider system morphemes. In a mixed constituent Sheng appears to use same tense system as that of Swahili except for the habitual aspect. Since all other tenses are similar both in Swahili and Sheng, I will only focus on the restructuring of the habitual tense in this section. Ashton (1944:36) identified six main primary tenses in Swahili. This is illustrated below (but with my own modifications).

Table 3.6.4
Tense Morphemes in Swahili

Grammatical category	**Affirmative morph**	**Example**	**Negative morph**	**Example**
Past	-li-	*Nilisom*a 'I read'	si-, ku-	*Sikusoma* 'I did not read'
Future	-ta-	*Nitasoma* 'I will read'	Si-	*Sitasoma* 'I will not read'
Present (definite)	-na-	*Ninasoma* 'I am reading'	Si-, -i	*Sisomi* 'I'm not reading'
Present (indefinite	-a-	*Nasoma* 'I read'	Si-, -i	*Sisomi* 'I'm not reading
Present perfect	-me-	*Nimesoma* 'I have read'	Si- -ja-	*Sijasoma* 'I haven't read
Habitual	hu	*Mimi husoma kila siku* 'I read every day'	Si-, -i	*Huwa Sisomi*

In addition to tense morphemes illustrated for Swahili above, Sheng has and displays a different formation for habitual aspect with the use of *-a(n)g-* morpheme in the affirmative constructions and *si-, -i* and *a(n)g-* in negated constructions.

Table 3.6.5
Sheng Habitual marker (morphemes)

Grammatical category	**Affirmative morph**	**Example**	**Negative morph**	**Example**
Habitual	-a(n)g-	Ninasomanga 'I study (everyday).	Si-, -i and a(n)g-	Sisomangi 'I don't study

While Swahili uses *hu-* to mark habitual tense, Sheng deploys *-a(n)g-* morpheme to mark habitual events. In my data corpus, the use of *-a(n)g-* aspect was ubiquitous. Consider the following example.

(141)

Alafu si-kunyw-ang-i ati i-le na-lewa
Also NEG-drink-HAB-NEG EMPH CL9-DEM PRS-be drunk
'Also I do not drink that which makes me drunk'

In (141) the speaker seems to imply that his nature of drinking does not get him drunk. This is a habit he has established for himself. Unlike Swahili, Sheng uses both shared negative affixes *Si-*, *-i* in addition to *a(n)g-* to mark this aspect. This is a new establishment to the matrix language frame where new features of morphosyntactic frame are borrowed from a different language other than the lexifier language. The use of *-a(n)g-* morpheme is not a new phenomenon in many Bantu languages. According to Nurse & Philippson (2006) *-a(n)g-* suffix is salient in many Bantu languages. In Kingwana for example, the suffix is used to denote habit (Polome (1968:23) and in Kinyamwezi the suffix has been integrated into its tense system to mark habitual aspect (Maganga & Schadeberg, 1992). Bantu languages neighboring Sheng such as Kenyanese Swahili, Lunyore and Lulogoli use this suffix to denote habitual aspect. Consider the example below.

(142)

a) Lunyore
A-manya ye-ts-ang-a
3SG.SUBJ-AUX- 3SG-come-HAB-FV
'He/she usually come'
b) Kenyanese Swahili
A-na-kuj-ang-a
3SG-PRS-come-HAB-FV
'He/she usually come'
c) Lulogoli

Ya-idz-ang-i
3SG-come-HAB-FV
'He has been coming'

The presence of habitual morpheme *a(n)g-* in other Bantu languages is evidence that the matrix language frame of Sheng is influenced by other substrate languages during contact. In reference to Myer-Scotton's assertion on formation of split languages, I argue that is this a case of morphosyntactic restructuring that is promoted by convergence to Sheng at the abstract level. Sheng as a case of convergence displays system morphemes from different source languages other than that which supplies most of its lexicon.

3.4.2.2.3 Relative and Object marker

Sheng prefers a leaner set of concords markers for OBJ NPs and relatives. As observed from table (3.6.3), Sheng has retained object markers for only two classes, that is, *ye/o* for CL1/2 and *-ko/-tu-* for CL12/13. The rest of the classes show no presence of object markers. While Swahili displays object markers for all its classes, many of them remain optional among Swahili speakers. CL1/2 object markers are salient compared to others which are generally reserved for formal usage. For Sheng, object markers appear to be supplemented by demonstratives which act as specifiers. Consider the following example in Sheng and Swahili.

(143)

a) **Sheng**	**b) Std Swahili**
U-na-cheki **huyu** m-see a-na-kam	Tazama ki-jana a-na-**ye**-kuja
2SG-PRS-see DEM CL1.NOM-guy CL1-PRS-come	Watch CL7-guy CL1-PRS-OBJ-come
'See this guy who is coming'	'See this guy who is coming'

Example (143) presents object markings for CL 1/2 in both Sheng and Swahili. In (143a), the demonstrative *huyu* 'this' functions as the object marker outside the verbal phrase. In (143b) the object is marked by *-ye-*.

Swahili marks grammatical object in three different ways. The first is the free relative pronoun *amba-* 'who', 'that' 'which'. This relative pronoun has to agree with class object marker particle for it to be grammatical. Consider examples in (144) below

(144)
a) CL1/2 *Mtoto amba**ye** atafika* 'The child who will arrive'
b) CL3/4 *Mti amba**o** utakatwa* 'The tree which will be cut'
c) CL7/8 *Kitabu amba**cho** kitasomwa* 'The book which will be read'

The class relative particle *-ye-*, *-o-* and *-cho-* are outsider system morphemes and work in tandem with relative pronoun *amb-* to express REL agreement with the object they mark according to their classes. In reference to table (3.3) and (3.4) Swahili relative particles vary according to number and gender. Sheng on the other hand, appears to have reduced number of relative particles to only two classes, that is, CL1/2 and 12/13. Based on my data, relatives in these two classes could be fewer or optional if present.

The second type of relative is the case marked particle that is prefixed on verb stem. This relative agrees in number and gender with the object or subject within the same clause. Consider the following example.

(146)
a) *Ji-we li-na-**lo**-chong-w-a*
CL5-stone CL5.SUBJ-PRS-CL5.REL-curve-PASS-FV
'The stone which is being curved'

b) *Chupa i-li-**yo**-pasu-k-a*
CL9-bottle CL9.SUBJ-PST-CL9.REL-break-STATE-FV
'The bottle which broke'

The embedded relative particles *-lo-* and *-yo-* in 146a and b grammatically agree with the object they specify both in gender and number (see table 3.4). The use of case-marked relative particles in Sheng are rare and if present they are optional.

The third type of relative marker in Swahili is tenseless[37] particle. This appears as a suffix on non-finite clause. I argue that what Vitale (1981:99) considers as tenseless particle could actually be present simple tense as their use applies with present simple constructions while avoiding other tense constructions. Consider the following illustration.

(147) Swahili

a) *Mw-alimu a-na-ye-funz-a*
CL1.NOM-teacher CL1.SUBJ-PRS-REL-teach-FV
'The teacher who is teaching'

b) *Mw-alimu a-funza-ye*
CL1.NOM-teacher CL1.SUBJ-teach-REL
'The teacher who teaches'

c) **Mw-alimu a-**__**ta**__**-funza-**__**ye**__
CL1.NOM-teacher CL1.SUBJ-FUT-REL-teach-REL
'The teacher who will teach'

d) **Mw-alimu a-**__**na**__**-funza-**__**ye**__
CL1.NOM-teacher CL1.SUBJ-PRS-REL-teach-FV
'The teacher who teaches'

In (147a), the REL particle *-ye-* co-occurs with present simple prefix *-na-* to convey habitual aspect, that is, the teacher who teaches all the time. In (147b) the relative marker is used as a prefix. Vitale (1981:99) suggests this to be a tenseless prefix. However, this particle appears to make the sentence present simple or rather habitual. Furthermore, there is no apparent difference in what is conveyed in (147a) and (147b). Compared with (147c-d), if the relative suffix is used with a different tense such as FUT tense denoted by *-ta-* in (148c), it renders the construction ungrammatical. The construction in (147d) is even more important in outlining the difference. The REL suffix

[37] Vitale (1981)'s use of tense and tenseless particles is somehow confusing since tense is marked on the verb by other prefixes within the verb phrase. I would rather go with 'case-marked' or 'caseless' particles rather than 'tensed' or 'tenseless' particles.

-ye- cannot be used in the same construction with present tense marked by *-na-*. If it does, it makes the entire construction ungrammatical.

The relative pronoun *amba-* is a bridge system morpheme as it maps subject phrases to their complementizer phrases. *Amba-* relative pronoun cannot occur in isolation without the relative particle. The relative particles such *-ye-* in CL1 and *-lo-* in CL5 are late outsider system morphemes. As observed in table (3.6.3) Sheng appears to be in the process of converging all relative particles to /∅/ except for CL1/2 and 13/14. This gradual shift in the morpheme system is a sign of morphosyntactic restructuring of Sheng language into a composite grammar.

In summary, it is evident that Sheng morphosyntax displays a composite frame with system morphemes coming from other substrate languages. For a language to be considered split, Myers-Scotton contends that its morphosyntactic frame should incorporate elements from other language other than its lexifier language. This restructuring allows certain morphemes from substrate languages to feature in the composite frame. Compared to Swahili, its main lexifier language, Sheng demonstrates substantial differences in the morpheme system involving nominative, subject, object, associative a-, possessive, relative and demonstratives. All these are divided into early and late system morpheme. In summary, Sheng demonstrates a composite structure with system morpheme coming from not only the main lexifier language but other substrate languages as well.

The early system morphemes are conceptually activated together with their heads. In the words of Myers-Scotton, they have ‘a strong link’ between them and their heads (content morphemes). In Sheng, the early system morpheme includes the class nominal

(NOM) markers, demonstrative DEM and habitual affix -*a(n)g*-. Sheng shares nearly all NOM markers with Swahili except in a few cases. All but CL2 nominal prefix for plural are converging to *ma*- nominal marker. Originally *ma*- is a CL6 nominal marker but adapted in Sheng as a generic plural (cf table 3.3 and 3.4). The emergent CL 12/13 in Sheng uses *ka-/tu*- nominal prefix that is non-existent in Swahili. This class is reserved for diminutive group of nouns while Swahili uses CL7/8 for similar function. What is true of class 12/13 is mutatis mutandis to other Bantu languages which categorize diminutives in separate classes. For instance, in Lunyore (the native language of the author) diminutives belong to class 12/13 with subject markers xa-/ru-. Maragoli has *ka/tɔ*. This is an indication that Sheng is drawing its system morpheme patterns from other substrate languages that it comes in contact with. This confirms a morphosyntactic restructuring that is underway.

The Sheng demonstratives (DEM) too are conflating to those of class 9/10. Other than class 1/2 DEM (i.e. *huyu/hawa, huyo/hao, yule/wale)* and CL 12/13 (i.e. *haka/hutu, hako/huto, kale/tule*) all other demonstratives are converging to CL9/10 (*i.e. hii/hizi, hiyo/hizo, ile/zile*). While Swahili uses the prefix hu- to mark habitual aspect, Sheng draws from other substrate languages such as Lunyore, Lulogori, Kenyanese Swahili among others which use -a(n)g- prefix to mark habitual aspect. I consider NOM, DEM and HAB -*a(n)g*- early system morphemes as they are grammatically assigned their case from their immediate heads. The NOM markers in both Sheng and Swahili mark number and grammatical class of the noun. The DEMs grammatical particle are also informed by the class of their heads, hence early system morphemes.

A language that shows structurally assigned late system morphemes during contact with another language is said to be restructuring. Sheng displays late system morphemes that are novel to its own system. The late system morpheme in Sheng includes adjectival prefix (ADJ), subject prefix (SUB), associative a- or possessive (POSS), preposition prefix (PREP), relative affix (REL) and object (OBJ). The bridge system morphemes in Sheng are associative a-/possessive (POSS) particle and REL marker. The POSS morpheme, unlike English, has to grammatically agree with the head within its own projection. For example, in the construction:

(148)

Ka*dem* ***ka*** *John*
CL12-woman CL12.GEN John
'Girlfriend of John',

the associative a- has the particle *k*- which agrees with phrasal head ***k****adem* 'girl'. Any other particle such as *w*- in

(149)

**Kadem wa John*
CL12-woman CL2.GEN John
'Girlfriend of John'

renders the whole construction ungrammatical in Sheng. The REL markers are conspicuously absent in Sheng. The remaining SUBJ, ADJ, PREP and OBJ affixes are late outsider morphemes. They grammatically coindex with forms outside their maximal projection. When some or all of the late outsider morphemes are outsourced from other languages other than the lexifier language, the grammatical frame of the contact language is said to be restructuring or changing. Nearly all SUBJ morphemes in Sheng are

converging to CL 9/10 except for class 1/2 and 12/13 (see table 3.7). It appears the CL9/10 is the Sheng default class for nearly all inanimate objects and can be classified without much constraint. This conflation reduces the type of subject morphemes in Sheng to only three, that is, *a-/wa-, i-/zi- and ka-/tu.*

Table 3.7

Reduced Sheng noun class system

Class	**NOM**	**Noun**	**SUBJ**	**ADJ**	**OBJ**	**POSS**	**PREP**	**REL**	**Prox**	**ref**	**Distal**
1	m-	*mtoi* 'child'	a-	m-	-ye-	w-	y-	-ye	huyu	huyo	yule
2	wa-	*watoi* 'children'	wa-	Wa-	-wa-	w-	w-	-o	hawa	hao	wale
9	n-/ny- / m-/ø	*Kalamu* 'pen'	i	ø	ø	y-	i-	ø	hii	hiyo	ile
10	n-/ny- / m-/ø	*Makalamu* 'pens'	zi	ø	ø	z-	z-	ø	hizi	hizo	zile
12	ka-	Kadem 'Woman'	ka-	ka-	-ka-	k-	ka-	-ko	haka	hako	kale
13	tu-	*Tudem* 'women'	tu-	tu-	-tu-	tw-	Tu-	-tw	hutu	hutwo	tule
16	ma	*mahali*	pa	pa	po	p-	p-	ø	Hapa	Hapo	pale

The remaining ADJ and PREP prefixes for all classes except CL1/2 and 12/13 are converging to CL9/10 in Sheng. The apparent reason for the exception could be that class 1/2 and 12/13 involve human objects since class 9/10 is exclusively for inanimate objects.

3.5 Grammaticalization in Sheng

While grammaticalization has been most fully described in homogeneous languages, recent studies have shown it applies to cases of language contact. Grammaticalization occurs when grammatical forms are derived from content morphemes over time (Bybee et al,1994). In this section, I provide evidence of cases of

grammaticalization in Sheng. While Sheng is a language that is still under crystallization, many grammaticalized forms are extensions from its lexifier. As highlighted in chapter 2, cases of grammaticalization involve interrelated mechanisms such semantic bleaching, context generalization, decategorialization and loss in phonetic substance. In this section, I shall be reviewing some of these aspects as they appear in Sheng data. Heine and Kuteva (2002), one of the lead proponents of grammaticalization, postulate that in diachronic change languages may undergo grammatical changes where concrete meanings are reinterpreted in certain contexts, representing abstract entities. The newly formed grammatical functions are later generalized to cement themselves in their new functions. Such new grammatical forms assume a set of properties that do not contain much or any of their former meaning. In this dissertation, I argue that Sheng is an example of language already in the shift process and many lexical elements in the lexifier languages are assuming new grammatical functions. An element or form that undergoes grammaticalization further diversifies to assume more general and predictable occurrences in their functions.

3.5.1 Cases of grammaticalization in Sheng

3.5.1.1 Conditional Marker > Habitual

Swahili possesses a conditional marker *-nga* which is reanalyzed in both Kenyan colloquial Swahili as well as Sheng to mark habitual forms. In standard Swahili *-nga* has polysemous functions that include both present and past conditional. Consider example (150) below.

(150)

Swahili
a) *Ni-ng(e)-kuj-a* *ni-nge-m-pat-a*

CL1.1SG-COND-come-FV CL1SUB.PRON-COND-3SG.OBJ-find-FV
'If I had come I would have found him'

Sheng
b) *A-na-kuja-ng-a* *baze daily*
CL1.3SG-PRESENT-come-HAB-FV base daily.
'He/she comes to the base daily'

Typically, Sheng avoids use of Swahili's habitual *hu-* but instead, it employs the use of /NG/ morpheme to mark present simple aspect or habitual. Consider the Swahili-Sheng pair below.

