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Multilingualism and Change on the Kinyarwanda Sound System post-1994

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Chapter 1: General introduction

1.0 Introduction

Multilingualism is an issue that has become a subject of discussion in a variety of language related disciplines. Some researchers discuss multilingualism as a sociolinguistic concept through which issues of language contact and the status of the mother tongue (hereafter referred to as MT) can be interrogated. Others see multilingualism as a political matter, that is, an issue which requires solutions to language problems from the policy makers who are political authorities in a multilingual nation, and as an economic problem, because, as Jahr (1998) states, chaotic language differences are determinants of economic disadvantage whereas well planned language differences are considered to be resources.

Many studies on various multilingual societies have been conducted by among others Cuvelier, Du Plessis, & Teck (2003) on multilingualism, education and social integration in Belgium, Europe, South Africa and Southern Africa; Deprez & Du Plessis (2000) on multilingualism and government in Belgium, Luxembourg, Switzerland, former Yugoslavia and South Africa; Emenanjo (1990) on multilingualism and language policy in Nigeria. The present study on 'Multilingualism and change in the Kinyarwanda sound system' focuses especially on sociolinguistic approaches oriented to the effects of language contact on Kinyarwanda sound change.

This investigation of the effects of multilingualism on the Kinyarwanda sound system has been motivated by the observation that I have had with people that I have been interacting with in Kinyarwanda, and from French or English classes with students with different language backgrounds, that is, students who have been educated in the French system attending English classes and vice versa. There have often been some sounds in Kinyarwanda speech that can be seen as originating from the individual's language background. The main hypothesis to be expounded in this research is that Kinyarwanda sound variants that can be heard in current speech arise owing to the Kinyarwanda

speakers' language background. The 1994 event[1] which reunited the Rwandan population after many years of separation has contributed to the rapid Kinyarwanda sound change because, as Wolfson (1989:258) states, 'language is always in the process of change, and when speakers of what was once the same language are separated by time and space, their pronunciation, vocabulary and syntax are likely to change in different ways'.

This research was undertaken in order to conduct an extensive analysis of the most prominent linguistic variables of sound change in Kinyarwanda, and show how these features of sound change were influenced by multilingualism. The study uses two methods of data collection, that is, interviews and questionnaires. It hopes to identify linguistic variables of sound change, provide their phonological variation (variants), explain possible reasons for the change and highlight the role of multilingualism as an outcome of language contact in the sound change of Kinyarwanda. It is expected that this research will reveal whether foreign languages in contact with Kinyarwanda have changed its sound system, and this may add a new dimension to studies of multilingualism within Bantu languages and yield suggestions related to how the Kinyarwanda sound system can be standardized.

1.1 Background of the study

Before colonization, Rwanda was linguistically homogenous, with Kinyarwanda as the sole medium of communication. French was the first foreign language introduced in Rwanda by Belgian missionaries and colonizers in 1916 and given the status of official language used in administration, education and international relations. After independence[2] in 1963, English was introduced in the Rwandan secondary schools and was assigned a relatively lower status than French. Between 1963 and 1994, despite the introduction of foreign languages (French and English) in the country, Kinyarwanda, generally used by the masses of the Rwandan population, was made the medium of

[1] 1994 is particularly marked by the end of genocide in Rwanda and the repatriation of the former Rwandan refugees, which start a new era in a New Rwanda.

[2] It is worth mentioning that after the independence of Rwanda in 1962 there were many political refugees who went into exile in neighboring countries, Uganda, former Zaire (now DRC), Tanzania and Burundi. It took them more than 30 years to get their rights back in their own country by means of armed struggle.

instruction and a subject from the first to the last year of the primary school, and it kept its status as a national and official language. It did not have many external influences because, at that period, there were regular and strict language policy by the Ministry of Education related to:

1. Designing the primary school programs in Kinyarwanda, and having Kinyarwanda as a subject at the secondary school level with French as a language of teaching.
2. Writing a Kinyarwanda dictionary to help Rwandans get more information about their language and do research on it, and help foreigners learn Kinyarwanda.
3. Teaching the Rwandan culture through language. This plan focused especially on increasing cultural creativity and design either in writing, singing, performing plays and so on.

The above language policy managed to be fruitful in protecting Kinyarwanda against external influences because the whole country got the same programs designed in standard Kinyarwanda, and students at the primary school level were taught most of their courses in Kinyarwanda while French was only taught as a subject in the last three years. In administration, churches and public meetings, Kinyarwanda was used without any objection or problem, while French was there as a second official language for diplomatic affairs, and foreign and internal communication when necessary. English was taught as a subject in secondary school but was given a relatively low status.

After the 1994 liberation war, things changed. Communication which was stable in Kinyarwanda before began to show some features of a number of foreign languages brought into the country by the former Rwandan refugees after the victory of the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) over the government which had prevented them from coming back to their country peacefully. There appeared varieties of sounds in Kinyarwanda because, among four million Rwandans who were repatriated, only older people had kept their language as it was before they fled the country. Their children

either shifted from Kinyarwanda and learnt other languages, or they spoke a little Kinyarwanda mixed with foreign languages they had already learnt.

After 1994, the Rwandan population could be divided into four main linguistic groups: 'standard' Kinyarwanda native speakers (those who did not leave the country for exile and some conservative Rwandan refugees); those who were educated in Anglophone countries and who could speak Kinyarwanda and some other Bantu language; those who were educated in Francophone countries and who could speak Kinyarwanda and some other Bantu language; and people who grew up either in Anglophone countries or Francophone countries and did not have much contact with speakers of Kinyarwanda.

With this mixture of various speech communities, communication became a problem everywhere in the country, and the consequence of the situation which prevailed in the country was that Kinyarwanda started losing some standard features and its status as a national language in that linguistic chaos. The use of Kinyarwanda remained among smaller groups of people who were confident of their own MT. During this time, French and English were used in order to facilitate communication in offices, schools, public meetings, churches and so on, and Kinyarwanda became a second tool of communication through translation.

Later, the government made local communication an issue and started looking for ways of restoring the status of Kinyarwanda by setting certain regulations related to the former language policy and encouraging Rwandans who did not know Kinyarwanda to learn it.

1.2 Aims and Rationale

The aim of this study is to look at phonological changes which occurred in Kinyarwanda after 1994, the period in which Kinyarwanda got into contact with foreign languages and the real period of the beginning of multilingualism in Rwanda. The study seeks to find out whether French and English as second languages spoken in the country have had any influence on the sound system of Kinyarwanda. It also seeks to find out if some Bantu

languages neighboring Kinyarwanda (Swahili, Luganda, Kirundi, etc.) and spoken by some members of the Kinyarwanda speech community may have contributed to the current sound changes in Kinyarwanda. In brief, the study aims to find out the sound changes that occurred in Kinyarwanda after 1994, explain why and how they occurred, and suggest standardization perspectives suitable for the extent of change. To achieve this aim, the present research attempts to answer the following questions:

i) Why and how did multilingualism emerge as an official policy in Rwanda?
ii) What sound changes are due to multilingualism in Kinyarwanda?
iii) How are they explained sociolinguistically?
iv) How is this evident in the speech of Rwandans?
v) How and to what extent can we say that the Kinyarwanda sound system has changed?
vi) What are possible ways of standardizing the Kinyarwanda sound system in such a multilingual society?

My intentions in conducting the study on multilingualism and change in the Kinyarwanda sound system are based on the fact that after 1994 Rwanda got a complex linguistic situation due to the mixture of languages by then spoken by Rwandans who had been repatriated from various countries, with varied linguistic backgrounds, which apparently affected Kinyarwanda at almost all levels (lexical, morphological, syntactic, phonological, etc.). I chose to focus this study on phonological change because, firstly, almost all reliable studies on sound change have been focused on Indo-European languages, and, to my knowledge, there have not been extensive studies on sound change in African languages. Secondly, most studies conducted on the new linguistic configuration of Rwanda have focused on language attitudes in a multilingual context (Rugira 1997, Bucyana 1996, Gatayire 2000, Kabanza 2001, Bigirimana 2002, Mutwarasibo 2003), but none of them has tackled the issue of multilingualism and sound change as a result of language contact. Thirdly, I intend to show that there are some interesting features of sound change in Kinyarwanda to warrant systematic investigation.

Chapter 2: Literature review

2.0 Introduction

As the present study's main concern is multilingualism and its potential effects on Kinyarwanda, it is important to give an overview of the works of some of the leading researchers in the field of sociolinguistics related to multilingualism. This chapter provides valuable insights into how multilingualism has become a sociolinguistic and political issue. It presents what sociolinguistic studies say on multilingualism as a result of language contact, and multilingualism as a political issue that implies attitudes to language change, language policy and language planning.

2.1 Defining Multilingualism

Multilingualism has been regarded as 'the command and/or use of two or more languages by the respective speakers' (Herdina and Jessener 2002:52). For most linguists, multilingualism refers to communication through several languages. A multilingual society is characterized by a number of languages which serve different purposes, and this requires some order that goes with language choice. As Mansour (1993:20) states, language choices are determined by the domains of social behaviour (family, neighbourhood, work, etc.). There are three major functions of communication: in-group communication, out-group communication and specialized communication. This means that, in a multilingual society, some languages are only used for communication within ethnic groups or families and are rarely or never learnt by speakers of other languages. Other languages serve an in-group function, but they are also used as lingua francas to communicate with members of other ethnic groups. Specialized communication refers to domains such as religion, education, and other public functions in multilingual situations where none of the local 'mother tongues' (MTs) or lingua francas are considered to be adequate or appropriate. On the basis of these three functions, multilingual societies have been identified according to the number of languages needed for full participation in social interaction at all levels.