(151)

Standard Swahili
a)*Jumatatu huwa tu-na-lew-a*
Monday HAB CL2-PRS-drink-FV
'We get drunk on Mondays'

Sheng
b) *Monday sii(si)* *tu-na-tei-ng-i*
Monday CL2SUBJ.PRON CL2-PRS-drunk-HAB-FV
'We get drunk on Mondays'

3.5.1.2 Dem > Def

This is a specific case of grammaticalization in Sheng where an existing grammatical form assume new grammatical function. Consider the following example from Sheng.

(152)

Swahili		**Sheng**		
Mtoto huyu	*a-na-kula*	*Huu m-see*	*a-li-kuwa*	*makali*
CL1.SG-child DEM	CL1-PRS-eat	The CL1.SG-guy	CL1.3SG-PST-BE	alcohol
'This child is eating'		'The guy was so drank'		

In the Sheng construction above, the use of DEM *'huu*' does not function as a demonstrative as observed in the Swahili construction, but rather as a definitive modifier to the subject that both the speaker and listener are aware of.

3.5.1.3 Np>Adj/Adv

Sheng displays many new innovative constructions that are exclusive to the language. One way it does this is through grammaticalization. A number of neologisms in Sheng undergoes several semantic reanalyses. The word '*rada* 'to be in the know/aware of' has undergone grammaticalization from noun to adjective. Originally the word was borrowed from English, and it had the semantic meaning of a system that uses radio waves to detect other objects. In Sheng the word has grammaticalized to an adverb meaning 'well' or 'informed'. The word occurs mostly in Sheng greeting. Consider the example below when I met my informant for the first time.

(153)

Researcher:	*Niaje!*	*Niaje!*
	INT. how	INT.how
	'How are you?'	
Informant:	*niko*	*rada*
	1SG.STATIVE BE	well
	'I am well' OR 'I am informed'	

Semantically, the word still retains the primary meaning of the original English noun which refer to a detection system, but it is grammatically used in the adverbial position as highlighted in example (153) above. It is not surprising that the word is used among Sheng speakers to alert and warn each other in cases of impending danger or threat from the police. The following conversation was overheard by the researcher on the street and recorded.

(154)

Kuwa rada.		*Kanjo*	*wa-na-kam.*
BE	warned/aware.	City police	CL2-PRS-come.
'Be aware. The metropolitan police are coming'			

Grammatically *rada,* previously a noun *radar,* occupies the adjectival position as observed in (154) above.

3.5.1.4 Adjective ('bad', 'terrible') > Intensifier

The adjective *mbaya* in Swahili/Sheng is occasionally grammaticalized in Sheng to assume newer grammatical function, especially that of an intensifier. Consider the following.

(155)

Yule	*jamaa*	*ni*	*m-baya*	>>	*A-li-m-pig-a*		*ngeta*	*mbaya*
DEM	guy	BE	CL1-bad		CL1.SUB-PST-3SG.OBJ-beat-	FV-strangle		INT
'That guy is bad'					'They robbed him badly'			

Heine & Kuteva (2002:50) also identify similar type of grammaticalization in German. Consider the example below.

(156)

German

a) *Das ist furchtbar*
   That is terrible
   'That is terrible'
b) *Der Pudding Schmeckt furchtbar gut.*
   The pudding tastes terribly good
   'The pudding tastes terribly good'

In the examples above, grammaticalization shows a process under which adverbs denoting negative qualities that are valued by the speaker changes to signal intensity. Sheng speakers use *mbaya* 'badly' to show someone is 'extremely good' at executing their abilities, be it fighting, stealing, singing or even drinking. The adjective *noma 'bad'* is used interchangeably with *mbaya* in Sheng. So, cases like ones in (157) below are common in Sheng.

(157)

Sheng	(Cf. Swahili)
Hiyo movie i-li-kuwa noma sana.	*Filamu hiyo ilikuwa nzuri mno*
DEM movie CL9-PAST-BE bad very	Movie that CL9-PAST-BE good very.
'That movie was badly good'	'That movie was really good'

3.5.1.5 Verb (chapa 'beat') > Adjectival (rustic)

Sheng commonly describes old or outdated items (animates as well) as being beat or old. So, a black and white TV which is a relic in the postmodern millennial, would be described by Sheng speaker as *chapa* 'old'. Consider a sample case below from a Sheng speaker.

(158)

Sheng	(cf. Swahili)
I-le moshogi i-me-chapa	*A-li-m-chapa*
CL9-DEM bus CL9SUBJ-PERF-old	CL1-PAST-OM-beat
'That bus is very old'	'He beat him/her.'

3.5.1.6 Class 6 Nom Marker (ma-) > Generic Plural

Traditionally, many Bantu languages such as Swahili use nominal markers as grammatical agreements in syntactic constructions. *Ma-* is an example case that denotes class 6 nominal prefix or plural forms of the previous class, that is, class 5. Ma- can also be used to mark subject-verb agreements on verbal constructions. Consider Swahili example in (159).

(159)

CL5 (SG)	**CL6 (PL)**	**Gloss**
Tawi	ma-tawi	'branch'
Jani	ma-jani	'leaf'
Jiko	ma-jiko	'stove'

The *ma-* case is of special interest to Sheng as it grammaticalizes from marking nominal prefix in class 6 to becoming a general plural marker in Sheng. Cases as ones observed below are prevalent in Sheng.

(160)

SG	**PL**	**Gloss**
CL1 Kijana (youth)	ma-vijana	'youth'
CL3 Mti (tree)	ma-miti	'tree'
CL7 kikombe	ma-vikombe	'cup'

In (160) above, all the classes (cf. CL 1, 3 and 7) are marked with ma- nominal prefix for their plural forms. It is apparent that the case *ma-* is a structural change in progress for Sheng, striving for regularization and reduction of noun class.

3.5.1.7 Proximal DEM> 3SG

According to Diessel (1999b:20) and Givon (1984:352-60) as cited by Heine and Kuteva (2002), there exists a more common grammaticalization path that involves DEM pronouns becoming third person pronouns, which may later grammaticalize into a clitic and later verb agreement forms.

In Sheng, approximative pronoun *huyo* grammaticalizes into form marking third person pronouns. Consider example (161) below.

(161)
a) *Huyo mwalimu ni wa historia*
DEM teacher BE POSS-a history
'That is a history teacher'

b) *U-na-cheki huyo bazenga*
2SG-PRS-see 3SG guy
'You see him - guy.'

In standard Swahili, as highlighted in (161a), *huyo* 'that' is used as a proximal demonstrative. However, in the Sheng construction in (161b), *huyo* is used as third person plural.

In Cora, for example, it is common to find third person free pronouns being used as demonstrative while demonstrative show up as subjects in the role of pronouns (Casad 1984:247) as cited by Heine and Kuteva (2002:112).

3.5.1.8 DEM (huyo)>REL pronoun

Popjes and Popjes (1986:171) as cited by Heine and Kuteva (2002:113) observe that in Canela-Kraho language *ita,* a demonstrative, may be used in environment that denote relative pronoun as demonstrated by (162)

(162)
a) *rop ita*
dog this
b) *i- te humre te top curan ita pupun*
I- PST man PST dog kill DEM see
'I saw the man who killed the dog'

Similarly, Sheng shows cases of grammaticalization where demonstratives are used as relative pronouns. As discussed in section (3.4.2.2.3) Sheng appears to use demonstrative pronouns in contexts where Swahili would use relative pronouns. Consider example (163).

Std Swahili	Sheng
a) *Mwalimu a-na-ye-kuja*	b) *Odijo huyo a-na-come*
Teacher 3SG-PRS-REL-come	Teacher DEM 3SG-PRS-come
'The teacher who is coming'	'The teacher who is coming'

In the Sheng example, demonstrative *huyo* functions as the relative pronoun 'who'. This is a case that is still in progress and may be used optionally. Diesseal (1999) observes that pronominal demonstratives may grammaticalize into forms that are either

used as pronouns or possess some pronominal related properties. (as cited by Heine and Kuteva 2002114).

3.5.1.9 Applicative Verb (tokelezea) > Adjectival Complement (smart)

The verb *toka* means ‘leave’ or ‘come from’ in Swahili. Sheng has adopted the applicative form of the verb ‘tokelezea’ to contexts in which means ‘to be smart’ or ‘look good’. Consider example (164) below.

(164)

a) *Morio a-me-tokelezea kwa hiyo mbwenya*
Buddy 3SG-PERF-be smart from DEM coat
‘The buddy looks great in that coat’

b) *Mbwenya tokelezea ni ya mine*
Coat smart BE POSS
‘The smart coat is mine’

In (164a), *tokelezea* is used as the main verb in the construction. In (164b) however, the applicative verb is used as adjectival complement for the subject ‘coat’.

3.5.1.10 Leave (‘acha’)>Permissive (‘acha’)

In Sheng *acha* ‘leave’ may grammaticalize in certain contexts to mark permissive constructions. Consider example (165).

(165) Sheng

a) *A-li-acha bike*
3SG-PST-leave bicycle
‘He left the bicycle’
b) *Acha ni-ish-ie*
PERM.AUX 1SG-go-APP
‘Let me go’

In (165a) *acha* is used as a main verb denoting ‘leave’. In (165b) however, *acha* is used as permissive auxiliary verb.

Cases of where *leave* grammaticalizes to permissive auxiliary have been recorded in other languages. In Germany for instance, *lassen* ‘leave’ or ‘permit’ grammaticalizes to become auxiliary as highlighted in (166) below.

(166)

German

a) *Lass mich allein!*
Leave me alone
‘Leave me alon!’

b) *Lass ihn kommen*
let him come
‘Let him come/allow him to come’

Data source: Heine and Kuteva (2002:193)

In summary, I have used this section to highlight sample cases of Sheng grammaticalization to establish the genesis and development of grammatical forms into newer functional contexts. The main mechanism of grammaticalization observed in the present Sheng data was that of meaning extension and decategorialization. Of importance is context-induced reinterpretation of meaning. Many cases of grammaticalization in Sheng were a mixed bag of derivations where newer grammatical meanings were derived from concrete forms or grammatical forms more abstract grammatical functions in newer context. For instance, the case of Swahili CL6 nominal marker ma- assuming new function in Sheng as a generic plural marker is an example of the latter reinterpretation on one hand. On the other hand, the case of radar ‘detective device’ becoming adjectival form *rada* ‘be aware’ is a case of where grammatical form of adjective is derived from a concrete noun. Cases of grammatical forms assuming newer grammatical functions were frequent in the Sheng data.

CHAPTER 4: FIELD ETHNNOGRAPY: SHENG AND IDENTITY

4.1 Introduction

The goal of this chapter is to use a qualitative, reflective, and contextualized ethnographic approach to examine linguistic practices in Nairobi with the goal of understanding how Sheng has evolved to assume new social functions and identities. I particularly focus on the linguistic behaviours and norms of urban youths within their communities of practice to understand how socio-cultural, economic, and political issues influence their identity and ideological formation. I draw on this ethnographic data to characterize linguistic practices of Sheng speaker and how they use this variety to create, enact and promote their ideologies while repositioning themselves in the competing identities of the city. To underscore what defines and informs sociocultural, and linguistic practices in the subaltern areas of Nairobi, I turned to critical ethnography[38] as a method of data collection. This method involves participant observation triangulated with other eclectic forms of data collection such as structured and semi-structured interviews, surveys, photographing, notetaking, and conversational analysis grounded in dialogic relationship with respective social actors. While the origin of critical ethnography is in educational practice, I find it befittingly applicable in sociolinguistic data collection and analysis. Unlike traditional ethnography, critical ethnography extends beyond observatory and exploratory analysis to re-immersion in critical praxis that is integrated

[38] In defining critical ethnography, Brown and Dobrin (2004:4) cites Lance Massey (nd) as "a research practice (primarily related to education) whose purpose is to use dialogue about a cultural context to develop critical action, while remaining highly attuned to the ethics and politics of representation in the practice and reporting of that dialogue and resulting action"

with theory at the backdrop of socio-cultural, economic, and political orientation (Brown and Dobrin 2004). According to Brown and Dobrin (2004), critical ethnography moves away from only seeking knowledge but also enhancing dialogic relationship with participants for a common goal.

In order to understand the social-cultural and linguistic context of Nairobi as a space for contestation of multiple identities and practices, I spent 8 months in the subaltern areas of the city engaging the youths on their account of what it is like to live and grow up in the area. The Eastlands slums of Nairobi are one of the most linguistically rich and diverse areas in Nairobi. Estates such as *Jericho*, *Majengo*, *Kaloleni*, *Buruburu*, and *Kayole* are epicenters of Sheng innovations. It is not surprising that even in the 80s Spyropoulos observed:

> Three languages, operating on three different levels, may be identified in the Eastlands. The first is the 'mother' or ethnic tongue, used within domestic and ethnic units; the second is Kiswahili, used outside these spheres; and the third is English, taught in schools in addition to Swahili and carrying greater status as the colonial tongue. It is no wonder, then, that a hybrid language comprised of components from all these levels emerged in Nairobi's Eastlands, the need for a common language being an important underlying impetus. It is important to stress that not all members of these diverse language groups could communicate with one another in Kiswahili or English if they did not speak the same vernacular (p. 126)

In the light of this excerpt, it is evident that the speaker composition with multiple ethnic background contribute to linguistic richness of the area. For instance, in Kayole, one of my research sites, many inhabitants are from the Kikuyu ethnic group; in Kaloleni, many residents are from the Luo ethnic group and Bahati has a larger population from the Kamba community. This may have prompted youths who live side by side in this neighborhood to craft a common language that would give them a sense of group and urban identity.

In the subsequent sections, I highlight three major linguistic practices in Nairobi while exploring how they index certain ideological stances and identities.

4.2 Field ethnography

Drawing on one of the study goals for this dissertation, that is, 'to explore the new emerging identities associated with Sheng', I surveyed the Eastlands area of Nairobi to evaluate existing linguistic practices and how Sheng speakers use them as a space to (re)construct and (re)shape new or existing identities through shared experiences. While conducting my research interviews in the inner-city estates, I built a formidable relationship with a section of my participants who agreed to meet up with me on a biweekly basis for a period of six months. They did also invite me for their evening gatherings where they met either to pass time or engage in other social activities such as playing pool, chess or eating *miraa* 'khat'. What started as simple friendly meetups, eventually developed into vibrant discursive focus groups. Through social networks and referrals, I initiated a focus group in each of the estates where we met once a week for informal interviews and normal conversations which were based on any topic. One salient observation I made is that these youth do not socialize or gather in an unstructured manner but rather have implicit shared interests and experiences that inform their meaning and identity as urban youths. Youths who actively engage in linguistic practices associated with Sheng tend to have a significant impact on dialectal construction that mark competing identities. In the next few paragraphs, I discuss some of the selected linguistic practices and based on personal observation and first account of the youths in subaltern neighborhoods of Nairobi.

4.2.1 The bazes

"Baze ndio mboka yetu……" (Baze is our livelihood*)……* (UH2 youth, 2018)

A *baze* [beɪz], as commonly known by *wasee wa mtaa* 'street folks', is a shared space for youth agency where young men (and to some extend women) gather to socialize, while commenting on social issues affecting them. Through friendship network referrals and invitations, I was able to observe members of my focus groups in their respective *bazes*, in Kayole, Kariobangi South and Uhuru. *Bazes* are not regular gatherings but meaningful sociocultural practices in the inner city. One cannot precisely define a *baze* but can characterize one. In the Eastlands slums of Nairobi, it is not uncommon to find young people in groups at popular joints such as car wash stations, the bus terminus, and shopping centers among other spots engaging in conversations as a way of unwinding or just passing time. There is no exact approximation of membership for each of the *bazes* observed but my observation revealed a fluid membership of around 15-20 young men and women aged between 18-35. Members frequently meet up in the afternoons to socialize through games and other activities as they catch up on the trending issues. A closer examination reveals that a *baze* is a multilayered and multifaceted unit. Members frequent them to socialize, pass time and hunt for jobs while at the same time constructing their exclusive identity. In one of my interviews, I asked a member how long he has lived around the area, and the first thing he mentioned is "*tunakaa baze, tunakaa na mamorio"* 'the baze is our home, we live with our friends'. This in itself reflects the social construction of identity that is shared among peers in this area. The term *morio* does not only reference a 'friend' but also a person with whom one shares a lot in common. When one of my informants says *tunakaa na mamorio,* 'we live with friends' in

my own analysis, it is having a symbolic function in that young people assign social meaning to their youth network, that is, friendships that help them to deal with social challenges and realities of life. In other words, their experience and social meaning in the subaltern context is a collective phenomenon and not based on any one individual. The *baze* is foregrounded as a safe space from which young people can articulate their issues without having to fear retribution from anyone based on linguistic, ethnic or class barriers. It is a community of practice co-owned by the youths for the youths. At the *baze* everyone is equal. No class or tribal advantage transcends membership to the group. As it will be discussed later, one of the ideological stances of the *baze* is to maintain tribeless identity. The following was a metalinguistic comment by one of the youths in Kayole about the role of Sheng in the *baze*.

> …this Sheng should be considered a national language…because it would eliminate tribalism completely. If you go to another place, you will hear the same thing from another youth. I tell you the way you find Luos speaking Kiluo, and elsewhere Kikuyus speaking Kikuyu, here we don't do that, all of us including Luo, Waria, Kikuyu, Kamba we are all one.
>
> (Kayole Sheng speaker, 2018)

It is apparent that Sheng is not only a unifying language but also a means of constructing urban identity that is devoid of ethnic undertones. In the above conversation, the speaker is aware of the role Sheng plays among themselves. The urban youths originate from different ethnic groups stemming from different families that co-existed in these areas from the early 60's. While the first and second generation may still be confined to their ethnic languages, such as Kikuyu, Luo, and Kamba, the third generation speaks Sheng as their first language if not second. Tribalism in Kenya, as well as many other African countries is one of the major social threats ailing development and growth. Its ripple effect includes divisiveness, favoritism, ethnic profiling, and other forms of

inequality with the youths being the most affected. For example, it is not uncommon to find a job being offered not based on merit but the relationship with the hiring manager, with shared ethnicity as one of the top reasons. As the common saying goes in Nairobi 'It is not about what you know, but who you know that counts,' meaning that your professional experience and merit alone cannot afford you a job opportunity if you have no personal connection with men and women in higher positions. It is this kind of narrative the youths in Nairobi are rescripting with their use of Sheng which to them is neutral and free of ethnic undertones.

The *baze* is also characterized by heated verbal debates which serve as availed space for commentary on various topics ranging from local, national, to global issues. Local topics may include but are not limited to music, politics, economy, police brutality, alcohol, drugs, and women. Global issues on the other hand may revolve around sports, music (hiphop), fashion and celebrities. While many of the members are multilingual, the default language in a *baze* is Sheng. Sheng, they say, brings them to together and gives them that urban identity. One of the youths in Kayole once told me that the *baze* is their livelihood. In the same way people with white collar jobs report to their physical office for work, to them the *baze* is their office.

The *baze* is like a hunting ground. It is here they come to hunt for jobs, food, and social capital. Consider the following interaction with one of the participants in the field. (167)

> Interviewer: So, do you just use the *baze* to hang out?
> Informant: uuuhm uuuhm, you see, it is here we offload containers and materials from trucks. We wait for them here. We own spades for offloading sand. Also, we could still offer car wash services. We have water here.

As earlier mentioned, a *baze* appears to perform multilayered functions among them a workstation, that is, a place where youths can report to work with expectations of making an income, a business hub, and a place for socializing and networking among other roles. Based on its vantage location, it helps one access job opportunities either through social networking or direct solicitation. Normally, the jobs would include loading and offloading of construction materials from trucks, car and carpet cleaning services among other things. The *baze* is a well-structured and organized entity with all supplies accessible from within. In one of the *bazes* in Kayole, I spotted containers of water, spades and shovels all displayed on the opposite side of the street facing the *baze*. Further probing revealed that at the *baze* they also run income generating activities such as car wash services and loading and offloading of trucks as some of the ways to earn income. Also, it is here they can access potential customers. These entrepreneurial activities are well coordinated by members of the *baze*. From an external perspective, one can hardly notice any underlying income generating activities at the *baze*, but a closer examination reveals this is a community of practice with multiple buzzing activities. What is even more salient and common among all *bazes* I observed is the in-group business of hawking miraa 'khat'. *Miraa*, popularly given various names such as *jaba*, *matawi*, *veve*, *jingjong* or *aluta* by Sheng speakers, is a flowering plant largely produced in Meru County of Kenya. It contains the alkaloid cathinone, a stimulating substance which may cause excitement or euphoria. There is still a great amount of debate in Kenya as to whether miraa should be categorized as an illicit drug. According to Carrier (2008) miraa chewers label the substance not as a drug but a pleasurable substance that affords them a relaxed and enjoyable social gathering with fellow chewers. Users argue that they are not after

getting intoxicated but fun that comes with chewing it. In Carrier's words, "a miraa chewer would have to chew a lot of the strongest varieties of miraa before coming even close to the types of effects associated with snorting amphetamine or cocaine" (2008, p.812). Similarly, I noticed that the chewing of miraa among the urban youths in Eastlands was quite prevalent. Every *baze* I went to had at least one or two individuals who merchandized it in small packets going for 10-20 shillings (about 0.1 -0.2 dollars). One of the *baze* members informed me that miraa is affordable and helps them stay longer talking to each other confirming aforementioned Carrier (2008)'s allegations.

Image 2: The researcher at one of the *bazes* in Eastlands Nairobi

Majority of these *bazes* are located at strategic points along the streets and shopping centers where members can easily assemble as well as monitor any imminent danger such

as police or municipal council officials who harass them time to time on allegations of being idle and waiting to commit crime. In other words, the *baze* affords them a collective responsibility of being cautious and aware of their surroundings. They say that from time-to-time law enforcers survey the area and harass for trivial reasons, such as smoking weed. Their network and use of language define this reality. Consider the following conversation.

"…….*mtu anaeza kutoka huko anataka shada na umpatie shada…yani hata sanse anaeza come ivi mtu akuchanue yani na utarudi na uone watu wame—wameepa mpaka sanse ashindwe fomu ni gani venye iiyo information mmepewa videadly na nyii mmeshikanishia..unapata? si lazima mtu ati akuje akwambie ati ndio ao masanse ati mapayi mtu*…"	"…..one would come to get *weed* from you, but even if the police were to appear, we would instantly get the information way ahead of the police and the only thing you notice is everyone scampering before their (police) arrival to point that even police themselves are left confused and in wonder of how you knew of their coming. So it is not imperative for one to come and convey the information openly...".

UH12 Kayole (2019)

The *baze* therefore functions as an availed space where youths with shared experiences gather to construct their identities while at the same time getting an opportunity to comment and critique on issues affecting them such as drug abuse, police brutality, political instability, social class differences among other things. It also a source of livelihood where many youths assemble to seek for jobs and engage in income generating activities. The use of Sheng in these *bazes* is to construct urban identity based on their lived experiences in subaltern Nairobi where social meaning is conveyed, (re)designed and (re)articulated. Some of the innovative forms of Sheng originate from this community of practice. Members of the *baze* pride themselves on their knowledge of deep Sheng as witnessed by their effortless translation of new words of Sheng unknown to the general public. It is equally not surprising that many of these unique forms of

Sheng are confined around topics relating to drugs, police and women as exemplified in (168) below. For a long time, the inner-city estates have been characterized by drug abuse and addiction, crime and street prostitution. It is therefore apparent that once forms of reference to these activities are known to outsiders, they invent new forms to preserve their secret communication with in-group members.

(168) Lexical variation in sheng for police, marijuana and woman
Police – *sanse, mapayi, makarao, mavedi, waraz, mableina, mabang'a, mahater, beasts, njege*
Marijuana – *shash, ndom, shashola, ngwai, shish, kivela, ombidho, shada, tire, korobo*
Woman – *dem, ngeus, mayengs, damsel, kitu, matoto, mashebebe, manyonyo, msupeng*

Some of these wordforms are used interchangeably but with time they become out fashioned as new forms are invented. It is also worth noting that the choice of wordforms in the three categories highlighted in (168) is dependent on region, gender, age, and outsider group. This warrants a further study on dialectal variation of Sheng within the city neighborhood.

4.2.1.1 Sheng's role in the baze

Sheng plays several roles in the *baze*. First, it is a symbol and marker of urbanity. Urban youths in Kenya use local speech styles to shape and redefine their social meanings in relation to their identities and experiences within the urban context. Secondly, Sheng as a language presupposes element of authenticity while at the same time excluding non-members. In the following conversation, one Sheng speaker narrates how Sheng is significant in helping them warn each other of imminent danger or threat without having to whisper (which may lead to suspicion).

(181)

Original data

Kuna design mtu anaeza iitisha gezo tu live "Reggae is coming soon" na ikiwa mtu alikuwa ametoka uko anataka shada..na umpatie shad ahata sanse anaeza come ivi mtu akuchanue yani na utarudi na uone watu wam..wame eepa mpaka sanse ashindwe fomu ni gani venye iiyo information mmepewa videadly deadly na nyii mmeshikanisha unapata?	Translation There is away someone can warn you live 'Reggae is coming soon' –(the police are coming now) and if someone had come to ask for weed and you give them, even the police wouldn't notice how everyone got informed in such a swift way'

Sheng appears to be an endowed asset that speakers use to communicate among themselves while excluding non-ratified members like the police. Innovative ways of conveying information that is classified to them is central to their communication. In other words, Sheng is a language that affords them resistance identity against mainstream other. City residents are also socially stratified with *mababe*[39] occupying the suburbs such as Westlands and Kileleshwa while *masufferer*[40] occupying the subaltern areas of Eastlands Nairobi. In my ethnographic interaction with Sheng speakers, they repeatedly refer to Sheng as *lugha ya mtaa* 'street language' and it defines their collective identity as *wasee wa mtaa* 'street guys'.

Thirdly, Sheng is a functional medium. It affords urban youth an opportunity to (re)negotiate, (re)define and claim their position and relevance as urban residents. Sheng does not only give them identity but also it defines the city as their home and gives them sense of belonging. For one to be a 'real' city resident, they are supposed to be fluent in Sheng. Speakers of Sheng use this variety to frame their own linguistic knowledge which they then use to map onto their own practices within the urban space. According to Irvine and Gal (2000), this is known as linguistic differentiation. They define linguistic differentiation as "ideas which participants and observers frame their understanding of

[39] Sheng word for 'the rich'
[40] Sheng word for 'the poor'

linguistic variation and map those understandings onto people, events, and activities that are significant to them" (p.35). Language is a product of social world and plays a significant role in a community of practice by making any linguistic practices salient.

Fourthly, Sheng appears to promote tribal neutrality. Historically, Kenya is made up of ethnic tribes. Ones belonging to a tribe may attract favor or hate in equal measure depending on ethnic affiliation between individuals. For instance, nepotism has seen some individuals getting favors at the expense of others. This is the narrative that these urban youth are in process of rescripting through language. According to Dorleinj et al (2015:273) "Sheng started out as a means for youth to mark their urban identity rather than an ethnic identity. The urban identity obviates ethnic identity since ethnic undertones are associated with rural culture and with the past." According to the youth, ethnic affiliation is not an urban way of life. Consider the following excerpt collected from one of the bazes.

(183)

Original	**Translation**
……*alafu hiyo kitu imetoa ile kitu inaitwanga ukabila. Eeeh wee enda uko ata ukuwe wa oridho ama wa kucome kila mtu anaongea ii luga ata saa unapata uyu ni mjaka na uyu, lakini hiyo time yote wamekaa apa hawajawai ongea kijaka. unaona hadi wana issue wanaambianaga tukiskia….. alafu sisi mavijana wote hata ukienda mitaa zote utaskia …kabila inarudish watu nyuma*	Also, this thing (Sheng) has eradicated tribalism. Eee even if you are local or new everyone speaks this language. Even now this is Luo (referring to a Luo speaker), and this but all this time they have never spoken Luo. You see even if they have an issue they share (in Sheng) while we can hear. …Then we as youth even if we were to go to all estates (we'll recognize each other) …. Ethnicity takes us back. -UH108 (2019)

Based on this conversation, young people appear to acknowledge their affiliation to ethnic languages but choose to stick with Sheng for the purposes of marking their present

urban identity. They endeavor to build urban identities and ideologies that are centered around ethnic neutrality. To them, negative ethnicity is a backward phenomenon, that has no place in their newly found urban culture.

In summary, the baze is like a *community of practice*, for the youth with shared sets of interest that is constructed around their practices and lived experience in the city. In such multilingual city, competing identities among the urban youths are evident in their interaction spaces such as the *baze*. It is here that their identity formation is enacted, shaped and advanced.

4.2.2 Hip hop and *Gengetone*: The upcoming artists of Kibera

The emergence of hip-hop music among the urban youths in Nairobi and surrounding towns continues to play a significant role in redefining urban culture and identity. Many youths have transitioned from just being consumers of western hip-hop to producers of their own hip hop content that characterize local sensibilities of culture and identity. With advancement in technology such as interactive media, it is not uncommon to find young people creating online content such as rap, stand-up comedy, satirical clips, comic strips among other forms and broadcasting the same on their YouTube channels, Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, etc. The hip-hop artistes of the 90's did not have such privileges. They found it challenging in creating content due to what was considered as expensive recording and production cost. Music had to be recorded in studios and produced on CDs which they would also have to peddle around in local radio stations to be broadcast. The present artists do not need to go through these challenges anymore as large percentage of consumers have transitioned to digital platforms. Evolution of digital

space therefore has created an enabling environment for the ‘new’ hip-hop culture and practices among the young artists in Nairobi.

The urban youths in Nairobi have embraced hip-hop for self-expression. They can now contribute to matters of national interest through music. Ntaragwi (2003) notes “through hip-hop the youth have been able to gradually insert themselves into the local and global spheres that shape national and regional political and cultural structures in unprecedented way” (p. 23). Music, therefore, affords young people a social responsibility of becoming watchdogs not only for the society but also for self-checking and reevaluating their own obligations to the community. King Kaka (Kennedy Ombima) a song writer and rapper, for example, uses his Sheng rap *Wajinga Nyinyi* ‘You, the fools’ to critique and call out on the political class for their hypocrisy, self-aggrandizing demeanor and corruption. In one of his stanzas, he raps:

(169)

Original	Translation
Laptop ni multi billion project, na walimu ushago hawana lights	Laptop is a multi-billion project, while teachers in the country have no lights
Wanacharge kwa generator shopping center,	They charge their cellphones at shopping centers
it's not right	It's not right
Wasipandishe tax, hizo ndio dreams mi uwa nazo nikituna	They should not increase taxes, that's my dream when I lay to bed
What are we really doing as a country saa zile tunachuja Miguna?	What are we really doing as a country, when we discriminated Miguna
Petroli imepanda so inamaanisha polisi wata operate kama customer care	Gas price has sky-rocketed, so it means police will operate as customer care
Busaa na chwara zinamaliza mayut	Alcohol and drug have finished our youths
Enyewe Stivo was right, mihadarati haiwezi	Verily Steve was right, drugs is not a solution
Wachane na polisi wafanye raid tena	Leave the police to raid drug lords again
Ama ni vile OCS hajapewa yake na kila mwizi	Or is it because the OCS (office commanding station) has not been bribed?
Oh, i mean ya kila mwezi	
Na polisi wako in cahoots, hao ndio uSupply wagondi na guns za ku shoot	The police is a tirade, that supply robbers with gun

(King Kaka, 2019)

It is evident that many young people identify with Kaka's lyrics and use similar platforms for commentary on sociopolitical issues affecting them. It is with no doubt that the colonial legacy, poor politico-economic structures, and internal mismanagement of resources by local leaders has adversely affected the youth whose future is tightly depended on these structures (Ntaragwi, 2003). Hip-hop therefore, has renewed youth

agency of confronting and criticizing such ill governance through their lyrics. Kaka uses his artist's position to speak of the problems and realities facing them as young people. In his album of *Wajinga Nyinyi* 'You the fools', he condemns young people for lining up to vote for politicians when they are already aware of their questionable character. He says, it is not the politicians who are stupid but we (youths) who vote them. He uses his satirical rap as a platform to comment on the vices propagated by these politicians. Between the year 2013 and 2017, highest rate of corruption was reported in many government departments with billions of moneys being siphoned through corrupt deals. The government auditor general once reported that in one of the government departments a pack of pens was secured for several hundred dollars, while 50 office laptops were imported for a couple million dollars. Such high levels of corruption have left the country in hopeless state with a skyrocketed cost of living coupled with heavy taxation. Hip-hop therefore has become a powerful agency tool with which young people use for to critique those in power while commenting on social issues affecting them. Previously, many youths lacked this type of medium or platform to engage and participate in matters of national interest often dominated by the political class. In past, young people who were aware of such governance ills did not critique or comment on for fear of retribution. However, with advancement of technology and evolution of 'new' hip-hop culture, such barriers have been minimized and the ground leveled. Despite the global forces of inequality, youths are using hip-hop as means to retain self-sufficiency and ability to face their own realities while championing political and socioeconomic stability.