In Africa, most multilingual societies have a three-language or trifocal pattern of language use. They display a pattern which involves the use of one of the country's indigenous languages, a lingua franca and the official language. In Rwanda, multilingualism officially started reflecting this pattern after 1994. Before that period, the country was regarded as bilingual, with Kinyarwanda as the indigenous language, also recognized as official, and French as the official language and the language of instruction in schools. English was only taught as a subject in some secondary school options such as languages and human sciences, and in the department of English at university (Mutwarasibo 2003). The return of the former Rwandan refugees in 1994 impacted on the sociolinguistic situation of the country, with English becoming an official language alongside Kinyarwanda and French. This appears in the Revised National Constitution of 1996 (Government Gasette No 3, Article 5), which stipulates that Kinyarwanda, French and English are official languages in Rwanda.

Kinyarwanda lost its status in a multilingual situation and was affected by external influences either from French, English or other foreign languages which were brought by the former Rwandan refugees. In such a situation, it was recommended that Kinyarwanda be standardized and taught at all levels of school (Mutwarasibo 2003:29).

One cannot talk about 'multilingualism' leaving aside 'bilingualism'. Very often, the term 'bilingualism' is used in the sense that involves 'multilingualism', because, as Weinreich (1968) states, the latter has been regarded as the alternate use of two or more languages. In the Rwandan context, the term 'bilingualism' is defined as 'the capacity to use at least two world dominant languages' (Mutwarasibo 2003:62), which, in the case of Rwanda, are French and English. Therefore, any Rwandan who can only speak French and Kinyarwanda or English and Kinyarwanda cannot be considered bilingual. However, for the purpose of this study, multilingualism is taken as the use of any two or more languages without any distinction related to 'indigenous language' or 'world dominant language' because, as discussed in the next point, two or more languages (irrespective of their nature) cannot coexist without influencing each other, either negatively or positively (Weinreich 1968, Romaine 1995, Herdina and Jessner 2002).

2.2. Transfer in multilingualism

Transfer is a phenomenon which has been recognized as a significant feature in multilingual systems. It has been realized that 'when a speaker has command of more than one language, both language systems do not coexist as two entirely separate spheres but a large number of transfer and interference phenomena are to be expected in multilingual speakers' (Herdina and Jessner 2002:20).

Transfer has especially been documented in second language (L2) learning as the cause of problems of learning. This means that differences between the first language (L1) and L2 often result in interference or transfer. In other words, if L1 is structurally different from L2, problems of learning L2 are attributable to the unidirectional influence of L1. For Herdina and Jessner (2002:24), 'where differences between L1 and the language to be acquired were to be found, interference problems would occur, whilst where the language showed a large amount of structural similarity, L1 would facilitate the acquisition of L2'. This has also been a view of many researchers such as Romaine (1995), Ellis (1985), Littlewood (1984), Norrish (1983), Grosjean (1982), and others, who found that, in case of similarities between languages, transfer is assumed to have a positive influence on the language being learnt, while dissimilarities reflect negative influence of transfer. Similarly, transfer has been regarded as the adoption of any elements or features from the other language; and it is positive when the previous knowledge facilitates the learning of the new material, and negative when the previous learning interferes with the new skill (Romaine 1995:52). It was also realized that in a long-term contact situation the first language can be considerably influenced by the second one on various linguistic levels, phonological, syntactic, semantic and even pragmatic (Herdina and Jessner 2002:25). For this study, we will focus on influence at the phonological level.

When the phonological systems of the bilingual individuals are in contact, as Romaine (1995:53) states, 'interference arises when bilinguals identify a phoneme of the secondary

system with one in the primary system'. To produce that phoneme, speakers subject it to the phonetic rules of their primary language, which, according to Weinreich (1968), has four different consequences, namely, under-differentiation, over-differentiation, re-interpretation and substitution.

Under-differentiation occurs when one language has a sound distinction which does not exist in the other. For example a French speaker of English may under-differentiate the English /I/ and /i/, and replace them with the /i/ that exists in French. *Over-differentiation* is the opposite of under-differentiation because it imposes the distinctions of sounds which exist in one language on another. *Re-interpretation* is a phenomenon in which bilinguals make distinctions in L2 according to their previous knowledge of relevant features in L1. For example, an Italian speaker of English may be misled by the written form of the word *patty* and pronounce it as /patti/ (doubling /t/) because of referring to how the word would be pronounced in Italian (Romaine 1995:53). As for *substitution*, it is a phenomenon in which a bilingual replaces a sound of L2 with another which exists in L1. For instance, a Norwegian speaker of English in the United States substitutes /s/ for English /z/ because Norwegian does not have /z/ (Haugen 1956 quoted in Romaine 1995:53).

In addition to these explanations, Romaine (1995) finds that more cases of the abovementioned examples may occur because of 'mismatches at the level of allophonic variation and differences in the phonotactic patterns between two languages' (Romaine 1995:53). To support her argument, she gives an example of a Spanish speaker of English who may pronounce English *run*, *rum*, and *rung* as /rʌn/ because, even if both English and Spanish have /m,n,ŋ/ as phonemes, only /n/ can appear in final position in Spanish whereas all of them can appear in final position in English. Such examples of phonetic and phonological transfer can also be observed in cases of mismatches which often occur between the English sound /d/ and the Saudi Arabian Arabic /d/, the uvular /r/ of Parisian French and the retroflex /r/ of American English, and so on (Long and Richards 1989:113–5).

It is obvious that language systems do not coexist without influencing each other. In other words, 'the presence of one or more language systems influences the development of not only the second language but also the development of the overall multilingual system' (Herdina and Jessner 2002:28). For example people whose languages either do not have certain sounds such as [k, g], [t, d], [l, r], and [s, z] or do not differentiate between them may eliminate the ones that occur in the target language and say a sentence such as *he slaughtere*[***t***] *a* [***k***]*oat for his* [***k***]*uests* instead of *he slaughtered a goat for his guests* or *the* [***r***]*o*[***l***]*y came down the* [***l***]i*ver side* instead of *the lorry came down the river side* (Kembo 2000:301). These examples show that the learner's L1 heavily influences the pronunciation of the target language. It is also worth mentioning here that when learning a L2 or third language (L3), it is possible to have cases of transfer from not only the MT, but also the L2, or the language in wide usage in the community.

The notion of transfer has been extensively treated in the domain of 'Error Analysis', and broadened to include tendencies influenced by previous knowledge of the language, usually but not always the native language. In other words, transfer errors result from the fact that the learner uses what he/she already knows about his/her L1 in order to make sense of new experience (Norrish 1983:128). One may also note that some researchers describe language transfer in terms of overgeneralization, that is, 'the tendency to apply a rule which has been learned beyond the extent to which it applies' (Hubbard et al. 1983: 330). According to Richards (1974:174), 'overgeneralization covers instances where the learner creates a deviant structure on the basis of his experience of the other structures in the target language'.

2.3 Language contact and interference

As can be read above, 'interference' is a term which is closer to 'transfer' as far as their definitions are concerned. Some researchers use the terms interchangeably, and others distinguish between them. According to Romaine (1995:52) referring to Clyne (1967), interference is taken as 'the adoption of any elements or features from the other language', whereas transfer is applied to 'the phenomenon in which previous knowledge

is extended to a new domain'. In addition to this, interference has often been associated with negative connotations (Haugen 1972:322).

Weinreich (1968:1) explains 'interference' as a result of 'language contact'. For him, two or more languages are said to be in contact 'if they are used alternately by the same persons'. For the users of two or more languages, there may be some instances in which they deviate from the norms of one of the languages they can speak as a result of their familiarity with many languages. This phenomenon, which occurs as a result of language contact, is referred to as 'interference'. Likewise, interference is defined as 'a product of the bilingual individual's use of more than one language in everyday interaction' (Romaine 1995:51). For speakers of French for instance, the tag *n'est-ce pas* is often joined to utterances in English which make the speaker produce something like **He is a nice person, isn't it?* or **They work very well, isn't it?* This is seen as a matter of interference.

Interference is of interest to linguists because of its impact on either language among those in contact. It can affect either side of the language system: phonemic or phonological system, morphological or syntactic system, vocabulary, etc. As Weinreich (1968:1) puts it, '[t]he greater the difference between the systems, i.e. the more numerous the mutually exclusive forms and patterns in each, the greater is the learning problem and the potential area of interference'. This shows how interference occurs whenever two different languages are in contact.

According to Weinreich (1968), there are some utterances which occur in the speech of a bilingual speaker as a result of his/her personal knowledge of another language. Such utterances, if they occur frequently in the speech of bilinguals, become habitualised and established. He expresses this as follows:

> When a speaker of language X uses a form of foreign origin not as an on-the-spot borrowing from language Y, but because he has heard it used by others in X-utterances, then, this borrowed element can be considered, from the descriptive viewpoint, to have become a part of LANGUAGE X (Weinreich 1968:11).

As far as sound change is concerned, Weinreich (1968) presents a case study of languages in contact in Switzerland and focuses on phonic interference, a phenomenon which occurs when a bilingual produces a sound in the secondary language subjecting it to the phonetic rules of the primary language. This phenomenon, as Weinreich (1968:14) explains, was traditionally known as 'sound substitution'. He gives an example of two languages in Switzerland, Romansh and Schwyzertutsch, which he illustrates as an actual case of language contact. By taking an instance of an aspirated sound /k^h/, very frequent in Schwyzertutsch, and a non-aspirated /k/ that Romansh uses in place of /k^h/, he finds that the Romansh speaker confounds /k^h/ with the more familiar /k/ and renders unaspirated /k/ where Schwyzertutsch requires /k^h/. Similarly, he finds that such a phenomenon characterized by various substitutions is realized in the lengthening or shortening of vowels, the voicing of lax consonants and the affrication of some fricatives among speakers of both Romansh and Schwyzertutsch in Switzerland. It can be realized that for every point of difference between two phonic systems, there is interference. This is what makes some people assert that interference errors can be called transfer errors since they are errors in the target language which can be attributed to the structure of the L1 (Nicholls 2002).