Since Kenya's independence in 1963, young people have been marginalized economically, politically, and socially. Many other African countries are grappling with

economic imbalance and youth unemployment as well. The existing education systems produce more graduates than the market can absorb. As a result, these young men and women end up with no jobs but to brave the hostile environment before them. Through hip-hop and other performative arts, the urban youths are changing their story by using these very available platforms for their own social and economic capital. Ntaragwi (2003) observes that many artists have embraced the new social and economic opportunities that come with being a musician. They innovatively confront the outcomes of socioeconomic collapse and build alliances that help them positively navigate the challenges (Ntaragwi, 2003). For example, in the early 2000's two local hip-hop artistes Gidigidi (Joseph Oyoo) and Majimaji (Julias Owino) were contracted by the then opposition political party to compose a campaign song entitled 'unbwogable' (Sheng word for 'undefeated') which featured prominently in the NARC[41] coalition that formed 2002-2007 government. This song did not only profit them financially, but also afforded them fame that led to more opportunities (personal word from Julias Owino).

While being interviewed on one of the YouTube channels, Mbogi Ngenje hip-hop trio, Smady Tings (Antony Odhiambo), Guzman (Teddy Ochieng) and Militan (Malaka Yuen) say that music has helped them become agents of change in the streets by giving them the chance to articulate challenges they and other young people go through on daily basis. Their lived experiences serve as a motivation for other youths who want to be like them. For instance, Smaddy Tings says:

(170)

[41] National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) was once a political party in Kenya that formed the 2002-2007 government.

Original	Gloss
…….mii naeza sema tu watu hutoka mbali, mii hadi nikiangalia maali mii nlitoka na maali saa hii nakuaga mii huinotice hiyo change, na bado naona kuna room ya kufika mbali Zaidi unapata. Soo mii hutaka kukaa kama motivation kwa wasee wengine, wasee pia wanapitia maisha similar yenye mii nilikuwa napitia unapata. Juu hakuna haja saa ii mii niimbe ati juu ya life ya luxury na labda sijaai kuwa hapo unaona. Heri niimbie watu ile kitu tu mii najua. Juu nikiimba hivo najua kuna mtu itamfikia na itamotivate labda kesho akuwe a better person hata kuniliko	*"…..*what I can say is that people come from far, I see a big change in me. And I know I am going far. I would like to be an example and motivation to other youths who undergo similar experiences like me. There is no reason for me to sing about luxurious life which I haven't experienced, you see. I better sing for people what I know. Because when I sing like that, I know it will get to someone and maybe motivate them to become better people more than me."
	Smaddy Tings, (May 3, 2021)

It is apparent that Smaddy Tings (and other artists) use their position of fame as hip-hop artists to become influencers and agents of change within their community. This is in line with Moyer (2005) who argues that the poor and disenfranchised youth use hip-hop to make sense of their conditions.

Hip-hop and Sheng blend in a special way to construct social identities among young people in Nairobi. According to the youths I interacted with, Sheng is *lugha ya mtaa* 'street language' that affords them urban identity as *mamorio wa mtaa* 'ghetto youths.' In Tanzania for example, Remes (1998) contends that the urban youth, especially hip-hop artists, from the inner-city of Dar es Salaam, incorporate western images and local languages as a way of expressing imagined global realities as well as lived experiences of urban Tanzania. In his dissertation on Nigerian hip-hop, Gbogi (2020) characterizes how hip-hop in global contexts has aided in (re) constructing different identities among the young people across different levels socioeconomically, culturally, politically among others. Gbogi also observes that the "linguistic changes in youth languages are fast-tracked and strengthened by hip-hop in major African urban

spaces" (2020, pg. 7). Nairobi is no different. The growth and expansion of Sheng in the city has been enabled by the growing hip-hop culture in Kenya and its East African neighbors. It is not uncommon that the very nature of Sheng as a hybrid language is characterized by the globalization of hip-hop production and consumption that cuts across regional and national boundaries. In my interaction with the youths at the *bazes*, one of the members shared the following,

(171)

Original		**Gloss**	
IM:	*ooh word kama arif inatoka wapi?*	IM:	Ooh, where does a word like 'arif' come from
Y14:	*arif si sasa unajua…arif ni ya jam-town. ….hiyo ni English ya huko. Ni venye tu sisi tukiita msee beste. Sasa uko.*	Y14:	'arif' you know… arif is from Jam-town. ….it is an English word from there (jamtown). It is just like when we call someone 'friend' here. So there (it is the equivalent of friend)
IM:	*Huko ni wapi?*	IM:	Where is there?
Y14:	*Huko ni jam town. Uko ni Jamaica*	Y14:	It is Jam-town. There is Jamaica?
IM:	*Ooh, hiyo ni word ya kutoka Jamaica?*	IM:	Ooh, I see. So, that word is from Jamaica?
Y14:	*eeh, arif. Hiyo hata ni Kartelo aliiletaga.*	Y14:	Yes, 'arif'. In fact, it is Cartel who brought it.
IM:	*Kartelo ni wa wapi? Si huyu wa aapa?*	IM:	Where is Cartel from? Not the l ocal Kartelo?
Y14:	*ule Kartelo. The real 'Cartel'*	Y14:	It is that Cartel. The real 'Cartel'

In this excerpt, it is evident that percolation of hip-hop into East Africa has subsequent effects on the growth of local urban dialect such as Sheng. In my follow up probe on the origin of the Sheng word *arif* 'friend', I realized that it has its roots in Jamaica. Probably from Arif Cooper who happens to be popular DJ of reggae and dancehall music from Kingston, Jamaica. But what is even more interesting is how the hip hop fanbase in Nairobi not only embraces foreign hip hop but also recreates their own

hip hop by incorporating local Sheng lyrics. As one of my informants mentions above, the word *arif* found its way in Nairobi when it was introduced or used by the visiting hip hop artist 'Adidja Azim Palmer' who goes by the stage name '*Vybz Kartel'.* Kartel is a popular Jamaican reggae dancehall artist who has produced several album hits such as 'Romping Shop', 'Dancehall Hero' 'Summertime' among others. While doing my analysis of upcoming artists in the Eastlands slums, it was not surprising when I found out that one of the Sheng standup comedians and radio presenters from Eastlands, Nick Chege, goes by the stage name 'Kartelo'. Such cross-border exchanges, ignited by music performances and participating artists, reveal how young people "mobilize hip hop in order to produce not only new avenues for identity formation but also establish new parameters for sharing social and cultural interpretation within broader regional polity" (Ntaragwi, 2003:44). The very nature of music to spread beyond borders and its unboundedness has enabled youths to echo global identities while (re) constructing their own local identities. Such reconstruction is evident in localization of foreign hip hop music and style, and adoption of foreign names such as 'Kartelo' and 'arif' in reproduction of local hip hop. Formulation of urban identity by the Nairobi youths through hip hop can also be likened to Apparadui (1996)'s notion of vernacularizing where foreign cultural practices and lifestyle elements are adopted and localized while retaining local cultural sensibilities (as cited by Ntaragwi (2003)).

In one of the family gatherings at a friend's event in Nairobi, I met Rose (not her real name) who is a resident of Kibera[42]. Rose is aged 24. In our introductory small talk conversation, I had mentioned to her that I was doing a study on Sheng and that I would

[42] Kibera is a low-income residential slum located in the Southwest of Nairobi.

be in Nairobi for the next six months. Rose found this exciting and immediately asked if I would be interested in meeting one of the upcoming artist groups in her neighborhood, which I immediately accepted. At this point in time, Rose was now conversing to me in Sheng. Our newfound camaraderie with Rose led to my adventure of Kibera slums.

Kibera is the largest slum in Nairobi and Africa at large. According to Kenya population and housing census of 2009, it has a population of 170,000 a figure that is still controversial as many argue the population could be more than that (nd). Residents here live-in abject poverty, surviving on less than a dollar a day. Many youths are unemployed and social amenities such as schools and health facilities are scarce or in deplorable condition if at all available. Rose lives with her elder sister in a single room in one of the villages of Kibera known as *Laini Saba*. She tells me that she has lived here for over four years now. Her friendship network is quite diverse. She has friends of all ages and gender. On my first day of visit to the area, she had me interview seven young speakers of Sheng in *Laini Saba*. But more striking was this group of young upcoming artists who compose and perform local hip hop and *gengetone* music in Sheng. At the time of data collection, they did not have a defined name for their band. For the purposes of this study, I named it 'the upcoming hip-hop artists of Kibera'. The band consisted of 8 members with 4 male and 4 female. Their composition and rehearsals take place in one of the shacks that also doubles as a home for 4 of the boys. The room has no furniture. Everyone sits on the floor. What appears to be a 2-inched mattress and a couple of blankets are rolled up and placed in one of the corners. But more prominent, is the huge TV monitor laid on a box speaker, a DVD player, and a tall stack of compact discs all laying on the ground. There are two cordless mics and two other corded mics shared

among rapping quartet. My interview with them reveals that they use the TV monitor to watch both local and international hip-hop rappers. From time to time they also watch movies together.

Image 3: The researcher with the upcoming hip hop artists of Kibera

More important is their budding music career. They have been composing music for the last two years and have several albums under their production. Their only challenge is lack of financial capital to market their music and band. Their style of music mirrors locally based hip-hop popularly known as *gengetone* with blend of international hip-hop stylized beats. In the subsequent paragraphs I propose to paint a picture of what *gengetone* music looks and sounds like and why it is important to the growth of Sheng.

Gengetone is a new and fast-growing music sub-genre of local hip-hop in Kenya among urban youths today. The genre is characterized by fast-paced beats with rap lyrics that are poetic and melodic in style. The beats which appear to be borrowed from foreign and international hip-hop are laced with local lyrics mostly in Sheng and rooted in

African oral structure of call and response. According to Ntaragwi (2003) call and response structure involves short, repeated forms with rhythmic patterns that are taken in turns. The artists use digitized instrument backing while they rap with rhythmic style and rhyming words. The genre emerged in early 2018 and became popular in 2019 as a protest against local media radio stations as well as DJ's for playing foreign music at the expense of local productions. *Gengetone* fans see it as a revolution to Kenya's music industry. Its style has redefined urban music, identity, and culture among the youth in Nairobi. According to the artists, *gengetone* is one way of localizing hip-hop and giving it local identity. The first *gengetone* group to ever feature in the mainstream media was the *Ethic*. *Ethic* is a group of four artists, who go by stage names: *Rekles, Swat, Xilla and Seska*. Some of their popular hits include *Pandana*, *Instagram*, *Figa*, *Chapa chapa* among others. This group has however, been lashed with criticism for playing offensive music that exalt immorality and objectifies women. Another popular group is the *Sailors*. Sailors have been branded as the kings of *gengetone* by their fans. The group is comprised of five members who go by the stage names: *Miracle Bany, Shalkido, Masilver, Lexxy Young* and *Qoqosjuma*. They have produced hits like *Wainame, Queen B, Pekejeng* and *Wakiritho*. They have also produced a gospel song, *Jesu ni Mwathani* 'Jesus is Lord'. *Mbogi genje* also known as 'Sheng masters' is the latest band to make inroads to the Kenyan music industry. The band is made up of three members, that is, *Smady Tings* (Anthony Odhiambo), *Teddy* (Guzman Teddy) and *Miltan* (Malak Ayuen). The trio grew up together as friends and went to the same high school. They live in Umoja, one of the Eastlands estate in Nairobi. Their music hits include *Wamocho, Ting Ting, Si uduh* . *Ngumi Mbwegze* among others. This band is popularly known for their

exceptional use of Sheng. Their lyrics consist of innovative vocabulary that is only known to Sheng natives. Other bands include *Boondocks Gang*, *Rico Gang*, and *Zzero Sufuri*.

All these bands have a set of things in common. First, is their glocalization approach in production of *gengetone*. Their efforts to re-invent and transform hip-hop to reflect local sensibilities has not only been seductive but afforded them a close connection to their urban fans who identify with their music. Secondly, their use of Sheng in localizing hip hop has contributed in re-defining and reshaping their urban identity. Thirdly, their music mirrors the street life of Nairobi. For them, *gengetone* is a platform for commenting on social issues and lived realities within the urban slums of Nairobi. It affords them the freedom to communicate to wider audiences about their struggles in the inner city. The following is a *gengetone* stanza from one of the *Mbogi Genje's* hits. (172)

Original	**Gloss**
Mbuku jo, nimekula mbuku jo	You know books, I have studied books
System jo, imeninyima kazi jo	The system, has denied me a job
Degree yangu ni urembo jo	My degree is just beauty
Mbogi jo, inataka dishi jo	The family, needs food
Inabidi tuwateke, wamocho	It forces me to get high
Tupate za machwara, wamocho	To get money for alcohol, to get high
Utanipata zabe, kanashi	You will find me at the *baze*, chewing miraa
Kuja na maini, si mabati	While planning how to get money from guys
Nikichora vile nitateka tu wathii	I summon the farmer with crops
Niite mkulima na mimea	A manager without title
Mkurugenzi wa kujipulizia	Getting high is my job
Kuwamocho ndio riba	

Gengetone is a platform that affords young people a forum for social commentary. The downfall of politico-economic structures and mismanagement of resources through corruption in many African countries has left so many youths

frustrated with many not having jobs or sustainable form of livelihood. Political marginalization of youths has denied the youth an opportunity to address the very problems they face as young people. This is articulated in one of *Mbogi Genje*'s stanzas in (172) where the rapper laments on his state of affairs for not having a job despite graduating from college. His family goes hungry because he cannot provide for them. As a result, he opts to get intoxicated on drugs and alcohol because this appears to be the only job left for him. Such are the issues that are affecting many young people in the slums of Nairobi.

Many youths in this area are unemployed and depend on daily manual jobs such as construction work or parking services at *matatu* stages. They call this their 'daily hustle'. Many of these young men are breadwinners of their families. Others still share accommodation with their parents within the city. Unemployment remains the biggest challenge, not just for the urban youth but countrywide.

Local hip-hop like *gengetone* therefore plays a vital role in articulating sociopolitical and economic realities not only within urban slums but in Kenya as a whole. Its rapid growth and expansion in urban Africa bring with it a new social function that youths tend to capitalize on to change their own narratives. The budding of new hip-hop culture(s) in Nairobi, allows young people to localize international hip-hop sensibilities both in style and content that appeals to local audience while embracing the exoticness that comes with the international genre. Many of the local artists blend Sheng lyrics or rap with pre-recorded foreign beats and style to give it a unique hybrid taste that is appealing to the urban audience. Ntaragwi observes that one of the main reasons hip-hop has gained popularity in Africa at large is because of its aptitude to be localized

through style and content (Ntaragwi 2003). Hybridization of western style and local languages such as Sheng in crafting local hip-hop reflects urban identity and culture of young people who capitalize on international hip-hop's fame to comment on their own realities and local issues affecting them. Just like the upcoming artists of Kibera, their existing challenges such as poor housing and sanitation, lack of clean water, and unemployment can only be checked and challenged through their music. The content of their lyrics and messages within their songs is like a told narrative about self that is journeyed through historical past to present detailing their lived realities and experiences and ways to transform such narratives to a better story. This paints a picture of a youth who is aware of the global trends while remaining true to their own culture. As a form of self-expression these urban youths have created for themselves a third space comprising of local and global sensibilities, which they use to shape their urban identity while proving to be equal players in socio-politico-economic development within their country. Ntaragwi (2003:35) observes "the expressive form of hip-hop adopted by East African youth in the process of negotiating identity in this globalizing context is quite similar to that of the US rap hip-hop". Ntaragwi says that it is not uncommon to find local artists dressed in sagging pants, with long white T-shirts and hats facing backward with long bling chains and bracelets as part of their dress code. Such is a characteristic of American hip-hop artists such as Lil Wayne, Nas and Kendrick Lamar. Local hip-hop artist CMB Prezzo (Jackson Makini) has in the past been nicknamed *king of bling* due to his reproduction of global style of wearing many gold bracelets and necklaces.

The US represents the western world, which according to the youth is a model of advanced lifestyle and fashion. Therefore, in an effort to locally project these western

realities and identities, they use music, fashion and style to cross regional and national borders and tap into these imagined realities while embracing their African culture. One way in which they do this is through production of blended art such as music, dress and talk which while it resembles western style, it is at the same time infused with African sensibilities.