2.4 The rise of multilingualism

Multilingualism, as the ability to speak, at some level, more than one language has become a widespread global phenomenon. As Edwards (1994:33–35) suggests, multilingualism occurs for varied reasons. The first reason is the movement of people: immigrants bring their own languages into contact with the languages of the populations they are joining; territorial expansion also favours language contact. One can also talk about imperialist and colonial expansions which, through military and economic pressures, bring about a massively expanded base for foreign languages among the population to be ruled. Similarly, Wolfson (1989:258) finds that factors such as nomadic life, wars, famines and other natural disasters which involve movements of people result in language contact whereby multilingualism arises.

Another reason for the rise of multilingualism is 'political union among different linguistic groups'. This point is explained as follows:

> Peoples who may have existed in sufficient isolation as not to need broadened language ability may find themselves more closely united, with obvious linguistic consequences. Switzerland unites four official language groups – the German, Italian, Romansh and French; Belgium is a country of French and Flemish speakers; Canada has English and French 'charter' groups. In addition to these unions, there are federations based upon more arbitrary, and often involuntary, amalgamations. These often result from colonial boundary-marking and country-creation; modern examples are found in Africa and Asia (Edwards 1994:33–34).

As mentioned above, multilingualism can also be a result of the arbitrary boundary-making for most countries in the world. This is the reason why multilingualism can commonly be observed in border areas such as the Mexican-American border and the New England and Quebec border in America (Edwards 1994:34). The separation and gradual divergence of regional dialects of the same language are also among the factors of the rise of multilingualism (Wolfson 1989:260).

To the above-mentioned reasons for the growth of multilingualism, cultural and educational motivations are often added as factors which favour the expansion of linguistic repertoires, and this is not really surprising because language and culture, or society in general, are inseparable things. As Labov (1972:3) states, 'one cannot understand the development of language change apart from the social life of the community in which it occurs'. Hence, language should be seen as an integral part of the social process.

2.5 Diglossia

In multilingual communities, a language or languages can be used for certain functions because of the needs of the speakers. Communication between friends, family members or other human groups in close relation often displays the kind of language which differs

from that used in more formal situations such as administration, school, business, church and so on. This observation attracted the attention of some language researchers who coined the word 'diglossia' as a concept to define different domains of language use.

The term 'diglossia' is used to refer to the situation in which 'two or more varieties of the same language are used by some speakers under different conditions' in a speech community (Ferguson 1972:233). In such a situation, one can distinguish between 'standard language' and 'regional dialect'. In many diglossic speech communities, people use the standard language in communicating with speakers of other dialects or on public occasions, in government and in education, and speak their regional dialect among themselves at home, in families, between friends or related people from the same dialect area. This means that, in a diglossic speech community, the two varieties of the same language exist side by side and each of them has its own domain of use (Ferguson 1972, Kamwangamalu 2000:102).

Diglossia has been regarded as one of the factors which can help the standardization of a language, but it does not always occur in the standardization process. It may develop from different origins and eventuate in various language situations (Ferguson 1972). For example, the Greek diglossia developed with the renaissance of Greek literature, Swiss German diglossia was a result of long religious and political isolation from the centers of German linguistic standardization, and the Haitian Creole developed from a creolization of a Pidgin French with standard French (Ferguson 1972:233–4).

In a diglossic speech community, the standard variety is learnt through formal schooling whereas nonstandard varieties are informal and not taught at school. Each language variety has its own function, and the speaker has to use the right variety in the right situation. For instance languages such as isiZulu in South Africa, Kiswahili in Tanzania, Cibemba in Zambia and Yoruba in Nigeria have a variety that is used in church or taught at school, different from the variety that is spoken at home or in the market place (Kamwangamalu 2000:103). As Ferguson (1972:236) adds, if the language variety is

used in a different situation from its own, the speech becomes an object of ridicule, and the hearers' attitudes are very sensitive to such variations.

Fishman (1971), as quoted in Kamwangamalu (2000:103–4), extends the definition of diglossia to include cases in which two different languages are used in the community, one (a former colonial language regarded as the High language) in formal settings, and the other (an African language regarded as Low the language) in informal settings. He finds that the relationship between the High languages, English, French and Portuguese, and Low languages is diglossic because, generally in Africa, Low languages are used for intra- or inter-ethnic communication or as the medium of instruction during the first years of education, whereas the High languages are used for administration, the media, education, diplomacy, social mobility, inter-ethnic communication, and international transactions. Apparently the language situation in Africa reflects the two definitions of diglossia, the original by Ferguson and the extended by Fishman. The present study will use Ferguson's definition to suggest ways of standardizing Kinyarwanda.

2.6 Sociolinguistics and sound change

Many studies on language change in sociolinguistics (Labov 1966, 1972; Trudgill 1973) have focused on the change in the sounds of a given language influenced by social factors and settings. As stated by Labov, studies of the social stratification of language in New York City show two overall directions of change in the phonological system. One direction is related to new phonemic mergers and chain shifts of vowels comparable to the Great English Vowel Shift, and another direction of change is the superposition of a new prestige pattern (r) (Labov 1972:143).

Sound change can be observed in both vowels and consonants. Labov's work on Martha's Vineyard shows a phonological change among vowels of English on that island. This sound change was especially the result of linguistic influence on the one hand, and of social change on the other hand. The vowel change involved in Labov's work concerns the raising of vowel /a/ in diphthongs /ai/ and /au/. This phenomenon happened in

circumstances where the diphthong was followed by a voiceless obstruent such as /t/ and /s/ as in 'out' and 'rice'. In this work, it was realized that the change of /a/ into /au/ occurred under pressure from the change in /ai/, which evidenced the linguistic influence on sound change. This vowel sound change in Martha's Vineyard was also influenced in part by the social subgroup, the Yankee natives of the island who wanted to distinguish themselves from visitors by developing the raising of /a/ in /ai/ and /au/. Labov dealt with the vocalic sound change in Martha's Vineyard by analyzing linguistic variables (ai) and (au) and their variants. He found that the variable (ai) for instance has two variants [ai] and [əi] in words like 'white', 'right' and 'kind'. The analysis of the vowel sound change in Martha's Vineyard showed that it resulted from both phonological influences (the change of /a/ in /ai/ triggering the change of /a/ in /au/) and social influences by the fact that a group of speakers, the Yankees, developed its language in order to distinguish themselves from foreigners (Fasold 1990:227–8).

As for consonants, Labov's works in New York City and Martha's Vineyard identified the variable (r). The evidence for change in the use of (r), Labov (1972) states, is that New York City was an r-pronouncing region in the 18th century, and it became completely r-less in the 19th century. The origin of change for Labov seemed to be the need to follow the prestige pattern of New England and London because New York at a time followed the example of Boston, Charleston, and other Eastern seaboard cities. Unlike New York City, Labov's research on Martha's Vineyard showed that speakers on that island were r-pronouncers because they retained the final and preconsonantal /r/.

Tousignant and Sankoff's (1989) sociolinguistic diachronic study of the Montreal French /r/ found that this language had undergone changes since the early fifties. Sociolinguists who conducted synchronic studies of the variable (r) in Montreal French discovered the following variants: the alveolar, apical, flap [r]; the uvular, back of tongue, flap [R]; and a retroflex [r]. They found that the prevailing variant in Montreal French was the uvular [R]. The variant [R] occurred in Montreal French as the result of the prestige variety [R] of France, and it was especially found among speakers from the east of Montreal. It was also discovered that the young used more [R] than the old.

Most sociolinguistic studies on sound change have focused on a linguistic variable and its variants in particular languages. To study sound change in a given language, one has to identify linguistic variables and analyze them in order to determine the reasons for change.

2.7 Attitudes to language change in multilingual societies

In a multilingual society, language variation causes problems of attitudes towards languages. These attitudes can be explained through reference to language planning and language policy.

Language planning has been limited to 'the organized pursuit of solutions to language problems, typically at the national level' (Fishman 1973 in Paulston 1994:5). Most studies on language policy/planning show that language decisions are especially made on political grounds and reflect the value of those in political power who are the policy makers. Language problems which face the policy makers in most multilingual nations are, among others, the choice of national or official language(s), the choice of alphabet, and the choice of the medium of instruction (Paulston 1994:3).

Many people talk of language planning and policy as the outcome of language variation. Jahr (1998:263) looks at language planning as 'a deliberate effort by political authorities, some institution or prescriptive linguists to change a spoken language or a spoken variety of a language in a certain defined direction'. It can also be that effort by authorities to establish relationships or harmony between languages within a country which is bilingual or multilingual. He finds three possible ways in which language planning can cause changes in the speech of a given language:

1. By introducing a new feature into the language in question. A feature previously not found in the language can be introduced into it by language planners. It can replace the old one which disappears, or it can be borrowed from another

language because of language contact, and the decision to introduce and accept it as a part of the recipient language is up to the language planners.

2. By removing a feature from the language in question, most often by halting and reversing an ongoing (and spreading) change. This makes a kind of anti-change to maintain the linguistic features whenever any language change on the way is not favored by the language planners.
3. By changing the written standard of a language and through this, as a side effect, influencing the speech variety most closely connected with this written standard (Jahr 1998:264).

In general, language planning refers to the activity performed by people who make language choices and policies. Language plans are carried out by means of policies that are formulated, codified, elaborated and implemented once the target language or languages are chosen.