Through art, especially music, African artists are able to represent Africa at a global platform by rewriting its history and advocating for African rights while reflecting on and critiquing self. Kaka's rap highlighted in (169) is a true example of how artists use music to re-evaluate their role as agents of change. Hip-hop affords them a podium upon which they acquire a voice to question their status and inequality extended to them by economic imbalance castigated by those in power. In (172) Mejja (Nameye Khadija) uses his position as a music artist music to comment on unemployment challenges youths face through music. Music to them is a space for activism. It helps them fight for equality while condemning the vices in the communities which they come from.

The continued use of Sheng in production of local hip hop is an interesting observation. The urban youths are multilingual, that is, they speak a minimum of three languages. This in itself is an indication that they have multiple linguistic choices when it comes to production of their own music. However, the use of Sheng in local music industry is predominant. Sheng is a symbol of urbanity. It represents urban culture that many youths identify with. This urban identity is mobilized through language, music, dress, values, and attitudes that are shared among urban residents. Therefore, in an effort to construct urban identity, Sheng becomes an ideal choice in fulfilling this requirement. As earlier mention in (Section 3.2.1), youths consider Sheng as a label of urban identity.

To them, Sheng sheds off any tribal undertones and confers on them that urban self that is tribeless. Many of the present youths have been born and raised in the city and Sheng serves as their first language. For those who migrated to the city, they have been shifting from their ethnic languages and in its place adopting Sheng as a language of wider communication.

One of the *ngengetone*'s bands 'Mbogi Genje' caused a stir on social media when they released one of their *ngengetone* hits in what appeared to be 'deep ghetto Sheng' that many were not familiar with. The following is one of the translated stanzas.

(173)

Original	**Gloss**
Mazing ni kupiga tu baroda	[Us guys] Our work is just to tarmac
Piga riu tukukate hadi mocha	Talk much we chase you away
Piga tapo mrazi achachishe	Touch the guy to pysche him up
Piga changli renga kwa mrota	Drink alcohol, fall in the trench
Babilon wanadai tu Portmore	Babylon just want Portmore (Ghetto)
Wananauowo ngumi mbweze ni ma hate bad	They see Ngumi Bwegze as bad guys
Hatuwadungi na ukapi ni mangiso	We'll not use daggers but guns
Leta blodclat tukupige kidi	If you joke with us, we'll stone you

The language featured here would sound exotic to an ordinary Sheng speaker at first. In fact, many residents in Nairobi said they did not comprehend a single word when the album premiered in 2019. The song features innovative forms of Sheng that are at an early stage of production. For instance, in (174) I tried to compare the words used in the song with current Sheng to understand the innovation in progress.

(174)

Current sheng	**Innovative forms**	**Gloss**
msee	Mzing	guy
baro	baroda	road
kata maji	piga changli	consume alcohol
cheki	nauowo	see
suki	ukapi	knife

getto Portmore ghetto

Young people (especially male) in the Eastlands slums are agents of change when it comes to linguistic innovativeness and language evolution. As told by one of my interviewees at the *baze* in Kayole, innovativeness starts from ghetto and spreads outwards. This is also in line with regional distribution of language features suggested by Wolfram and Schilling (2016:143) that "a change is initiated at one locale at a given point in time and spreads outward from that point in progressive stages so that earlier changes reach the outlying areas later". Eastland appears to be the cradle for Sheng innovativeness and continues to play a significant role in the growth of Sheng in Nairobi. In the early 60's the use of Sheng was primarily limited to Nairobi and its environs due to limited mobility of its users as well as its stigmatized status. Sheng speakers would only move back to countryside during annual holidays, limiting its spread. Mainstream media would not use it due to its social status at the time. But with rapid growth of technology and interactive media in the post millennial time, the transmission of Sheng out of Nairobi has been phenomenal. Other than advancement in technology, music is one way in which diffusion of Sheng innovativeness has been achieved. Music plays an integral part in diffusion and spread of this dialect in Nairobi and beyond. Jua Cali (Paul Nunda) is one of the earliest *genge* hip-hop artists from Eastlands to have produced many records exclusively in Sheng. In one of his songs *Kuna Sheng* 'There is Sheng' he narrates how different parts of Nairobi have varieties of Sheng. In the song he provides examples of Sheng used in different parts of Nairobi.

(175)

Original
Kuna Sheng ya Easich,
lakini si wote tunaelewana
Kuna Sheng ya Kibich,

lakini si wote tunaelewana	**Gloss**
Kuna Sheng ya Emba,	There is Eastleigh Sheng
lakini si wote tunaelewana	But we all understand each other
Kuna Sheng ya Mari	There is Kibira Sheng
lakini si wote tunaelewana	But we all understand each other
	There is Embakasi Sheng
Manzi msupa anaitwa mtoto	But we all understand each other
Manzai wa udu naye ni ong'ong'o	There is Maringo Sheng
Ukiachwa mataa ni umetokwa	But we all understand each other
Kuingiza ma winch mingi ni umeomoka	
	A beautiful girl is *mtoto*
	An ugly girl is *ong'ong'o*
	If you are rejected is *umetokwa* (be left)
	To winch up, is *umeomoka* (become rich

It is evident in (175) that artists have conscious and linguistic knowledge of their language. This awareness enables them to realize different forms of Sheng and how to navigate through it while performing to different audience in the city. Sheng being the language of the street as the natives call it, it becomes the first choice for local hip hop as it immensely appeals to the local fanbase. Additionally, since many hip-hop artists have background in Eastlands slums of Nairobi, they themselves are innovators and agents of transmission of Sheng. According to Everett (2003), factors that influence diffusion include the phenomenon under change, communication network, social structures among others. In our case, music is a vehicle through which Sheng is made known to the outside world. The emergence of Sheng was closely associated with secrete code by which young people wanted to keep their communication within the inner group. This is still evident in the Eastlands area where youths wanting to maintain their urban and ghetto identity, use coded Sheng that an ordinary Nairobi resident would struggle to comprehend.

4.2.3 Sheng and the media: Ghetto Radio, the official Sheng radio Station in Kenya

The media presents a rich ground on which we can understand the construction of linguistic ideologies and how these ideologies are mediated by the society and linguistic practices. The media remains a powerful tool that affords people a platform to express their culture and identity. For a long time, the language of the media in Africa has been English (for British colonies) and French for francophone countries. This is due to the ideology that the Western languages command authority and the same would be reflected in the media which they are used. However, proponents of African languages and literature like Ngugi Wa Thiong'o have a different opinion. In one of his publications, he notes:

> English, French and Portuguese are the languages in which the African people have been educated; for this reason, the result of our research into science, technology and of our achievements in the creative arts are stored in those languages. Thus, a larger portion of this vast knowledge is locked up in the linguistic prison of English, French and Portuguese. Even the libraries are really English language fortresses inaccessible to the majority. So, the cultivation of these languages makes for more effective communication only between the elite and the international English-speaking bourgeoisie.
>
> (Wa Thiong'o 1993:37)

Wa Thiong'o lobbies for more African languages in literary works. To him stories told by Africans about Africa in African languages connect well with the audience, differently from works in western languages. Similarly, the use or lack of use of local languages in the media reflects different ideologies.

While defining metalanguage, Preston (2004:75) uses a tripartite model to categorize metalanguage into three definitions. Definition one comprises instances where speakers of a language use the language to comment on a language. The second definition involves the phatic function of language where speakers may mention talk itself such as 'what did you say?' or 'what I mean is...' and lastly and more important to

this section is the third definition, where metalanguage involves shared set of beliefs and attitudes around language structure and its use by speakers of that language. This definition becomes our take-off point in understanding how a vernacular radio station (as well as other forms of media) and speakers of Sheng use language to construct their own sociocultural and urban identities while negotiating for public space within a complex multilingual city like Nairobi.

For a long time in Kenya (and Africa at large), mainstream media has been used as a legitimizing tool both linguistically and politically. Leading TV and radio stations as well as print media mainly used English and Swahili as their languages of choice in transmission of content. One may pause to ask, what does this mean for exclusive speakers of indigenous languages? How can they participate in public and national discourse? Do these languages inform cultural practices and linguistic practices of entire country which is ethnolinguistically diverse? Does this translate to exclusion? In order to address these questions, we need first to examine how the media represents and facilitates interests of the public in which it exists. According to Curran (1991) the media should be an entry point to public discourse. It allows people an opportunity to contribute to national discourse. To this I will add that, it should also provide an equal space where all people regardless of socioeconomic status can construct and express their own culture and identities.

Advancement in technology has seen a prolific rise and emergence of digital media and FM stations in Kenya which transmit content in local languages to tap in areas/audiences perceived to be marginalized or those that have not had a chance to participate in public discourse through their ethnic languages. The use of local languages

in the media is likely to inform cultural practices and identity construction among its audience while getting a chance to contribute to matters of national interests.

The media aid in promoting linguistic and cultural representation of speech communities. It is this type of representation that inform social construction of group identity and their role as players in the public discourse. According to Gal and Woolard (2001), linguistic ideologies are a representation of cultural beliefs and involve understanding of culture in terms of linguistic ideas and cultural conceptions of social actors. The use of language in the media can equally be a complex topic to tackle because of its multifaceted representations. For the sake of this dissertation, my focus is to understand how vernacular radio stations and the new media are promoting and constructing sociocultural status of Sheng and its speakers in Kenya.

Using the ethnographic approach, I visited one of the vernacular radio stations known as Ghetto Radio in Nairobi with the primary goal of understanding its role and position in transmitting content in Sheng. Ghetto Radio is an urban vernacular FM station that transmits its content exclusively in Sheng. The station was established in 2007 and has since then been popular not only among urban residents but also in other regional towns where its signal is accessible. Ghetto Radio broadcasts news, talk shows, informative programs, sports, and lifestyle programs such as music and fans-request show. According to personal communication with the manager, the station was established with an ultimate goal of unravelling the fuller picture of the African urban life in the ghetto slums of Nairobi as told by its people. The station also provides people with a platform where they can tell their own stories uninterrupted. This can be through music, graffiti, blogs, comments, storytelling competition among others. Besides

mainstream broadcasting, the station also runs social media pages and interactive websites where fans are allowed to be part of the conversation while interacting freely through Sheng and other forms of expressive art, such as graffiti. According to the manager, the primary goal of the station is to feature real ghetto life and culture contrary to how it has been depicted by other mainstream media. At the time of my visit, the majority of the radio crews were on a fans-sensitization tour in different parts of the city. I asked if I could join them on the tour and they accepted. The tour, which was dubbed as 'Kaboom tour', featured local artists who collaborated with Ghetto Radio presenters for a meet and greet tour across different estates in the Eastland area. The tour also involved open mic sessions where radio fans were allowed to rap and entertain the audience with their songs. Fans were also treated to Ghetto Radio giveaways and gifts such as t-shirts, hats and free concert tickets, among other things. In this tour, local fans also had a chance to meet and interact with their favorite Sheng radio presenters. All my interviews with the media personalities took place on this tour. Moving forward, I divide my analysis into 3 portions that represents the three media personalities I interacted with.

4.2.2.1 Bossman (Julias Owino)

Julias Owino who goes by the stage name 'Bossman'(Sheng for manager), is the managing director of Ghetto Radio station. Bossman also co-hosts a breakfast show popularly known as 'brekko' with his fellow presenter King Kafu. Brekko runs from 5 o'clock to mid-morning. The show reviews online trending stories and news from ghetto, national and international spaces. In this show, they also analyze newspaper headlines and stories from local dailies. Fans are also given a chance to call in and *big up* 'greet' each other. According to Bossman, Sheng is a lifestyle. It is his identity. Having been

born and raised in the urban slums, he narrates that there is no other language he understands better than Sheng. To him and his fans, Sheng speaks to their hearts, it speaks to their mind. It makes them feel understood by others. The following response to my question reveals just that:

(176)

> Me: Why did you choose Sheng as your broadcasting language when there were other languages at your disposal?
> Bossman: ..it is the reality. Reality of lifestyle. It makes us who we are. The other languages don't do that.
> Me: So how would you say Sheng is helping to fulfil this reality you mention?
> Bossman: as a scholar you are, I will take you back to the definition of communication. Sheng is enhancing communication. The main goal of communication is to understand each other and also feel understood. So, good communication is when you speak to the heart and Sheng is that language that makes that happen. We can't be struggling with other languages when Sheng can help us without problem.

In this discussion, Sheng appears to provide ease of communication between the presenter and his fans. It should also be noted that majority of Ghetto Radio listeners are ethnically mixed, and Sheng is the label that gives them a unified urban identity. As Bossman mentions in (176), other languages cannot fulfill this role except Sheng. As previously discussed, Sheng plays a pivotal role in leveling ethnic diversity in the city to pave way for unified identity.

On why he decided to venture into radio, Bossman narrates that he was once a victim of negative publicity and insensitiveness brought about by the media. He felt that the mainstream media did not communicate and identify with him as a teenage growing up in the slums. He says, some of the presenters by then did not acknowledge his shout out requests and did not play the exact music he wanted, due to what appears to him to be unfamiliarity with his tastes. He mentions that when he used to send in requests to be played on live radio, the presenters kept playing alternative music. From this he deduced

that they did not have his record or were not familiar with the requested music. In summary he says, he joined radio so he could change this narrative by becoming a media personality who speaks the language of the youth for the youth. According to Bossman, most urban youths are not understood because their culture is suppressed by the dominant society as well as those in power.

4.2.2.2Brown Girl (Celina Njoki)

My second interview featured Ghetto radio talk show host Celina Njoki who goes by the stage name *Brown Girl*. Celina hosts a midmorning show called '*Niaje niaje'* (Sheng for 'what's up, what's up'). In this talk show, she discusses topics ranging from behavioral change, youth unemployment, drugs, sports, gender and sexuality. The audience is comprised of urban youths, who call in to contribute to various topics under discussion. The main language of the show is Sheng. Celina informs me that Sheng is a lived experience. The problems affecting young people cannot be addressed if you do not speak their language. In her talk show, she says, young people want to identify with people who are like them, talk like them and live like them. It is a shared construction of identity. However, she notes that Sheng varies and plays different roles depending on where one comes from. The Eastland Sheng, according to her, is different from Sheng spoken outside the city. On how they manage to broadcast to an audience that speaks different variations of Sheng, Celina had the following to say:

(177)

Me:	How do you reach out to all these people when they speak different varieties of Sheng?
Celina:	we [Ghetto Radio] do is we use the oldest Sheng that people can relate to quickly. Or rather, Sheng that is known. We have Sheng listeners from all over the world and we also want them to connect

with us. If you go deep into Sheng language aah let's say Ziwani Sheng, no one will understand but unless you introduce it to them slowly.

Me: How do you introduce it to them?

Celina: Songs. Many songs that we play on radio introduce new forms of Sheng to other listeners. From here they learn. Even other callers. They call in with different variety of Sheng and from here people get to learn.

Me: So, does old Sheng seems the most standard?

Celina: I am told if you use the up-to-date Sheng, you are likely to lose people [listeners will fail to understand]

From this excerpt, it is evident that there exist sub-dialects of Sheng based on region. Celina contends that they use an older version of Sheng as many people are not conversant with the latest one. In (175) the artist Jua Cali acknowledges different types of Shengs in Nairobi but says that it is intelligible, that is, they all understand each other regardless of the variation. I wonder if this is the case with Ghetto Radio listeners and that there is no older version of Sheng as Celina suggests. Additionally, the youths in the *bazes* once noted that they are able to recognize Sheng from different estates, but this does not hinder their communication.

According to Celina, the urban youths use Sheng to project 'citiness'. 'Citiness' to them is being informed, being aware of the latest trends compared to country folks who are rubes and not trendy. They use Sheng to describe their city experiences (Celina preferred to use the word 'life'). Other languages like Swahili and Kikuyu for instance do not project their lived experiences as Sheng would do. According to them, using Swahili would make them sound too formal while Kikuyu (one of the local indigenous languages) would make them sound so rural, only Sheng gives them that perfect description of a town guy.

Like Bossman, Celina also agrees that one is likely to connect much better with the young generation in Nairobi if they speak their language. According to Celina, being a fluent speaker of Sheng has enabled her to reach out to so many youths something she would not have achieved if she switched to English or her Kikuyu language. She says "..when you speak Sheng, they get the message, they get the message… and they know what you are saying. They understand you and they relate with you. To them, you are not an enemy. Speaking a different language creates a wall, not that they don't understand Swahili, but you are not identifying with them."

4.2.2.3 Dj Chara (Jared Wambua)

Jared Wambua who goes by the stage name DJ. Chara is the official Ghetto Radio DJ. Chara was born and raised in the urban slums of Nairobi, and he describes himself as one of who is familiar on what the life in the hood looks like. At the time of this study, he had worked for Ghetto radio for 3 years mainly as disc jockey. His main role is to sample, mix and select music for talk show presenters. He informs me that he plays music genres ranging from *kapuka*, *genge*, *gengetone*, and reggae to RnB. Our main conversation centered around the role of music in constructing urban identity and how this is mediated by Ghetto Radio. As mentioned earlier, this interview took place on a Ghetto Radio tour in the subaltern urban estates. The group was accompanied by invited local reggae artists. The majority of talented youths from the Eastland slums venture into music as an alternative source of income. Popular artists such as 'Mejja', 'Jua-cali', 'Mbogi Genje', 'Kartelo' among others were born and raised in the Eastlands. This is where their music career started. According to Chara, people in the ghetto identify with

reggae and hip hop more than any other music. The embedded messages in reggae songs from popular artists such as the late Bob Marley from Jamaica; and Lucky Dube from South Africa connects well with their struggles as young people living in an urban slum. They identify with these icons since they feel they rose to success after undergoing struggles similar to theirs. The tour of the urban estates was to inspire upcoming musicians by giving them a platform to express themselves as they popularize their songs. DJ Chara notes:

> We choose to do [music] tours within the ghettoes since we want our fans to get the message directly. We want to them to have real experience with live performances of reggae. Reggae is a ghetto kind of music. If you go back to study about reggae and artists like Bob Marley [you will get their revolutionary message]. They used to do it within ghettoes.
>
> (DJ Chara 2019)

From Chara's except it is evident that the local youth/artists are echoing the style and culture of international artists to rebrand their own local music that address similar challenges in the urban slums. This aligns well with the hybridity experienced in the production of local music where western style and local languages are blended to fit in the urban culture. Chara notes that music plays an integral part in reaching out and communicating to the masses where regular broadcast cannot. Fans communicate to other fans through music. "When I am deejaying many fans will call in to request certain songs with certain messages to be played out to their friends who are celebrating things like birthdays as well as those who are undergoing challenges such as drug addiction or hopelessness," he remarked. Music therefore plays a significant role in constructing social relationships and mediating between social actors, that is between fans and fans

and ghetto Radio and fans. According to Chara, their use of Sheng has given them power to access the ghetto without much protest compared to other radio stations.

In summary, the relationship between Ghetto Radio and its urban audience can be likened to that of a social system interacting with another in a contextualized communicative space. The use of indigenous languages in the media did not blossom until the late 1980's when the political reformists in Kenya wanted a local language press as a tool to push for multi-party democracy (Salawu, 2016)[43]. This saw a rise in alternative forms of press in local languages such as Swahili, Kikuyu, Kalenjin and Luhya. With the pressure of urbanization and globalization in African cities, other urban languages have also emerged. The existence of Sheng as an urban language with a growing speech community has not been publicly acknowledged by those in power. It exclusively remains a case of interest for linguistic scholarship and social actors such as the community of speakers and media platform such as Ghetto Radio. The rise of Ghetto Radio can be attributed to the rethinking of the linguistic functions in public space. Until recently, the representation of people by the media in Kenya has been premised on a notion of exclusivity. The use of only English and Swahili in mainstream broadcasting was discriminatory. This left out a large portion of the population which could not effectively communicate in either of the languages. This is also captured by Urla (2001:141)[44] who says, "The idealized image of a democratic theatre of free and equal participation in debate has always been a fiction predicated on the mandatory silencing of

[43] Salau, A. (2016). Indigenous languages and media democracy in Africa. In Indengenouos Language Media, Language Politics and Democracy in Africa. Edited by Salawu, A. and Chibita M. B. Palgrave Macmillan Publishers, Hampshire

[44] Urla, J. (2001) Outlaw Language: Creating alternative public spheres in Basque Free Radio. Languages and Publics: The making of Authority Edited by Susan Gal and Kathryn A. Woolard. St. Jerome Publishing. Manchester, UK & Northampton MA.

entire social group and vital social issues…This is especially clear in the case of those citizens who do not or will not speak the language of civil society." In an ethnolinguistically diverse community like Kenya, it is unlikely that various speech communities will exclusively use the two official languages in articulating their own sociocultural specific issues. This then calls for the reexamination of media and mediatization in representing the communities in which they broadcast their content. The prolific rise in local vernacular radio stations such as *Mulembe FM, Mbaitu FM, Ramogi FM, Kass FM* among others continues to change this narrative.

Ghetto Radio as a local media platform has effectively succeeded in representing and covering a subaltern speech community that was under-covered by the dominant media for a long time in Nairobi. While citing Foucault (1980), Johnson and Ensslin (2007)[45] observe that the media reflects and promotes a dynamic set of ideologies within the community which it serves. The emergence of a Sheng Radio station in the Eastlands indexes the representation of a marginalized group of young speakers who were previously underrepresented. This aligns well with Bossman's sentiments when his says that he felt underrepresented by the mainstream media as he could not identify with them due to what he termed as the mainstream media not knowing the interests and likes of young people like him when it came down to music requests and issues affecting them as urban slum youths.

Ghetto Radio as a public agency displays a set of practices which are unconditionally goal oriented. These may include but not limited to observing, interpreting, performing, representing, and disseminating information (Johnson and

[45] Johnson, S. and Ensslin, A. (2007). Language in the media: Theory and practice. In Language in the Media: Representations, Identities , Ideologies. Edited by Sally, S. and Ensslin, A.

Ensslin,2007). As a local media station, Ghetto Radio participates in representation and construction of Sheng as a language. It should be noted that language is not a static independent concept but rather a process that involves reiterated discussive practices (Pennycook 2004:8) that results from social interaction that is contextually situated and reflects ideologies of the social actors involved. For instance, in my interaction with Ghetto Radio media personalities, one thing that stood out is their use of Sheng to engage a specified group of audience within Nairobi. In Celina's talk show, youths are able to express themselves and freely, talk about underlying challenges they go through such as drug abuse, teen pregnancy and school dropouts mainly because of the availed space of discussive practice in a language they can easily identify with. Therefore, Ghetto Radio, through its ability to convey local concerns on a global stage using Sheng, provides a powerful social platform for construction of urban identity. As noted elsewhere in this dissertation, globalization has shaped youth's urban identity in a significant way, that is, urban youth have been enabled to interact on the global stage through technology, music, fashion, and social while remaining true to their African roots. As a result, they hybridize two worlds through glocalization. This is evident in how young artists (re)produce local hip hop using western beats infused with lyrics in local languages such as Sheng.

Ghetto Radio together with its other interactive media platforms have creatively accessed and permeated a new geographic region that has sequentially allowed what Johnson and Ensslin (2007) refer to as new pragmatic and social function of language which indexes social identity among its listeners. Through Sheng broadcasts, listeners feel a sense of inclusivity and belonging, a notion articulated well through language. This is one area in which other local media stations have struggled to gain ground due

their exclusive reliance on standard forms of communication. While many urban youths may be familiar with standard English and or Swahili, they are not be able to articulate their issues as they would do in Sheng, their identity language.

Salawu (2016) contends that many indigenous languages in Africa are not actively used on the internet due to what he considers as 'reluctance of Africans to use their own languages on digital platforms such as Facebook and twitter. While this may be true for many indigenous languages, it is not the case for Sheng. By the fact that Sheng is language of the youth, indexing their urban identities is very active on social media platforms. Before advancement of the new media, Sheng existed only in its spoken form. Sheng speakers could only express themselves through verbal communication as is it is the norm for a section of them who have no access to advanced technology. However, the evolution of vernacular radio stations such as Ghetto Radio and its interactive online pages have changed how local languages are perceived in airwaves and digital programs.

4.3 Emerging social functions of Sheng

With proliferation of new linguistic practices in Nairobi (and other urban cities in African as well) there is need to check the status of these languages and whether they still function as anti-language[46]. With time, urban varieties are likely to re-invent themselves attracting new set of speakers, new domains and even new linguistic practices that were previously excluded. I argue that these emerging (newer) practices e.g. bazes, gengetone, vernacular radio stations etc, are redefining Sheng to index new social functions and identities that were not previously associated with it. The findings from ethnographic observations and interviews reveal unbounded and fluid borders of such functions and

[46] Language used by a group of speakers who align themselves against ideologies of the dominant society (Halliday, 1976)

identities from which speakers move in and out at will. Further, restricted boundaries of Sheng as an anti-language are becoming permissive with Sheng gradually transforming into a language of wider communication. There appears to be mutual interaction between practices associated with dominant groups and those of resistant populace. While young people want to exclude themselves from practices of the dominant society, they are at the same time drawing on these mainstream practices to weave hybrid identities that convey a combination of mainstream, international and in-group ideologies.

Gengetone as a platform for public commentary provides youth with access to public spaces that they never had a chance to access before. By so doing, they creatively invite the mainstream society to share and interact with their discourse which in return breaks the anti-language barrier that existed before. Similarly, group identities that were associated with resistance ideology are now transforming to newer project identities. In addition, *gengetone* is an agency tool urban youths use to champion for their rights while at the same time critiquing what they consider as oppression and exclusion by the mainstream society. The growing dominance and presence of *gengetone* music on the internet and the local media stations are steadily transforming Sheng from an in-group language to a language of wider communication.

Digital spaces are becoming new sites for virtual linguistic practices. The online interaction is the new community of practice where youths enact, construct, and vitalize newer identities while forging virtual relationships that are not limited to physical meetings. In other words, the digital space affords them a chance to critique, lobby and to contribute to matters of national importance regardless of their location. With such enablement, the community of practice may have members from across different social

classes, ages, and cultures, with an array of potentially differing linguistic practices. Digital spaces also help us understand how young people are consciously aware of their language and language use. The following images are from a Facebook post that highlight youths' commentary on their own language.

Image 4: Facebook post highlighting metalinguistic awareness among digital youth

In image 3, the original post shows the poster asking for meanings of certain Sheng words that he seems not to understand, that is, *abujubuju* 'affectionate remark', *Adonija* 'penis', *mayengs* 'girls', *mbogi* 'gang', *rieng* 'situation'. The subsequent comments highlight definitions and translations of some of the words with further recommendations. What this suggests is that information that was previously exclusive to speakers of these languages is now accessible to the larger public via digital platforms. The erstwhile resistance identity appears to be transforming to project an identity that is more inclusive, allowing non-members to participate in linguistic practices that were

previously ratified for in-group members only. In summary, this virtual community of practice promotes compounded identities that are fluid and boundless.

Another dominant linguistic practice in Nairobi is Standup comedy. Sheng language is considered an innovative language and tends to elicit humor and excitement among its speakers. It is not uncommon to find young people on the street performing verbal dueling while engaging in comical insults that are aimed to elicit humor and excitement as a way of passing time. In the recent past, this linguistic practice has found its way in mainstream standup comedy performances. Sheng words have affective values of humor and fun and this makes it desirable for comedians. In Nairobi, famous standup comedians like Daniel Ndambuki of *Churchill Live* use Sheng for the most part in their performances on national TVs, clubs, arenas etc. Other comedians like Eric Omondi, Jaymo Ule Msee, Mamito, Flaqo, Terrence and many others capitalize on Sheng for dissemination of their comedy content. These shifting domains also index shifting identities that appear boundless and not restricted to only Sheng speakers. The widespread use of Sheng in mainstream performances makes Sheng a language of wider communication that include people who were previously considered as non-members.

The prolific use of Sheng in advertising has had a significant effect on its identity as an anti-language. Many business entities now use Sheng to advertise their products through TV commercials, online, print, and outdoor marketing. The following ads exemplify the use of Sheng in marketing.

Image 5: Examples of corporate ads in Sheng

This corporate use makes Sheng less exclusive to the urban youth. As aforementioned in this dissertation, urban youth languages especially in Africa are gradually transitioning to languages of wider communication. Sheng is not an exception. Hollington and Nassesstein (2017) make a similar observation when they observe that the widespread use of Sheng words in Kenya has now extended beyond the original communities of practice, the speakers of the slums. According to the duo, such widespread of Sheng has made some speakers consider Sheng as the new lingua franca in Kenya. While business firms popularize their products in Sheng, by so doing they also promote Sheng and its shared knowledge to the wider audience. The second ad in image (5) displays a beer company advertising its product in form of a bottle with Sheng inscribed on it. The words displayed are different synonyms for 'man' in Sheng. These words are widely used in different varieties of Sheng spoken in Nairobi. The use of Sheng in advertising can be compared with Bourdieu's (1977) idea of linguistic marketplace, where Sheng has gained desirable characteristics that makes it a language of

advertising. While Sheng holds covert prestige among its users, it is now transforming to overt prestige where its uniqueness and innovativeness gives it a positive attraction.

It is evident from the above discussion that linguistic practices associated with Sheng are spreading into newer domains and reflect flexible and fluid identities. According to Halliday's definition of anti-language and project identity (Halliday 1092), the borders between these types of identities are becoming fluid and boundless. Each linguistic practice indexes different identities that are contextualized within specific community of practice. While Sheng is transitioning into mainstream spaces, the younger speakers are also re-inventing newer linguistic practices such as the *bazes* where 'deep' Sheng is used while 'mainstream' Sheng is relegated to the wider public. In my personal communication with one of the Ghetto Radio station presenters, Brown Girl, they confine their broadcasting within mainstream Sheng which is seemingly understood by a wider audience than deeper Sheng. Away from the need to reach to a wider audience, one could still argue that the reason for this is the reality that Sheng cuts across different domains of use and that it also indexes flexible identities that are reflected in different linguistic practices associated with Sheng.

In summary, this chapter has used ethnographic approach to investigate linguistic practices in the subaltern pockets of Eastlands to understand how the younger population is using Sheng to advance their endeavors while at the same time reconstructing their own urban identities and cultures within the complex multilingual context of Nairobi. It is evident that linguistic practices such as *bazes*, local hip hop and vernacular radio stations are revolutionizing the urban culture by incorporating global pop culture to enact glocalization model that is witnessed in music styles such as local hip hop, rap, *genge* and

gengetone. The *baze* as a dominant linguistic practice in this area appears to be a multilayered domain from which young people not only gather to shape their urban identities but to earn a livelihood. The rise of new vernacular Radio stations such as Ghetto Radio has led to the contestation of social dominance that has previously been enjoyed by mainstream media broadcasting in English and Swahili. Lastly, the chapter demonstrates that social functions of Sheng, particulary, in the discussed linguistic practices are spreading into newer domains that are characterized by fluidity and flexibility.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

The present dissertation aimed at using existing theories to characterize the grammar of an emergent urban vernacular known as Sheng. It further analyzed new (emerging) identities mediated by this variety. The goal of this final chapter is to provide a comprehensive summary of the study, conclusions made, implications of the findings and future recommendations. Section 5.1 details summary of the dissertation, major claims and conclusions made. Section 5.2 provides implications informed by the study and lastly Section 3.3 delivers future recommendations.

5.1 Summary, claims, and conclusion

5.1.1 Summary

Chapter 1 provides background and setting for the study. It is divided into subsections that review scholarly literature on the typology and characterization of Sheng as a composite language and as an urban youth language. I paint the trajectory of Sheng in terms of its evolution and growth to the present moment. The chapter also highlights the changing trends in Sheng development from the post-independence period by focusing on some of the domains in which Sheng is used in Nairobi. I conclude the chapter by highlight the aims, goals and objective that guides the present project.

Chapter 2 introduces linguistic theories that inform this study. The first theory is grammaticalization theory proposed by Heine and Kuteva (2005). Key to this theory is the transformation of lexical forms into grammatical function morphemes or evolution of such grammatical morphemes as the functions they mark shift. While different scholars take slightly different approaches to defining grammaticalization, they all agree that it

involves some form of transformation of lexical items into grammatical role markers. Hopper & Traugott (2003) suggest a continuum of grammaticalizations where content morphemes may become system morphemes which may grammaticalize further to become clitics or morphological affixes. Lastly is the argument as of to whether grammaticalization is a diachronic or synchronic phenomenon. I revisit Lehman (1985)'s conceptualization of grammaticalization. In this study he theorizes grammaticalization at two levels, synchronic and diachronic. From the diachronic perspective, he posits that content morphemes reanalyze into grammatical forms and further change of this grammatical markers reduces their semantic content, making their function as theta-marking more salient. On the other hand, synchronic grammaticalization involves the process that governs ordering of subcategories of grammar. I conclude this part by adopting Heine and Kuteva (2002)'s definition of grammaticalization which views grammaticalization as a context induced reinterpretation. What this means is that the context in which language is used largely informs how functional categories undergo reanalysis into new grammatical forms. I adopted this latter approach to argue the case of Sheng moving forward.