In a multilingual society, languages can be a problem because chaotic differences are often determinants of social, economic, political and educational disadvantage. To solve this problem, there must be a plan and policy to devalue minority languages and their communities in favor of the dominant language group. Language differences with planned or organized policy and structure have been seen as resources. Language varieties and their corresponding communities have been taken as political, economic and social or cultural resources. That is why language planners also know and respect the right of any community to have its own language despite contact and difference. Planning assigns specific roles to each variety in the society. In France for instance, attitudes towards the French language and its varieties have been deeply influenced by language policies developed since the seventeenth century. There were vigorous and sometimes brutal language planning programs in order to favor the prestige standard form of French as can be seen in the following declaration:

> Being the language of the people, French will become the Universal language. Meanwhile, as it had the honor of being the language of the Declaration of the Rights of Man, it must become the language of all Frenchmen. We owe the citizens ‘the instrument of public thought, the surest agent

> of Revolution, the same language'. The language of a free people must be one and the same for all (Le Dû 2003:60).

This shows how attitudes are very important for language planners because they reflect the speakers' wishes and needs, and enlighten the directions which language policies have to follow. Different multilingual societies have different policies determined by the nature of their sociolinguistic circumstances. The Nigerian language policy primarily aims at establishing an indigenous national language not only for the purpose of facilitating communication but also seeking to reach the Nigerians' national identity at a politico-cultural level (Sofunke 1990:32). In Sofunke's view, this would also be relevant to the Nigerian developmental processes, because having an indigenous national language would lead to the national consciousness and pride, cultural dynamism, psychological equilibrium, pedagogical efficacy and mass communication. Quoting Olagoke (1982), Sofunke (1990:33) rejects the idea of retaining the language of the colonizer as an official language and suggests using an indigenous national language to foster national unity and facilitate 'self-discovery and pride'. Echoing Olagoke's point of view, Sofunke (1990:33) states that an indigenous national language 'will enable a greater number of Nigerians to communicate at a more adequate level than they do in English, bringing about more understanding and interaction. It will also promote cultural development, as it is impossible to express our cultures fully in a foreign language'. Furthermore, the National Policy on Education in Nigeria stipulates that all children should be encouraged to learn one of the major languages (Hausa, Igbo or Yoruba) other than their own MT (Ofuokwu 1990, Adegbite 2004).

In South Africa, out of 24 'sizeable home languages' grouped into 4 main language families, i.e the Khoe and San languages, the Bantu languages, the Germanic languages and the Indic languages, eleven are official languages, and 'no clear-cut criteria were used when determining the eleven official languages of the new South Africa' (Du Plessis 2000:102). However, before the establishment of official languages in South Africa, different attitudes relating to various issues of national concern such as national

unity, economic development, cultural and linguistic diversity were raised, claiming the empowerment of indigenous languages in South Africa. As Webb (1992) states,

> Afrikaans and English, the present national official languages, are the only really empowered languages, with all the other indigenous languages marginalized politically, economically, socially and culturally. At the same time languages have been used for manipulative purposes and as a basis for discrimination (Webb, 1992:431–2).

The 1996 National Constitution of South Africa stipulates the parity of esteem and equitable treatment of the eleven official languages but as Maphalala (2000) puts it, attitudes towards language use in South Africa show that Afrikaans and English are the dominant languages in government and are the major languages of educational development.

To remedy such attitudes towards the language question in South Africa or in any other multilingual nation, Du Plessis (2003) provides a classification of possible governmental policies in the following terms: promotion-oriented policies, expediency-oriented (accommodative) policies, tolerance-oriented policies, restriction-oriented policies and repression-oriented policies. Though the focuses of these policies are varied, there is a view that language policies are instruments of social control across social and political domains. Moreover, 'language policies are best understood in their relationship to broader societal policies, dominant beliefs, and power relationships among groups' (Du Plessis 2003:101).

It is necessary to notice that language policies should hinge on language attitudes because of the important role the latter play in a community. Language attitudes can affect the economic, educational and social life of a language group because, as Webb (1992:434) states, if a language has a low status in a community,

> its speakers will have little access to the higher occupational opportunities, may have little hope of upward mobility and their schooling children will have to study in a second language (which may affect their educational development). Language attitudes can also affect the success of learning,

> could co-determine linguistic modernization, result in cultural alienation and therefore even affect nation building.

In general, language attitudes in most African multilingual nations are against the devaluation of the indigenous languages in favor of the colonial languages because, as long as African languages are not properly used in government, administration and education, they do not develop their expressive power for all specialized fields beyond the colloquial level. In addition, the fact that these languages are technically undeveloped should attract the policy makers according to each country's language situation and people's attitudes in order to find a solution to the language question in Africa.

In the present study, language attitudes will be considered in order to see whether sound change in Kinyarwanda can be taken as a determinant of linguistic modernization or as a negative factor for the development of the language which deserves the attention of language planners to avoid any social, economic, political or educational disadvantage to Kinyarwanda among its counterparts (French and English).

2.8 Language maintenance and language shift

Language maintenance and shift is a phenomenon which occurs in languages when they are in contact with other external languages. A language shift can be defined as 'the change from the habitual use of one language to that of another' (Weinreich 1968:68). For example, the United States and Australia experienced an extreme shift of their aboriginal languages because of the contact with Europeans (Romaine 1995:38–9).

The process of shift 'consists of the socially motivated redistribution of synchronic variants to different speakers and different social environments' (Gal 1979:17). In language shift, the new form first occurs variably for each new set of speakers in each new situation in which it is used. There must also be an alternation of new and old variants in order to allow the linguist to describe the structure of language change for a given sample of speakers. The alternation between old and new variants in a single

context can carry social meaning, and very often, language change simultaneously involves both new linguistic environments and new sets of speakers (Gal 1979:18). There are several reasons for language shift. Romaine (1995:39), for example, refers to language shift as 'a community's transition to the new language, i.e. two languages in contact may result in bilingualism as a stage on the way to monolingualism in a new language'. She cites a number of external factors in language maintenance and shift, namely:

> numerical strength of the group in relation to other minorities and majorities, social class, religious and educational background, settlement patterns, ties with the homeland, degree of similarity between the minority and majority language, extent of exogamous marriage, attitudes of majority and minority, government policy towards language and education of minorities, and patterns of language use (Romaine 1995:40).

In France, at the time of the 1789 revolution, the need for the French linguistic homogeneity arose because, as Le Dû (2003) states, 'French was used amongst the aristocracy, the bourgeoisie and the church hierarchy, whereas the common people spoke either various patois that closely resembled French (Picard, Normand, Tourangeau, etc.), or other languages which were so different from French as to be opaque: Flemish, German, Italian, Corsican, Provençal and all the varieties of Occitan and Francoprovençal, as well as Catalan, Basque, Breton' (Le Dû 2003:60). In addition, till the end of the 18th century, the French language was regarded as the language of diplomacy and a class language, that is, the 'King's French'. To deal with this language problem, there was an urgent plan of setting up schools in areas of France where the kind of language was very different from French (Le Dû 2003:61).

There were two stages of language shift in France. After the French revolution, the first stage was realized in schools where most children were taught French, in newspapers, magazines, songs and dances through which French became a popular instrument of communication, in political life where French became a medium of campaigning via speeches and writings, in families where parents addressed their children in French, in churches where the catechism was taught through the medium of French, etc. As a result, French started being heard in everyday life, replacing regional languages in France. The

second stage was that in which French shifted from old generation forms to the new generation forms in the 19th century. During this phase, the French diglossic system namely school French, patois, and various French dialects became unified and yielded the new version of French spoken in the whole of France, the 'younger-generation French' (Le Dû 2003:64–6).

Language maintenance and language shift can be observed through the lexicon, syntax, semantics, and phonology of the language. Sound change as a domain of language shift alternates new and old variants of the given variables of a language, which helps the researcher to know to what extent that language has changed or maintained its standard features.

2.9 Language standardization

It has been common practice for most speech communities to look at their language and determine how and when it has to be used. This resulted in discovering language variants which are often assigned different functions according to how they are evaluated by the community. In such a situation, one variant is standardized and stands for the correct usage of that language.

In many speech communities, language attitudes have been concerned especially with standardization and the vitality of a language surrounded by variants in a community. *Standardization* of a language variety refers to a set of norms defining correct usage that has been codified and accepted within a speech community, while *vitality* refers to the degree to which a variety has visible vitality, that is, interaction networks that actually employ it natively for one or more essential functions (Ryan & Giles 1982). For Kembo-Sure (2004), 'where a language is a native tongue, one of the competing dialects is selected and then developed through rigorous corpus, status and acquisition planning and then codified as the standard language' (Kembo-Sure 2004:104). This is what has been applied to languages in Europe where the choice of the correct usage of English in the

United Kingdom and French in France has been the variety spoken at the capital by the ruling class, the 'RP' (Received Pronunciation) and 'le bon usage' respectively.

In France, for example, Bourhis (in Ryan et al.1982) shows that the standardization of French took centuries of systematic efforts to impose one variety as the prestige norm to the exclusion of all other varieties. There was a kind of French that was favoured in the seventeenth century, and this was referred to as 'le bon usage', that is, the only one correct way of speaking the French language. That was the French spoken by esteemed members of the royal court. Later, there was a cultural policy that encouraged the great French literary works by Corneille, Molière and Racine, which became the models of good style and correct spoken French. Later, vigorous language planning programmes were established, proficient language teachers in standard literary French were trained, and students at school were taught in standard French; punishments were given to those who used their native dialects. At work, clerks and administrators were required to possess a mastery of written standard French. There were also similar policy and language planning in colonies to favour French as the language of power over indigenous languages.