The second theory highlighted in this section is more of a hypothesis than a theory. This is the Matrix Language Turnover hypothesis proposed by Myers-Scotton (2002). Of significance importance is the '4-M Model' and the 'Abstract Level Model' that define and inform this hypothesis. The 4-M Model accounts for the morpheme distribution during the classic codeswitching process. The Abstract Level Model, on the other hand, details an explanation of abstract morphosyntactic frames that structure bilingual constructions during language contact. In other words, it informs the nature of

the mental lexicon underlying surface representation during language contact. I use this to theorize Sheng as a composite language comprised of grammatical structures from more than one language. According to Myers-Scotton (2000), a morphosyntactic frame structuring the language is said to have changed if the system morphemes come from the embedded language. I showcase how the feature-based morpheme system is conceptually activated during classic codeswitching to account for realignment in the morphosyntactic frame of Sheng. In summary, both Grammaticalization Theory and the Matrix Language Turnover Hypothesis are used to account for structural transformation in Sheng as an emergent language.

Chapter 3 characterizes Sheng morphosyntax in relation to that of its lexifier language, Swahili. I start by analyzing the lexical morphology through word formation processes and patterns observed from the Sheng data. In addition, the chapter reviews the nominal and verbal system of Sheng in close comparison to that of its lexifier. These differences in grammatical mapping and conjugation reveal significant restructuring in Sheng.

The next portion of this chapter details the outcomes of the morpheme system and grammaticalization analysis in Sheng. I use the chapter to show that Sheng is a case of morphosyntantic frame change under progress. The grammaticalization theory accounts for the novel grammatical forms that have reanalyzed to assume new grammatical functions. I use the Matrix Language Turnover hypothesis as suggested by Myers-Scotton (2000) to characterize the morpheme system of Sheng and the restructuring process.

Chapter 4 is a detailed account of ethnographic observations conducted in the Eastlands, Nairobi, the official study site for present dissertation. I draw on critical ethnography as a method of data collection in an effort to understand youth interactions in real time within their community of practice. The approach further records linguistic practices in the area and how participants use Sheng to enact, perform and contest different identities within the urban space of Nairobi. Some of the linguistic and cultural practices observed include the *bazes* – shared spaces for youth agency; *gengeton*e – an emerging hip-hop genre in Nairobi, and Ghetto Radio – the urban vernacular radio station.

Lastly, chapter 5 is aimed at first, providing a review of the dissertation, and secondly, it details major goals and findings of the study and conclusions made thereof. Finally, I highlight theoretical and pedagogical implications of findings in this study. I conclude the chapter by providing related limitations and future recommendations.

5.1.2 Major claims and findings

The major claims of this dissertation were branched into two. First, I aimed at examining the grammatical nature of Sheng with the goal of understanding how it radically restructures its grammatical system from that of its main lexifier language, Swahili. Under this claim I focused on extensive analysis of nominal and verbal morphology. Additionally, I analyzed the grammatical frame of Sheng with the aim of understanding whether it consists of a composite structure, that is, if its system morphemes are borrowed from languages other than the main lexifier. I invoked Myers-Scotton's (2002) Matrix Language Turnover Hypothesis to analyze the morphosyntactic frame of Sheng as a bi- (-multi-)lingual contact language. More importantly, the 4-M

model and the Abstract Level Model were used to analyze the morpheme systems and abstract morphosyntactic frame that underlie them to comment on whether there exists a gradual shift in the in Sheng morphosyntax. That is, does the morphosyntactic frame of Sheng display an ongoing or complete change of late system morphemes? And does the language show all or part of its morphosyntactic frame coming from sources other than the lexifier language?

Based on this claim, I sought to answer the following research questions: (1) how does language contact situations in Nairobi influence the lexicon and grammar of Sheng? (2) How does Sheng grammar inform its typology? I further hypothesized that (1) Sheng is no longer a classic codeswitching phenomenon among bilingual speakers but rather an composite mixed language with complex grammatical structure confined within its grammatical constraints, and (2) that the present Sheng spoken in Nairobi has undergone radical restructuring of its grammar especially in the postmillennial period.

Based on this claim, my findings reveal significant morphosyntax restructuring in Sheng at selected linguistic levels including lexical, morphological, and syntactic levels. Structural transformations in the internal structure of words were salient. The word formation processes highlighted in section 3.2 demonstrate significant reorganization processes of Sheng from its main lexifier language. Notable is the change in the syllable structure. Unlike its lexifier language as well as other Bantu substrate languages, Sheng appears to tolerate closed syllable structure formation. For instance, the words *muok* [muɔk] ‘come’, dem [dem] ‘woman’, punch [pʌntʃ] ‘fifty’ and *mbɔch* [mbɔtʃ] ‘house-help’ all display closed syllable structure. Swahili and as well as many other Bantu languages disallow closed syllables. This is well illustrated in borrowing instances where

loan-words with closed syllables are phonologically adapted in Swahili to allow open syllable structure. For example, *pensili* from ‘pencil’, *boli* from ‘ball’.

Under nominal morphology, the noun class system of Sheng is in the process of restructuring with class 9/10 becoming the dominant recipient class borrowed nouns from both the principal lexifier and other languages. As discussed in section 3.3, Sheng appears to entertain a leaner noun class system compared to its lexifier language. According to (Table 3.4) Swahili has 18 noun classes; however, Sheng shows a more streamlined class system comprising of class sets 1/2, 9/10, 12/13 and 16 (cf table 3.4). For example, noun class 5/6 of the lexifier language appears to merge into class 9/10 in Sheng. Another salient structural formation is addition of a diminutive class 12/13 in Sheng. Unlike Swahili which has its diminutives in class 7/8, Sheng creates a separate class for this group of nouns. One reason for this could be functional. Sheng and Swahili diminutives have differing semantics and pragmatics of usage. In Swahili, diminutives are used to denote ‘smallness’ or to disparage something, to show that something is of lesser value. On the other hand, Sheng does not only use diminutives to denote ‘smallness’ but also to mark an affectionate attitude. For instance, *karembo,* a diminutive for ‘girl’ may not only mean ‘a small girl’ but also a ‘beautiful’ or ‘stylish woman’. The presence of KA/TU noun class in Sheng can be alluded to its contact with other substrate languages with similar formation. There is considerable evidence that the KA/TU class exists in other local languages such as Kimaragoli with similar semantic functions. For instance, in Kimaragoli, diminutives are marked by *ka-* in singular and *tu-* in plural. A sample example would be ***ka****yaye* ‘a small boy’ and ***tu****yaye* ‘small boys’. Similarly, in Lunyore, another local Bantu language, the diminutive is marked by *kh-* (prounounced as

[x]) in singular and *ru-* in plural. For instance, *khayaye* ‘small boy’ and *ruyaye* ‘small boys’. The phonemic shift from [t] to [r] may have undergone sound change due to language. Going by Myers-Scotton’s (2002) major definition of a split language, this would be a case example of a system morpheme that is borrowed from substrate languages during language contact.

Grammatically, Sheng also displays radical changes with grammatical agreement markers of various classes such as class 3/4, 7/8 assuming the markers as class 9/10. Sheng, like other Bantu languages, is highly agglutinative. The morphemes or affixes are concatenatively organized with each marking a grammatical function. In Swahili for instance, a nominal marking on a verbal phrase must grammatically agree with the specific class conjugations of their syntactic heads. For example, ***Ki****-tabu* ***ki****-meanguka* ‘The book has fallen’ Ki- prefix on the verbal phrase ***ki****meanguaka* ‘has fallen’ grammatically agrees with the Class 7 nominal prefix on ‘*kitabu*’. Sheng on the other hand appears to use grammatical agreements of class 9/10 to index subject nouns in nearly all classes except class 1/2 and 12/13 (see table 3.4). For instance, a Sheng speaker would say ***Ki****-tabu* ***i****-meanguka* ‘The book fell/dropped’ rather than ***Ki****-tabu* ***ki****-meanguka.* As observed in table 3.4 the subject markings for class 3/4, 5/6, and 7/8 are converging to those of class 9/10. Another salient feature in Sheng is the reanalysis of the class 6 plural prefix **ma-** as a generic plural marker in Sheng (Consider example 184 below). This is a case of restructuring that is underway.

(184)

SG	**PL**	**Gloss**
Ndom	mandom	‘marijuana’
Ngoto	mangoto	‘finger ring’
Shuksha	mashuksha	‘marijuana’

Wera	mawera	‘job’
Ndula	mandula	‘shoe’
Kebin	makebin	‘head’
Githaa	magithaa	‘time’
Pekejeng	mapekejeng	‘sex’
Ashu	maashu	‘ten-shilling coin’
Maikrofon	mamaikrofon	‘microphone’

This study provides a theoretic account of the composite grammar of Sheng. According to Myer-Scotton’s Matrix Language Turnover Hypothesis, a language is said to comprise of a mixed grammatical frame if its system morphemes are derived from languages other than the lexifier language (Myers-Scotton 2002). As observed in section 3.3, Sheng displays late system morphemes that are unique to those of its lexifier. For instance, the Sheng ADJ, SUB, POSS, PREP, and REL morphemes appear to consist of reanalyzed class particles that are different from its principal lexifier (compare table 3.7.2 and 3.7.3 below). I have copied it here for ease of access.

Table (3.7.2)
Late system morphemes in principal lexifier (Swahili)

Class	Subject	Object	AdjePref	Poss	Prep	Rel. prefix
1	a-/yu-	-m-	m-	w-	w-	-ye
2	wa-	-wa-	wa-	w-	w-	-o
3	u-	-u-	m-	w-	w-	-o
4	i-	-i-	mi-	y-	y-	-yo
5	li-	-li-	ji-	l-	l-	-lo
6	ya-	-ya-	ma-/me-	y-	y-	-yo
7	ki-	-ki-	ki-	ch-	ki-	-cho
8	vi-	-vi-	vi-	vy-	vi-	-vyo
9	i-	-i-	N	y-	i-	-yo
10	zi-	-zi-	∅	z-	zi-	-zo
11	u-	-u-	m-	w-	u-	-o
12	ya-	-ya-	ma-	y-	y-	-yo
14	u-	-u-	m-	w-	u-	-o
15	ku-	-ku-	ku	kw-	ku-	-ko
16	ku-	-pa-	pa	p-	pa-	-po
17	mu-	-m-	m-	mw-	mu/m-	-mo
18	ku-	-ku-	ku-	kw-	ku-	-ko

Table (3.7.3)
Late system morphemes in Sheng

Class	Subject prefix	Adj Prefix	Object prefix	Poss prefix	Prep prefix	Rel. affix
1	a-	m-	-ye-	w-	w-	-ye
2	wa-	wa-	-wa-	w-	w-	-o
3	i	m-/ø	ø	w-	y-	ø
4	zi	ø	ø	y-	z-	ø
5	i	ø/n	ø	y-	y-	ø
6	zi-	ma-	ø	z-	z-	ø
7	i	ki-/ø	ø	y-	y-	ø
8	zi	ø	ø	z-	z-	ø
9	i	ø	ø	y-	i-	ø
10	zi	ma-	ø	z-	z-	ø
12	ka-	ka-	-ka-	k-	ka-	-ko
13	tu-	tu-	-tu-	tw-	Tu-	-two

These grammatical markers co-index with subject heads in a manner that is constrained within Sheng grammar. Compared to Sheng's main lexifier language, such constructions would be considered ungrammatical. Sheng also demonstrates cases of double plural marking on both English and Swahili loan words. For instance, the plural of *maik* 'microphone' is *mamaiks* 'microphones'; *fon* 'phone' is *mafons* 'phones', *kitabu* 'book' is *mavitabu* 'books.' As discussed in chapter 3, double marking of plural like ones highlighted above is a case of early system morphemes being conceptualized early on with their heads during classic codeswitching. Elsewhere, is the case of HAB marking in Sheng. While Swahili uses *hu-* to mark habitual aspect as in *Mimi **hu**cheza* 'I (always) play', Sheng, on the other hand, borrows the morpheme *-a(n)g-* from the substrate languages. This morpheme co-occurs with the present tense suffix *-na-* to mark habitual aspect, as in, *Mii **na**chez**ang**a* 'I (always) play'. As discussed in (section 3.3.2.3) the suffix *-a(n)g-* appears to be salient in other Bantu languages such as Kingwana (Polome 1968:23) and Kinyamwezi (Maganga & Schadeberg 1992). The presence of *-a(n)g-* in

Sheng is evidence that the matrix language frame of Sheng is as well influenced by other substrate languages. I have argued that this is a case of morphosyntactic reformation where system morphemes are borrowed from other languages in contact to mark habitual aspect in Sheng. Also notable in table (3.6.3) is the absence of relative and object markers in Sheng except for the animate class 1/2 and for class 12/13. Sheng appears to be in the process of converging all relative particles to /∅/ except class 1/2 and 12/13. As indicated in section 3.3, this gradual shift is a sign of morphosyntactic restructuring of Sheng grammar into a leaner grammatical system.

Based on insights from grammaticalization theory, Sheng displays cases of grammaticalization where existing grammatical forms transition into newer grammatical functions. According to proponents of this theory, in a diachronic change, a language may undergo grammatical changes where concrete meanings are reinterpreted in certain contexts to represent abstract entities. I have argued in this dissertation that Sheng is an example of language under shift with existing lexical forms in the lexifier languages being used in new context that denote newer grammatical functions. For instance, the adverbial phrase *rada* 'well' in Sheng was derived from English noun 'radar'. In English, the word is a noun referencing a system of waves used to detect air or sea object(s). In Sheng however, it is used as an adverb meaning 'well informed'. Another example is the grammaticalization of adjective *mbaya* 'bad' in Swahili to an adverbial intensifier *mbaya* 'extreme' in Sheng. For instance, in the Swahili construction *yeye ni mbaya* 'He is bad', *mbaya* is used as an adjectival complement but in the Sheng construction *Ameumia mbaya sana* 'He is badly injured', *mbaya* 'extremely' is used as an intensifier. Another case of grammaticalization is the use of CL 6 nominal marker ma- in Swahili as a generic

plural in Sheng. In Swahili, for example, *ma-* prefix in the word *ma-tawi* 'branches' is used as the plural and nominal prefix for CL 6 group of nouns. However, this has grammaticalized to become generic plural marker in all borrowed nouns and those reclassified into CL10 in Sheng. For examples, ***ma***-vyakula 'food.PL', **ma**-kalamu 'pens', **ma**-miti 'trees.'

In summary, I respond to each of the research question governing this first claim as follows; (1) how do language contact situations in Nairobi influence the lexicon and grammar of Sheng? Nairobi, as a melting pot of multiple languages and cultures resulting from urbanization and globalization, serves as a favorable environment for language interaction. It is evident that Sheng is a case of language contact in Nairobi and its grammar showcases lexical and grammatical interactions of forms from multiple sources. The cases of -a(n)g- habitual marker, CL 12/13 KA-/TU nominal prefixes, and internal modification of words through word formation processes are but some of the examples resulting from language contact.

(2) How does Sheng grammar inform its typology? Based on the theoretical foundation of Matrix Language Turnover Hypothesis, it is evident that the morpheme system that governs the matrix frame of Sheng is composite in nature. That is, some of the late system morphemes are borrowed from languages other than the lexifier language. This aligns with Myers-Scotton's less stringent definition of what constitutes a split or mixed language as one that "shows a major constituent with its system morphemes and major parts of the morphosyntactic frame form a different source language from that of the lexicon and the morphosyntactic frame of other constituents" (2002:249). This

reinforces my position that Sheng is a mixed language whose genesis is polygenic and not monogenic.

This study also confirms my hypothesis that (1) Sheng is no longer classic codeswitching among bilinguals but rather a developing urban vernacular with composite grammatical structure confined within its own grammatical constraints. Based on the Abstract Level Model analysis, the underlying grammatical frame of Sheng is a combination of structures from more than one language. With continued codeswitching as a mechanism that necessitates convergence, there is division and combination of features from different languages in contact whose outcome is a composite structure. It is these abstract processes that underlie surface representation of mixed languages like Sheng. And (2), that the present Sheng spoken in Nairobi has undergone radical restructuring of its grammar especially in the postmillennial period. For this hypothesis, there was no sufficient evidence to ascertain how Sheng has changed in the post-millennial period compared to the early Sheng. The older speakers of Sheng appeared to fluently speak modern or present Sheng just like the millennials. This limited our correlational analysis of lexical and grammatical forms informed by age as a chronological and social factor. However, our analysis displayed a significant difference in lexical choice of young speakers of Nairobi compared to the older population. This lexical difference was mainly based on lexical variations that are age graded and used by different social groups for in-group communication. The older speakers of Sheng appear to use more ‘general’ Sheng that comprise of basic Sheng. Seemingly, this can be accounted for by existence of different levels of Sheng which Hubold (2012) referred to as “mainstream” and “deep” Sheng or “old school” and “deep Sheng” by Vierke (2015).