German history (Wikipedia 2001) reveals that the modern German language is a standardized version of medieval German. Because of the colonization patterns, the routes for trade and communication such as rivers, and physical isolation due to high mountains and deep forests, regional dialects developed. In addition to the division of Germany into states, there was a state of language chaos. The only unification strategy was the standardization of German. Northern German was taken as the standardized version in the 19th century, and it was only a written language. People who spoke dialects started learning it, almost like a foreign language, and tried to pronounce it as close to the spelling as possible. The German dictionary was issued between 1852 and 1960. Grammatical and orthographical rules appeared in 1860 and were declared standard in 1901. The government officially declared old spellings 'old-fashioned' and ordered schools and government offices to stop using them.

From these examples of language standardization in Europe, one can observe that there are serious measures which have to be taken in the situation of languages in contact in order to avoid chaos or restore the people's unity. These measures for language standardization are backed up by policies that a community adopts on the basis of its language situation.

2.10 Language policy in Africa

Many nations in Africa, especially sub-Saharan nations, face the same problems related to language. Most of them have been colonized by Europeans who imposed their languages which gained power over indigenous African languages. According to Mazrui and Mazrui (1998), to restore harmony between nationality and language, Africans are above all interested in restoring the dignity of their race and, therefore, accept an artificial linguistic solution by declaring a foreign language their official language (Du Plessis 2000:95). The African nations which adopted the policy of making a foreign language their official language in order to create a linguistic coherence did not achieve their aim. That is the reason why language policies vary according to what is convenient to each nation and its linguistic situation. But the general tendency is the use of the colonial language for governmental affairs and the indigenous languages for symbolic functions.

According to Maphalala (2000), in education, indigenous languages in most African nations have been marginalized in favour of the colonists' languages as the media of instruction at school. Colonization made European languages (French, English and Portuguese) the official languages as well as the media of instruction in the schools from the primary to university level while the use of indigenous languages in education is largely limited to the first few years of primary education. Some nations such as Kenya and Zambia follow the policy of using the ex-colonial language as the main language of learning and teaching, and the indigenous languages are only restricted to subjects of study (Kembo 2000:288).

Languages and different policies that the Sub-Saharan African nations follow have given other identities to these nations. Heine (1992), for instance, looks at African countries according to their use of languages and classifies them into two main categories: endoglossic and exoglossic. The former refers to countries which use one or more indigenous languages as their media of communication on the national level, whereas the latter relates to nations which use foreign languages as their primary media of communication. Among endoglossic nations, there are those which pursue an active endoglossic policy, that is, they use their local language(s) as media for all national concerns (government, administration, primary and secondary education) and reserve foreign languages for highly specific domains (university education and international relations). Such nations are for instance Somalia, Tanzania, Sudan, Ethiopia and Guinea. Another type of endoglossic nations such as Botswana, Burundi, Lesotho, Malawi, Rwanda and Swaziland favour the use of a foreign language in most important national domains (government, administration, higher education and written media) and use their indigenous language in administration symbolically, or in education only at the primary level (Heine 1992:23–5).

In addition, the vast majority of African nations "have declared a foreign language as their national official language, which is the only medium of government-controlled national communication in the domains of administration or education, with the possible exception of the first years of primary education where local languages may be used" (Heine 1992:25). This is the case in countries such as Kenya, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, Togo, and Uganda, which are referred to as exoglossic nations.

The colonial language policy in African nations resulted in the promotion of European languages which caused Sub-Saharan African nations to be labeled 'Anglophone' and 'Francophone'. The domination of the colonial languages demoted the African languages and contributed to the prevention of the social, economic and political upliftment of African people because, as their languages were considered unworthy for use in official circles, accused of primitiveness and judged incapable of expressing the ideas of higher civilization, they did not play their role in building their respective nations. In other

words, European languages prevented African languages from playing their role of expressing the vitality and life itself of the African people through culture, spiritual life, history, etc. (Maphalala 2000:149–152).

Thanks to some African people's efforts to resist the complete demotion of African indigenous languages, certain African nations managed to declare their people's indigenous languages official languages alongside colonial languages, thus brining about multilingualism. This was the case in South Africa, which declared nine African languages official alongside English and Afrikaans (Du Plessis 2000); Nigeria chose Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo as national languages alongside English, the official and colonial language; Senegal, which had French as official language imposed by the French colonists, declared Wolof and Fula the main national languages. Cameroon and Angola are also countries which selected some of their indigenous languages to be used as national languages beside the colonial official languages, English and French in Cameroon and Portuguese in Angola (Efurosibina 1994).

As mentioned above, while many African nations opted for an exoglossic solution to the language question by declaring a foreign language their official language, South Africa chose an endoglossic solution to its language question by declaring Afrikaans and the major African languages (isiZulu, isiXhosa, siSwati, isiNdebele, Sepedi, Setswana, Sesotho, Xitsonga and Tshivenda) its official languages alongside English, the language of its former colonists (Du Plessis 2000:96). This made South Africa a country of 11 official languages. According to the 1998 statistics on languages spoken in South Africa (Du Plessis 2000:101), African languages are spoken by 76% of the population, Afrikaans 14.4% and English 8.6%. Unlike other multilingual nations in Africa with a trifocal language policy, where among three languages one is a lingua franca, in South Africa, no language qualifies to become a lingua franca because of the basis of language management at the level of provinces. To put it differently, South Africa opted for three "principal languages"[3] per province or a trilingual language policy at the provincial level

[3] The South Africa Yearbook 1998 stipulates that provinces can limit their number of main languages to three, and one of them has to be an African language.

in order to solve its language question. The 1996 Constitution of the New South Africa stipulates that all eleven languages are official at both national and regional levels. Since then, each province must choose its three principal languages in such a way that one of them is an African language. For example, Eastern Cape has isiXhosa, Afrikaans and English as its principal languages while Gauteng Province has isiZulu, Afrikaans and Sesotho (Du Plessis 2000:102).

To put into practice a multilingual policy, the South African Government decided that all official languages should enjoy parity of esteem and be treated equitably and factors such as usage, practicality, expenses, regional circumstances and the balance of needs and preferences of the population as a whole or in the province concerned should be considered. In addition, official languages must be used regularly so that multilingualism is perceived to be a reality. However, not all official languages can be used in every conceivable form of the government's interaction with its citizens, which allows arbitrary decision making about what a language should be used for in the national or provincial government. Provinces and municipalities manage their official languages separately according to individual criteria (geographic, attitudinal and financial) for language use. For instance the Free State Province uses six official languages out of eleven for the whole country because they are convenient to its residents' preferences and meet other practical criteria such as usage, practicality and expense (Strydom and Pretorius 2000:112–5).

To develop and implement a language policy in South Africa, the Government created the National Language Service (NLS) in order to contribute to the practical implementation of multilingualism and promote the linguistic empowerment of all South Africa's people. Since the 1996 South African Constitution has elevated the status of the nine indigenous languages to the same level as English and Afrikaans and ensured respect for the language rights of all citizens, the NLS has to ensure that all official languages acquire equal functional status and put right what has gone astray in terms of language policy and practice. The NLS also has to deal with opposing language attitudes in political debates, since some people regard multilingualism as a problem (they think

that having many languages is divisive and therefore propose monolingualism to unify the country), whereas others take it as a resource because, for them, language diversity provides access to information and develops people. For the NLS, multilingualism is a resource in the interest of all South Africans, that is why it aims at empowering all South Africans to fully participate in their country's social, political and economic life by developing the languages of the country (Mkhulisi 2000:121–6).

However, even if the South African National Constitution guarantees the eleven languages' parity of esteem and equitable treatment, in education, English and Afrikaans are still the dominant media of instruction at school, and it has been suggested and claimed that African indigenous languages be made the media of instruction in South African schools as well (Maphalala 2000:151).

One can notice that most Sub-Saharan African nations share the same problem related to the management and integration of their indigenous languages in the most prominent governmental affairs. The fact that colonial languages are dominant in all official domains prevented African languages from developing their abilities to compete with their foreign counterparts. Instead of developing, they face more problems related to language contact, attitudes that marginalize them and policies which demote their social, political, economic and educational powers. Sound change as a result of language contact and attitudes is regarded as an important concern of language planners in a multilingual system.

2.11 Linguistic diversity assessment in Rwanda

Multilingualism and its implementation policies have had different images and varied types of language management thanks to the concerned communities. Many countries over the world are multilingual at different levels due to some criteria that are taken into account when assessing the linguistic diversity of a country in order to plan for its appropriate language policy.

To assess linguistic diversity, it is important 'to establish a formula which is designed to give a quick impression of the type of multilingualism prevailing in a given country. Such a formula should rely essentially on social data: the demographic statistics of native speakers' communities, the internal geographic distribution of languages, information about the use of lingua franca and an assessment of the proportion of the population speaking such languages (either as first or second language)' (Mansour 1993:16). This formula should clarify the functional role of various languages in a multilingual country, and this way, that formula becomes an important tool in language planning and policy decisions.

Most African multilingual nations have been characterized by a type of dense multilingualism composed of many indigenous languages and foreign languages, which has made their language situation more complex. The case of Rwanda is not as complex as that of Nigeria, Cameroon, Senegal, South Africa and others in terms of the number of indigenous languages. Rwanda with a total population of 7,963,809 has four languages (Kinyarwanda, French, English and Swahili) spoken countrywide. According to the 2003 third general census of the population of Rwanda, Kinyarwanda is spoken by 93% of the whole population, which allows it to be labeled as a major language. It is spoken countrywide and has acquired the status of being a national official language (Kabanza 2001, Bigirimana 2002). French is a former colonial language which is nowadays an official language in Rwanda. It is mainly used in government, education and international communication. It is spoken by 3% of the whole population. English is a language which, before 1994, was only taught and learnt from school and very rarely used in administration. Since 1994, it has become an official language with the same status as French. It is nowadays gaining much popularity and is estimated to be spoken by 2% of the whole population. Swahili is a minority language spoken by less than 3% of the whole population of Rwanda. It is mainly found in Muslim communities in which Swahili was introduced for religious and commercial purposes. There are a small number of Rwandans who learnt it as their first language, namely those who grew up in some parts of Tanzania and of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

Most studies conducted on language attitudes in Rwanda (Mutwarasibo 2003, Bigirimana 2002, Kabanza 2001, Rugira 1997) reveal that there are two diverging positions among Rwandans who are required to learn and use either French or English. After the 1996 Revised National Constitution's declaration that Kinyarwanda, French and English are official languages in Rwanda (Government Gazette No 3, Article 5), Rwandans speaking French have adopted a positive attitude towards learning and using English because of its position as a medium of international communication, science and technology, while Rwandans speaking English are reluctant to learn French because, for some, being proficient in English is assumed to be an asset for important positions in almost all job markets. Obviously, after 1994, English has become a language of government and business and every Rwandan wants to learn it because of its utility. As for Kinyarwanda, all French and English speakers have positive attitudes towards the language as a national language which serves as a bridge between Francophones and Anglophones (Gatayire 2000).

However, even if Kinyarwanda is regarded as the first language for most Rwandans, and an official national language, not everybody is able to conduct a natural conversation in Kinyawanda. The feeling of lack of proficiency in this language leads most Kinyarwanda speakers to mix all the languages they can speak. The general tendency is that Francophones and Anglophones use more French or English vocabulary, structures and sounds in their speech, which reflects instances of code-switching and code-mixing (Gatayire 2000). Although code-mixes and code-switches will not be discussed in this study, they make the language sound different and change the hearers' attitudes towards the speakers. The data on sound change must comprise all categories of speakers for a better understanding of change in a given multilingual community.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter focuses on the methods used to select the sample population, and collect and analyze the data. For the present study, the method of sociolinguistic research pioneered by Labov (1966) in New York City or (1972) on Martha's Vineyard, and Trudgill (1972) in Norwich is key to the approach used. In other words, this research is predominantly empirical, that is, it is based on the data that have been experienced by the selected sample, and the analysis and interpretation of the data follow theories/methodologies of sociolinguistic research as suggested above.

3.1 Selection of the sample population

The sample population for this study is divided into three age-groups, representative of the Kinyarwanda speech community. This classification is mainly necessitated by two factors. The first is the respondents' Kinyarwanda language background: it is recognized that the Kinyarwanda speech community is made up of members who have acquired this language from different areas and under different circumstances. There is a claim that some have learnt it as their L1 inside the country and in favorable conditions which allow them to feel integrated into their language speech community, while others who were political refugees in foreign countries have acquired Kinyarwanda under difficult circumstances, in refugee camps where they were also required to learn other languages for survival, which prevented them from freely using their MT.

The second factor is the speakers' attitudes to learning Kinyarwanda. It is thought that there are some Rwandans who, because of difficult circumstances they were living in abroad, became more interested in foreign languages than in Kinyarwanda and attributed less importance to the latter when they were back in Rwanda, and others who, when they were repatriated, tried to improve and teach their children Kinyarwanda as their L1. There is also another belief that there exist both negative and positive attitudes towards Kinyarwanda among Rwandans themselves.

These two factors as mentioned above supported my idea of classifying my respondents into three main age-groups. Of these, age-group 1 (GR1) comprises members of the Kinyarwanda speech community aged between 10 and 20. This is a group of people who were born in Rwanda and learnt Kinyarwanda, French or English in the country. Age-group 2 (GR2) is made up of subjects aged between 21 and 35. These are speakers of Kinyarwanda, born in foreign countries (French-speaking and English-speaking countries), who are assumed to have learnt Kinyarwanda from there, and have come to Rwanda since 1994. Age-group 3 (GR3) is made up of Rwandans who fled the country already speaking Kinyarwanda. These are generally over 36 years old. Each group is represented by 2 males and 2 females with an English background, and 2 males and 2 females with a French background. This limited my sample population to 24 informants. The following table illustrates the ideal structure and number of informants:

Language background	**English**		**French**		
Gender / Age group	**Male**	**Female**	**Male**	**Female**	**Total**
GR1	2	2	2	2	**8**
GR2	2	2	2	2	**8**
GR3	2	2	2	2	**8**
Total	**6**	**6**	**6**	**6**	**24**

Table1. Ideal Sample Cell

Due to time constraints, this research is conducted as a pilot study whose participants are members of the Kinyarwanda speech community in South Africa. In order to get a reliable sample, I took 48 respondents at random from the Kinyarwanda speech community and chose 24 who fulfill the conditions mentioned above for the study. Moreover, to avoid any other factor (for instance South African languages) which may affect the speech and skew the research, I chose to work with members of the Kinyarwanda speech community who have not yet spent more than 6 months in South Africa. It should also be mentioned that, because of the research site which could not

favour the identification of regional dialects, geographical dialect variables as influences on sound change are not discussed in this study.

3.2 Data collection

The nature of data for this research is mainly spoken data which I collected by tape-recording speech. I recorded interviews that were held in Kinyarwanda in order to be able to identify linguistic variables under investigation. The questions I asked were related to the topic which could help the interviewees talk for three to five minutes talk (see Appendix 3D). There were also 'subsequent questions' to help the speakers who failed to talk for three to five minutes on the main topic. The topic and questions were meant to help the respondents talk having in mind my objectives, and hold a natural conversation reflecting the sounds they actually use when they speak. In addition to the speech data, I used a questionnaire (Appendix 3E). I asked questions intended to yield a clear indication of the speaker's language background and attitudes towards language change, and help the analytical discussion of the variables.

3.3 Theoretical framework

The analysis of the data in this research was done largely within the framework of the literature review presented in chapter 2. The focus of the research was to identify linguistic variables (sound changes) from Kinyarwanda speech data and analyze them drawing on insights from Labov (1966, 1972) and Trudgill (1972) on social and geographical motivation of sound change, and Weinreich (1968) and Romaine (1995) on the issues of language contact and language learning. I assume that these two sociolinguistic trends involve sub-areas such as interference, transfer, diglossia, language maintenance and shift, and are closely linked to people's attitudes towards language. I hypothesize that variation in sounds of Kinyarwanda after 1994 can be explained in the light of interference, transfer and other issues closely related to multilingualism and language contact. Moreover, from my personal observation and some studies on language attitudes in Rwanda, I also assume that attitudes play an important role in language

change. The fact that some Rwandans are keen on being labeled ‘Anglophones’ or ‘Francophones’ (Mutwarasibo 2003) may be a significant influence on sound change in Kinyarwanda.

3.4 Scope of the analysis of the data

The analysis of the data basically focused on linguistic variables for phonological change. After interviews, tape-recorded speech was transcribed, and transcripts were classified separately according to the criteria described earlier. Since the speech segments were rather long (3 to 5 minute talks), I only quoted extracts containing 60 to 100 words (see Appendix 1). I identified linguistic variables by underlying them in the orthographic words and enclosing their phonetic occurrences between square brackets. For the sake of the interviewees’ anonymity, they were logged in by numbers for analysis. For instance the number GR111E is to be interpreted as follows: Letters GR stand for age group; the first digit after GR is the age group number: 1 (10–20), 2 (21–35), 3 (36 and more); the second digit represents gender, that is, 1 = male and 2 = female; the third digit stands for the subject number in that group; and the letter at the end of the number stands for the speaker’s language background: E = English background and F = French background. Thus, GR111E stands for speaker number 1 with English background, male, aged between 10 and 20, whereas GR222F is speaker number 2 with French background, female, aged between 21 and 35.

The analysis of variables were done within the framework described in 3.3 and was backed up by principles of the comparative method. For the purpose of the latter, the variables identified from Kinyarwanda speech data (interviews) were compared to the data (from questionnaires) available in other languages spoken by the respondents. This helped to confirm variables in the speech data and explain their origin and possibly discover others which did not occur in speech. I may also add that the questionnaires comprised questions whose answers highlighted the respondents’ language background and attitudes towards Kinyarwanda sound change, which reinforced the discussion of variables.

The analysis in this research was more qualitative than quantitative because it described variables, showing possible variants and explaining how and why they occurred in the Kinyarwanda speech data. However, to some extent, it also included quantitative analysis because it yielded approximate counts of answers and relative frequency of the variables and their variants from a selected sample, which required a summary of quantifiable variables in tables and a discussion of the findings in numbers.

3.5 Ethical considerations

This research involved human subjects. Consequently, in the first steps of data collection, I allowed my respondents to know what my research was about and its aim by means of a subject information sheet (see Appendix 3A). This was done by the means of a written letter addressed to my participants to guarantee them confidentiality and anonymity, and ask them their consent by signing the consent forms, that is, one for the interview and another for questionnaires (Appendices 3B and 3C). This helped me to ascertain that my participants had fully understood the research procedures and that they were assured that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time they wanted.

An interview form (Appendix 3D) and a questionnaire form (Appendix 3E) were given to participants prior to the step of recording and filling in the questionnaires. This was done in order to create a mood of trust between the researcher and participants, and it helped informants respond confidently because they were already prepared.

For questionnaires, I allowed my participants to answer in the language they felt comfortable with, either English or Kinyarwanda, in order to be sure that they answered after having understood the questions well.

Chapter 4: Findings and analytical discussion of the data

This chapter aims at showing how the data discussion is organized. It presents the findings according to the major themes that make up the questionnaire about the speakers and their interlocutors, and discusses them following the literature review in chapter 2. The analysis of the linguistic variables compares findings from the speech data and findings from the questionnaires.

The themes around which the questionnaires were built are those leading to when and from where the subjects learnt Kinyarwanda, which language they spoke most often in their lives, which language was easier for them and why. Other questions were those targeting the speakers' attitudes towards their interlocutors such as asking whether the speakers could recognize their interlocutors' language background according to the sounds that they use in Kinyarwanda.