The underlying reason behind these different levels of Sheng is socially informed. Sheng is said to be expanding on two fronts, that is, one that seeks to popularize the linguistic practices of Sheng like ones we observed with the *bazes* and hip-hop and one that seeks to promote the protest or resistance ideology, that is, Sheng that is influenced by communities of practice in the inner-city mainly marking group identity contrary to the generalized Sheng (Hollington and Nassenstein, 2017). The grammatical analysis between Sheng and its primary lexifier language discussed in Chapter 3 outlines some major grammatical differences. For instance, the noun class system of Sheng is drifting away from that of its lexifier language. While Swahili has 18 noun classes, Sheng has reduced these to 6 classes. The convergence of nearly all classes to class 9/10 except those for class 1/2 and 12/13 is evidence enough for radical restructuring of Sheng grammar. Introduction of class 12/13 that is not present in main lexifier also adds to the growing list of structural changes. Prevalent lexical and grammatical innovativeness of forms such as habitual – *a(n)g-*, generic plural marker *ma-*, double marking of plural, subject agreement markers, among others support this claim.

The second major goal of this study was to explore new emerging identities associated with Sheng and how these identities redefine its position in the Nairobi linguistic space. Under this goal, I sought to answer the question on whether Sheng has taken on new identities and social functions especially in the larger Nairobi. I hypothesized that Sheng has assumed new social functions in the postmillennial period. Based on Castells (1997) and Halliday (1978) concept of identity, there is a considerable shift not only from anti-language to project identities but also towards unbounded and fluid identities.

5.1.3 Implications

This dissertation contributes to the ongoing scholarly conversation on language creation as an outcome of contact linguistics. In this section, I start by highlighting the study's overall contribution to contact linguistics theory specifically on what defines creoles and mixed languages. Secondly, I highlight the significance of using existing theories such as Grammaticalization theory and Matrix Language Turnover hypothesis in defining Sheng typology. Lastly, I discuss how findings in this study can inform and sensitize the public to the relationship between Sheng and the education system in Kenya.

5.1.3.1 Theoretical implications

Many historical linguists and other language scholars remain divided on the evolution and characterization of both the creoles and mixed languages as outcomes of contact linguistics. The history and dynamics surrounding contact linguistics remain to be the biggest clue in substantiating different outcomes of contact linguistics such as creoles and mixed langauges. The structural criteria involving structural make up, processes of formation and influence of substrate and superstrate languages remain controversial. Traditionally, it has been argued that creoles developed from pidgin. Scholars like Mufwene (1996) disagree with this notion and argue that creoles began as second language varieties of the superstrate that later developed into creoles through process known as basilectalization. Chaudenson (2001) is of the view that creole grammar is an extension of lexifier language. Others are of the view that 'radical' creoles are mainly influenced by the substrate languages (Mufwene 1990; Lefebvre and Lumsden 1994). The present dissertation uses Matrix Language Turnover Hypothesis to examine structural nature of Sheng with the aim of characterizing its typology. While Sheng

displays cases of superstrate and substrate input in the formation of its grammatical structure it displays a composite grammar that is not only tied to two languages as creoles would generally do but multiple sources.

The present study characterizes Sheng as a mixed language. This is partly based on sociohistorical account as well as structural account as informed by the Matrix Language Turnover Hypothesis (Myers-Scotton 2002). A mixed language is said to have occurred when there is an indication of Matrix Language Turnover. This happens when the grammar of the new language displays composite structure. Myers-Scotton (2002) argues that for a language to be considered mixed its grammatical structure must show some form of convergence where system morphemes are not just from the lexifier language but also stemming from the embedded language. My analysis of Sheng in chapter 3 provides evidence for Matrix language Turnover that is under way. Certain system morphemes such as generic plural *MA-, KA/TU* SUBJ prefix, and *a(n)g-* habitual marker are evidence that Sheng is a mixed language. Additionally, the grammatical frame of Sheng is restructuring into its own system confined within its own rules.

Mufwene (2000) argues that creoles are outcome of language contact situations in plantation colonies between languages of the colonizers and those of the suppressed groups. There is also traditional view that creoles are pidgins that were adopted as native languages by second and subsequent generations of speakers. For instance, the Portuguese pidgin is considered to be the Ternateno, a Spanish creole spoken on the Philippine Island of Ternate (Winford 2003). It is apparent in the present study that the sociohistorical context of Sheng development in Nairobi is different from that of other creoles. First, Sheng grew out of multilingual complexity of Nairobi where speakers have

so many languages at their disposal. Speakers in Nairobi are at least bilingual if not trilingual. With Swahili serving as a lingua franca and majority of the population conversant with English, speakers of Sheng were in no dire need of a bridge language (pidgin that would have developed further into creole probably through 'nativisation' process) but a language to forge city identity. This language is Sheng. While there is indeterminacy on the sociohistorical evolution of creoles there is at least a general understanding that creoles are linked to language contact situation in colonies. This is not the case with Sheng.

The on-going conversation on whether Sheng is a mixed language, an urban slang or corrupted form of Swahili spoken in the Eastlands slums of Nairobi is picked up by this dissertation and situated within two theoretical constructs of language contact to characterize its typology. The indeterminate nature of Sheng has elicited varying views on its composition. It is not surprising when Kaviti (2014) decides to label it as a 'code'. She uses 'code' as a neutral term to evade theoretical biasness of categorizing it as either a language or dialect. Mazrui (1995) contends that Sheng is a slang composed of codeswitching between Swahili and English. In his dissertation, Rudd (2008) labels Sheng as a mixed language. A limited number of these studies, if any, account for the restructuring patterns observed in this variety. My dissertation underscores the contextual and theoretical framework under which Sheng is formed to conceptualize its grammatical structure. I have shown in this dissertation that Sheng is a case of mixed grammar that shows a turnover that is still underway. Sheng employs system morphemes from languages other than the lexifier language. Based on Myers-Scotton's(2002) Matrix Language Turnover Hypothesis, a language is considered to have a composite grammar if

its system morphemes and major components of the grammatical frame comes from source languages other than the principal lexifier. I have demonstrated that in the process of restructuring, Sheng's late system morphemes such as adjectival prefix (ADJ), subject prefix (SUBJ), associative -a (POSS), preposition prefix (PREP), relative affix (REL) and object prefix (OBJ) are derived from sources other than the lexifier language. While other system morphemes are primarily derived from the lexifier language, the rules governing their co-indexation or agreement with other elements within syntactic construction have changed.

Grammatically, Sheng displays a shift in its morphosyntactic structure. In its early formation, Sheng was characterized by its heavy borrowing and code-switching (CS). This code-switching later became the default way of speaking among Sheng speakers, thus, unmarked CS that indexes group identity among the youths in the urban slums. This unmarked CS characterizes a bilingual projection of the Complementizer Phrase (CP) which involves matrix vs embedded language opposition (Myers-Scotton and Jake 1993b). In the case of Sheng, the matrix language is Swahili while the embedded islands come from other languages in contact. The multilingual and multicultural context of Nairobi provides its speakers with linguistic repertoires that underlyingly inform their language shift from other languages such as Kenyanese Swahili, upcountry Swahili, and local indigenous languages to that of Sheng. In chapter 3, I extensively analyze nominal and verbal morphology of Sheng with the goal of understanding its structure as well as typology. In comparison to Swahili, it is evident that Sheng displays restructuring that is on-going. The conflation of all SUBJ grammatical concords, except for class 1/2 and 12/13, into class 9/10 is an example of this restructuring. The reduction of the Sheng

noun class system in comparison to that of Swahili is further evidence of grammatical restructuring of Sheng away from that of its main lexifier.

Another theoretical implication of this dissertation is the significance of grammaticalization theory in accounting for novel forms in Sheng. Using Heine and Kuteva's (2002) definition of grammaticalization phenomena, I have demonstrated in chapter 3 that Sheng undergoes grammatical changes where certain grammatical forms are reinterpreted to contexts that shows newer grammatical functions. These newly formed grammatical forms cement themselves in new functions that are constrained within Sheng grammar. To name but a just few examples, is the grammaticalization of VP *acha* 'leave' to permissive *'acha'*. Another case is grammaticalization of DEM huyo 'that' to a REL pronoun 'huyo'. Another example is grammaticalization of applicative verb *tokelezea* 'come out' to Adjectival complement *tokelezea* 'smart' (more examples are highlighted in chapter 3).

5.1.3.2 Pedagogical and social implications

This dissertation underscores some pedagogical and socially related implications as well. In Kenya today, English and Swahili are co-official languages. English is the primary language of instructions at all levels of education. At the tertiary level, Swahili is taught and examined as an optional subject. At the primary and secondary level, English and Swahili are compulsory and examinable subjects. Being a multilingual country, Kenya's indigenous languages constantly interact with these official languages. It is not uncommon to find regionally accented Swahili and English. These regional variants typically reflect the speakers' first language phonology. Such localized accents of English and Swahili are ethnically based. In Nairobi, however, Sheng has become the urban

vernacular primarily based on the Swahili grammatical frame with extensive borrowing and modification of the morpheme system as discussed in this dissertation. The choice of Swahili as the matrix language is probably due to the fact that Swahili was the chosen lingua franca serving speakers of different ethnic languages back in the days when Sheng emerged. However, since Swahili has national status, it does not mark group identity paving way for Sheng dominance in the city.

While Sheng is transitioning to a language of wider communication, at least in Nairobi for now, it remains prevalent among the youth, many of whom are school-going children and university students. The highest proficiency of Sheng is found in the urban areas. It is on record that there even exists a third generation of Sheng speakers, many of whom speak it as their native language (Ferrari 2004). While the mainstream society, especially educationists and language purists, continue to blame Sheng for its interference in national exams and "correct" ways of communication, several major assumptions are implied. First, Sheng is the main problem and if eradicated, school-going children would start performing better in English and Swahili languages. This premise is faulted by this dissertation. Just like other vernacular languages in Kenya, Sheng is the urban vernacular. Its knowledge does not or should not preclude better performance in national examinations. Perhaps, all that is needed is educationists' awareness and familiarity with the grammatical differences that exist between Sheng and standard Swahili as illustrated in chapter 3. Additionally, Sheng should be recognized by the Ministry of Education and policy makers as the official catchment area language of the schools in the subaltern Nairobi rather than a killer language. According to the Kenyan language policy for education, pupils in their early years of education are required to be taught in languages

of the catchment area of the school (Mbabu 1996 as cited by Mutiga (2013:11)). The language of the catchment areas in subaltern schools of Nairobi is Sheng. It would therefore be erroneous if the Ministry assumed that all children in linguistically heterogenous areas speak Swahili. With this awareness, teachers in urban schools can be retrained on pedagogical approach of substantiating dialectical differences, while emphasizing the 'standardness' of English and Swahili and perhaps use Sheng in early years of education. Another major assumption implied is that Sheng exists in a vacuum and that it does not warrant any social or educational benefits to its speakers. This assumption has significant ramifications for school-going children whose native language is Sheng. According to UNESCO report of 2008 children whose language of instruction is different from their native language are more likely to drop out of school or perform poorly. Furthermore, children's first language is optimal for literacy and learning in their early years. If Sheng was to be abolished, what would be the fate of those children who speak Sheng as their first language? Should there be a need for language reforms to adopt Sheng as a first language in urban areas where Sheng is dominant? Can teachers from these catchment areas be trained in Sheng language to provide instruction in Sheng during the early years of schooling as UNESCO recommends? These among other questions are what the present study seeks to address through creating awareness of the internal structure of Sheng.

Lastly, Sheng has social benefits to its speakers. It is an identity language associated with urban subcultures and lifestyles. Many of the linguistic practices such as hip-hop, stand-up comedy, *bazes*, verbal dueling, and *gengetone* are anchored in Sheng as a medium. Replacing Sheng would also mean doing away with these linguistic practices

and a loss of burgeoning city culture. With its rapid growth and shifting identities, Sheng is a language that cannot be wished away but rather should be incorporated into the Kenya's language and cultural heritage.

5.1.4 Drawbacks and future recommendations

This study had its limitations. First, data for this study were collected a time when the world was facing a major life-threatening pandemic of COVID 19. My field interviews were abruptly halted, and this led me to lose touch with many members of my established focus groups. When I restarted my data collection, I had to recruit different groups which led to inconsistency in speech styles of informants.

Another major challenge is more one of methodological approach. First, the data of this study were collected in the Eastland slums of Nairobi, an area that is considered the cradle of Sheng. However, there is also a need to conduct a comprehensive comparative study of Sheng variations that are spoken in different regions of the city. Secondly, there was a significantly low number of female enrollments in this study. Supposedly, this could be due to Labovian sociolinguistic norm that 'females use fewer non-standard forms in comparison to their male counterpart'. Could it be that they overtly refuse to use Sheng for its association with 'bad' grammar? Do they covertly embrace Sheng in their in-group circles? These would be great questions for future studies. Future studies should also consider ways in which female speakers can be recruited in the study to paint a picture of gender related linguistic differences.

5.1.5 Wrap up

This dissertation has examined two major goals. First, it sought to analyze the grammatical structure of Sheng with the goal of understanding its typology. Under this

goal, I situated the study within two theoretical constructs, that is, grammaticalization and Matrix Language Turnover hypothesis. It is apparent that Sheng displays a composite grammar with system morphemes being shared from both the lexifier language and other languages in contact. In Chapter 3, I have shown that Sheng nominal system is restructuring away from that of its lexifier. The conflation of all system morphemes to class 9/10, apart from class 1/2 and 12/13, clearly demonstrate a restructuring that is underway in Sheng. Introduction of class 12/13 to mark diminutive nouns in Sheng illustrates the substrate influence on the morphosyntactic frame of Sheng. This also aligns with Myers-Scotton (2002) assertion that split languages display split system of features. Compared to its lexifier language, Sheng appears to be in the process of simplifying its grammar. The reduction of noun class systems from 18 to 6 supports this claim. Class 9/10 appears to be the default class where all reduced classes converge. It is also evident that many calques and loan words are grouped in class 9/10. Another simplification process is the generic plural ma-. The realignment to towards generic pluralization is also evident. As highlighted in chapter 3 the absence of relative and object markers is conspicuously absent in Sheng. In addition, I characterized grammatical transformation in Sheng by invoking grammaticalization theory. I have shown that certain grammatical forms in the lexifier language are grammaticalized to assume new grammatical functions in Sheng.

The second major goal was to explore new emerging identities associated with Sheng and understand how these identities redefine Sheng's position in the Nairobi linguistic space. Under this goal, I sought to answer the question on whether Sheng has taken on new identities and social functions especially in the larger Nairobi. My

ethnographic analysis reveals that linguistic practices associated with Sheng are expanding into newer domains and reflect flexible and fluid identities. There appears to be a gradual shift from resistance identity that was associated with Sheng in the early years of its formation to new project identities that are not static but fluid and flexible. Linguistic practices that were previously narrowed to in-group members are now accessible to mainstream society. Globalization and the digital revolution have played a substantial role in expanding Sheng domains. The use of Sheng on social media, TV commercials and ads, stand-up comedy, a local vernacular station, and comic strip has provided the dominant society with access to Sheng knowledge and linguistic practices that were previously exclusive to subaltern groups. However, it is worth pointing out that, while many Sheng words are gaining use by the mainstream public, Sheng speakers are reinventing new words to replace those that are common. This can be explained by the fluidity of Sheng to allow multiple identity constructions by its speakers. Speakers can at one point identify themselves with the dominant linguistic practices such as hip-hop music yet retract to in-group identity practice such as *bazes* where they speak 'deep' Sheng that is yet to be deciphered by non-members. In brief, Sheng affords its speakers an 'indexical value of language' (Ochs 1992) that allows them to position themselves in varying identities in the urban space. Each linguistic practice indexes a different reality that is contextualized within specific community of practice. The growth of Sheng in the postmillennial period has witnessed a radical transformation in social functions of Sheng as well as its indexation of fluid and flexible identities that are reflected in different linguistic practices it is associated with.

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