As far as language background is concerned, I worked with subjects from both French-speaking countries and English-speaking countries because French and English are equally recognized as official and second languages in Rwanda. For this reason, all the data in this study were separated according to the subjects' language background, that is, French and English, in order to show the value attached by speakers of either language to sound changes in Kinyarwanda.

It is also worth mentioning that, in order to be sure of the sounds that the subjects used in their speech and to establish why they used those sounds, I gave them written words in the questionnaire and asked them to provide another word containing the target sound in a different language that they could speak. This contributed also to finding out what other languages the respondents could speak, and the contribution made by these languages to the sound changes in the subjects' on the Kinyarwanda (additional to the contribution of English or French). To go about the findings and discussion of the data, the above-mentioned themes served to name the headings and sub-headings of this chapter.

4.1 A word about participants: age and gender

It is very important for a sociolinguistic study to reveal as much information as possible about the participants in order to help the researcher describe and interpret their answers and language production. Due to this consideration, the preliminary question in the questionnaire asked the participants to state their gender and age.

As already mentioned in chapter 3 (see 3.1), the sample for this study was chosen according to three main factors, that is, age, gender and language background. As far as age is concerned, the number of participants for all age groups was reached as expected because after a random selection of 48 respondents I chose only 24 who fulfilled the conditions as suggested in section 3.1. The age factor was considered in the analysis because it gave information that was varied and worth discussing.

Gender did not yield any interesting results as there was no clear difference in the sound production or in the questionnaire answers between males and females. Gender was not therefore taken into consideration during the analysis since the contrast between males and females' speech and answers appeared to be of less significance than was expected.

4.2 Language background of the subjects

As mentioned above**,** all the subjects in this study were chosen following the criterion that, in addition to speaking Kinyarwanda, they should be born or raised in either a French-speaking country or an English-speaking country. This already puts the subjects in an environment of language contact, which triggered my interest to know the subjects' time and place of learning Kinyarwanda as their L1, and investigate the subjects' language performance and proficiency.

4.2.1 Subjects' acquisition of Kinyarwanda: time and place

The subjects were asked to mention the time when they learnt Kinyarwanda. The aim of this question was to help get an idea about the subjects' Kinyarwanda background when

they acquired this language in order to see whether the sound changes were triggered by the fact that the speakers learnt the language when they were children or as adults. The following table illustrates the subjects' answers in percentages.

Language background		English	French	Total
Age group	**Time**	Responses in %	Responses in %	Responses in %
GR1	Child	25	100	62.5
	Grown up	75	0	37.5
GR2	Child	25	50	37.5
	Grown up	75	50	62.5
GR3	Child	25	100	62.5
	Grown up	75	0	37.5
Total	Child	25	83.3	54.1
	Grown up	75	16.6	45.8

Table 2: Profile of the time of the subjects' acquisition of Kinyarwanda

The above table shows that most subjects with an English language background acquired Kinyarwanda when they were adults,[4] that is, at any age above 13. This is shown by the fact that 75% of the English-speaking subjects in all age groups said that they learnt Kinyarwanda when they were adults while only 25% of them claimed to have acquired Kinyarwanda when they were children, that is, they first learnt Kinyarwanda as their MT at their an early age (below 12). Most subjects with a French language background said that they learnt Kinyarwanda when they were children. This can be read from the table where 83% of them stated that they acquired Kinya-rwanda when they were children while about 17% answered that they learnt Kinya-rwanda when they were adults. In general, the statistics indicate that 54% of the subjects acquired Kinya-rwanda when they were children while about 46% learnt it when they were adults.

[4] Respondents meant at any age above 13 when they learnt Kinyarwanda in addition to another language they had acquired before.

Linguistic environment is also very important to the acquisition and performance of the language. The subjects were asked to mention whether they acquired Kinya-rwanda abroad or in Rwanda, and their answers are illustrated in the table below.

Language background		English	French	Total
Age group	**Place**	Responses in %	Responses in %	Responses in %
GR1	Abroad	25	0	12.5
	Rwanda	75	100	87.5
GR2	Abroad	100	0	50
	Rwanda	0	100	50
GR3	Abroad	25	0	12.5
	Rwanda	75	100	87.5
Total	Abroad	50	0	25
	Rwanda	50	100	75

Table 3: Profile of the place of the subjects' acquisition of Kinya-rwanda

Table 3 above shows that the majority of the subjects acquired Kinya-rwanda in Rwanda. In numbers, 75% of the sample population answered that they acquired Kinya-rwanda in Rwanda, and only 25% responded that they learnt Kinya-rwanda when they were abroad. GR1 and GR3 scored the same results, i.e, 12.5% of the respondents claimed that they learnt Kinyarwanda abroad while 87.5% mentioned that they acquired this language in Rwanda. One can also realize that all the subjects (100%) with a French language background acquired Kinyarwanda in Rwanda, while for those with an English language background, 50% acquired Kinyarwanda in Rwanda, and another 50% learnt it abroad.

It should be pointed out that among the Kinyarwanda speech community, there are some members who were born abroad and grew up there and only came into contact with Kinyarwanda when they were repatriated after 1994. This is the reason why some numbers such as those in GR2 show that 100% of the French-speaking subjects, for instance, learnt Kinyarwanda in Rwanda (see table 3), while 50% of the same subjects claim to have learnt Kinyarwanda when they were children and another 50% when they were adults (see table2).

4.2.2 Subjects' language performance

I asked the subjects to name the language they had spoken most in their lives this far. This question was meant to reveal the language they could speak better because of being exposed to it since this can be a factor of transfer or interference when learning or using another language (Herdina and Jessner 2002, Norrish 1983). It should also be noted that this question provided new information about other languages that are spoken by the respondents in addition to English, French and Kinyarwanda. Table 4 below gives the responses as follows:

Language background		English	French	Total
Age group	**Language**	Responses in %	Responses in %	Responses in %
GR1	English	75	0	37.5
	French	0	0	0
	Kinyarwanda	25	100	62.5
	Kiswahili	0	0	0
	Kirundi	0	0	0
GR2	English	25	0	12.5
	French	0	25	12.5
	Kinyarwanda	50	25	37.5
	Kiswahili	25	25	25
	Kirundi	0	25	12.5
GR3	English	75	0	37.5
	French	0	0	0
	Kinyarwanda	25	100	62.5
	Kiswahili	0	0	0
	Kirundi	0	0	0
Total	English	58.3	0	29.19
	French	0	8.3	4.16
	Kinyarwanda	30	75	52.5
	Kiswahili	8.3	8.3	8.3
	Kirundi	0	8.3	4.16

Table 4: Profile of the languages which the subjects spoke most frequently

The statistics in table 4 indicate that the most frequently spoken language for the majority of the subjects is Kinyarwanda. This can be seen in percentages which show that about 53% of the subjects answered that they had spoken Kinyarwanda most of the time, while 29% said English and 4% French. The table also shows that Kiswahili (8.3%) and Kirundi (4%) are other languages that are spoken by some members of the Kinyarwanda speech community.

However, when we look at answers in age groups we find that in GR1 and GR 3, the respondents with an English language background said that they had mostly spoken English, while all respondents with a French language background gave Kinyarwanda as their most frequently spoken language. This can be connected to the fact that most English-speaking subjects learnt Kinyarwanda while they were adults, whereas the majority of French-speaking respondents acquired this language when they were children (see table 2).

4.2.3 Subjects' language proficiency

In addition to the language that they had spoken most frequently in their lives, respondents were also asked to name the language they felt was easier for them since all of them could speak at least two languages, that is, French and Kinyarwanda or English and Kinyarwanda. To this question, my respondents gave answers as can be read in table 5 (see the next table).

From the statistics as presented in table 5, it becomes apparent that most respondents with an English language background stated that the language which is easier for them is English, while those with a French language background named Kinyarwanda. This can be explained by the fact that most English-speaking subjects learnt Kinyarwanda as adults (Table 2), and they learnt it abroad (Table 3), whereas most French-speaking subjects acquired Kinyarwanda in Rwanda (Table 3) and when they were children (Table2).

Language background		English	French	Total
Age group	**Language**	Responses in %	Responses in %	Responses in %
GR1	English	100	0	50
	French	0	0	0
	Kinyarwanda	0	100	50
	Kiswahili	0	0	0
	Kirundi	0	0	0
GR2	English	50	0	25
	French	0	50	25
	Kinyarwanda	25	0	12.5
	Kiswahili	25	0	12.5
	Kirundi	0	50	25
GR3	English	100	0	50
	French	0	0	0
	Kinyarwanda	0	100	50
	Kiswahili	0	0	0
	Kirundi	0	0	0
Total	English	83.6	0	41.8
	French	0	16.6	8.3
	Kinyarwanda	8.3	66.6	37.45
	Kiswahili	8.3	0	4.15
	Kirundi	0	16.6	8.3

Table 5: Profile of the subjects' easier language

From the table above, it should be pointed out that the statistics for the whole sample show that English has the highest percentage as the easier language (about 42%) followed by Kinyarwanda (37%), which means that the sample has a positive attitude towards English as an easier language for a larger number of respondents. This is not surprising because most Rwandans, either speaking French or English, are motivated to learn and use English because it has become the language of government and business, and everyone wants to learn it in order to get a better position in the job market and in business (Mutwarasibo 2003). This attitude towards a language, to my mind, motivates its learners to like it and become proficient in it. In response to why they felt the language they chose was easier for them, about 84% of the respondents with an English language background said that it was because they had used it most frequently in their lives,

whereas about 67% of the French speaking informants responded that Kinyarwanda was the language of the community they were born in and grew up with.

4.3 Attitudes among Kinyarwanda interlocutors

Language attitudes are important in this study in that they show people's feelings about their own language and the language of their interlocutors. In this section, we will look at how Rwandans feel about their interlocutors' production of Kinyarwanda sounds, since language attitudes are among the major factors of sound change, and the basis of language policy in a speech community (Le Dû 2003, Sofunke 1990).

4.3.1 Subjects' view about their interlocutors' Kinyarwanda sounds

To find out what the Kinyarwanda speakers think about their interlocutors' speech, I asked them to say whether they could feel that their interlocutors were using different sounds from theirs. In response to the question, they gave answers as illustrated in table 6 below:

Language background		English	French	Total
Age group	**Answer**	%	%	%
GR1	Yes	100	75	87.5
	No	0	0	0
	DN[5]	0	25	12.5
GR2	Yes	100	100	100
	No	0	0	0
	DN	0	0	0
GR3	Yes	100	75	87.5
	No	0	0	0
	DN	0	25	12.5
Total	Yes	100	83.3	91.75
	No	0	0	0
	DN	0	16.6	8.3

Table 6: Subjects' view about their interlocutors' Kinyarwanda sounds

[5] DN= Do not know.

From the data in table 6, we gather that a large percentage (about 92%) of the entire sample can recognize that another speaker is producing different Kinyarwanda sounds. This is more obvious with English-speaking subjects whose answers were 100% 'yes'. The majority of French-speaking subjects, i.e, 83%, also agreed that they could recognize sounds different from theirs; whereas about 17% answered that they did not know.

Referring to my own observation and literature on language attitudes, the answers given by respondents in the above table reflect what Rwandans think about themselves and their surroundings. Echoing Labov (1972), language attitudes within a speech community often result in self-identification, as is the case with the Kinyarwanda speech community (see section below).

4.3.2 Subjects' view about their interlocutors' language background

The question about whether the subjects could guess where the Kinyarwanda speakers grew up by listening to their speech sounds was asked because many speakers of Kinyarwanda after 1994 were proud of labeling themselves 'Anglophones' or 'Francophones' (Mutwarasibo 2003), which, according to Labov (1972) is a social factor of language change because of some people who want to distinguish themselves from others as in Martha's Vineyard. The following table illustrates the results:

Language background		English	French	Total
Age group	Answer	%	%	%
GR1	Yes	100	75	87.5
	No	0	0	0
	DN	0	25	12.5
GR2	Yes	100	50	75
	No	0	50	25
	DN	0	0	0
GR3	Yes	100	75	87.5
	No	0	0	0
	DN	0	25	12.5
Total	Yes	100	66.6	83.3
	No	0	16.6	8.3
	DN	0	16.6	8.3

Table 7: Subjects' view about their interlocutors' language background

The responses in table 7 indicate that most respondents (83%) accept that they can tell where a Kinyarwanda speaker grew up by simply listening to his/her speech sounds. It can be noted that 100% of the English-speaking subjects against 67% of French-speaking subjects claim that they can recognize where various speakers of Kinyarwanda grew up by listening to their speech sounds. This difference can be explained by the fact that most French-speaking subjects use mutually intelligible African languages (Kinyarwanda and Kirundi), which may prevent some of them from discerning the difference in the sounds that they use, whereas for English-speaking subjects, the fact that most of them learnt Kinyarwanda as adults (see table 2) and have used English most frequently in their lives (see table 4) influenced their sense of feeling that they speak different Kinyarwanda from their interlocutors with a French language background.

4.3.3 Attitudes towards Kinyarwanda sound change

Studies conducted on attitudes towards Kinyarwanda in multilingualism showed that both French and English speakers have positive attitudes towards learning and using Kinyarwanda as their first language (Gatayire 2000). In this study, I wanted to know the attitudes of the respondents towards Kinyarwanda sound change by asking them to say what they think about whether the Kinyarwanda sound system has changed because of language contact. The following table shows what they answered.

Language background		English	French	Total
Age group	Answer	%	%	%
GR1	Yes	50	50	50
	No	0	0	0
	DN	50	50	50
GR2	Yes	75	75	75
	No	0	25	12.5
	DN	25	0	12.5
GR3	Yes	75	50	62.5
	No	25	0	12.5
	DN	0	50	25
Total	Yes	66.6	58.3	62.5
	No	8.3	8.3	8.3
	DN	25	33.3	29.1

Table 8: Subjects' view about Kinyarwanda sound change

From table 8, the responses indicate that the majority of respondents (about 63%) say that the fact that the Rwandan speech community is made of people from different areas with different languages has changed the Kinyarwanda sound system. This is especially evident in GR2 and GR3 among both French-speaking subjects and English-speaking subjects. It should be noted that, in GR1, half of the respondents claim that the Kinyarwanda sound system has changed because of language contact, and the other half does not have any idea about the answer. This is because most subjects in GR1 were born and grew up in both English and French environments (Table 3), which may prevent them from self-identification.

4.4 Kinyarwanda sounds and change

This section deals with linguistic variables of the Kinyarwanda sound change. It analyses seven sounds that were chosen because they are assumed to be the ones most affected in the sound system of Kinyarwanda. Each sound is discussed separately. It should be pointed out that the linguistic variable, i.e, the sound that is taken as the model of standard Kinyarwanda, is written between slashes. The variants of each linguistic variable are written in square brackets.

The numbers that are presented in the tables for each linguistic variable are counts of the variant occurrence per speaker, that is, if all 4 English-speaking subjects in GR1 use the variant [r], for example, the occurrence is 100%. I chose this type of counts of variants after realizing that there was no intraspeaker variability among speakers of Kinyarwanda. In a careful search of this variability, I took tapes and listened to variables in every word where they were used in order to see whether speakers could shift from one variant to another in the same speech. The following extract (speaker GR111E)[6] illustrates the results of the search.

[6] This speaker is taken at random among others who could use all the 7 variables, simply for illustration.

Uko mbibona njyewe[ngj] abanyarwanda[rgw] uko bavuye mu Rwanda[rgw] mbona batar̲atakaje[r] umuco kuko ibintu byose bigar̲a[r]gaz̲a[z] umuco, wabonye ukuntu abakobwa bar̲i[r] bambaye nez̲a[z] n'abasor̲e[r] ntiwakwiz̲e[z]r̲a[r] ko bir̲iya[r] bintu bishobor̲a[r] kugar̲a[r]gar̲a[r] mur̲i[r] ik̲i[kj] gihugu[gj]. Nk'imigar̲a[r], amayugi[gj] ni byiz̲a[z] cyane[kj]. Ntawabeshya[ʃˇ] ko tutabar̲ushije[r]. Tur̲a[r]bar̲u[r]sha kabisa, ur̲asanga[r] nk'ibintu by'abanyamahanga usanga basa n'aho bagiye[gj] bavanga umuco n'ibindi bisa n'aho atari[r] umuco, naho njye[ngj] mbona ibyacu ar̲i[r]…byar̲i[r] bishyushye[ʃˇ] rwose[rgw] ntacyo[kj] nabinengaho.

(*In my opinion, Rwandans have not lost their culture. They kept all symbols of their culture; you saw how ladies and gentlemen were traditionally well dressed, you couldn't believe that things like 'imigara' and 'amayugi' could be found in this country! It's very amazing! No one can deny that we have won. We are better than all other competitors. It seems to me that other competitors from other countries have mixed culture with other things that are not culture. For me, I think that our show was fantastic, I have no criticisms).*

The frequency with which variants occurred in all words for this speaker appears as follows:

Variable	/r/		/kj/		/ʃˇ/		/gj/		/ngj/		/rgw/		/z/	
Variants	[r]	[l]	[kj]	[tʃ]	[ʃˇ]	[ʃ]	[gj]	[dʒ]	[ngj]	[ndʒ]	[rgw]	[gw]	[z]	[dz]
Frequency	18	0	3	0	2	0	2	0	2	0	3	0	3	0

Table 9: Example of the frequency of variants' occurrences in a subject's speech

The table above gives no indication of intraspeaker variability in the data. I may point out here that, after listening to the tapes many times, I realized that respondents were consistent in their use of sounds. In other words, if a speaker uses the variant [tʃ] for the variable /kj/, he/she does not shift to the other variant [kj] in the same speech. However, there were some instances of discrepancy where some respondents were inconsistent between the variant they used in the speech and the one they gave in the questionnaire (see appendix 2). For instance, speaker GR121F uses [r] in her speech (see appendix 1),

but when asked to provide a word in another language that contains the same sound as the underlined sound in the word **umu<u>r</u>imo** 'work' in the questionnaire, she gave the French word **ca<u>l</u>ité** 'quality' containing [l]. Another speaker GR112F uses [kj] in his speech (appendix 1) but shifts to [tʃ] in the questionnaire: for the word **gu<u>cy</u>ura** 'to bring (the cattle) home', he gave the Swahili word **<u>ch</u>ayi** [tʃ] 'tea'. It does not seem easy to explain the reason for the discrepancy in the first case but, to my knowledge, most Kinyarwanda speakers tend to write 'l' instead of 'r' in front of the vowel [i] (see more in 4.4.1), but they pronounce [r]. It should also be noted that some subjects such as GR 112E uses [r] in speech but gives a word in Luganda **omu<u>l</u>ima** 'field' containing [l] in the questionnaire. As for the second case, some people pronounce 'cy' as [tʃ] before [a], [u] and [o] and as [kj] before [i] and [e] what is questionable as will be explained in section 4.4.2.

4.4.1 The variable /r/

The variable /r/ has been considered in this study because of the interest based on the Ministerial Instructions No13.02/03.2/003 of 2 July 1985 on the official orthography and phonemes of Kinyarwanda, especially chapter 2, article 4, which stipulates:

> La lettre 'l' ne sera employée que dans les noms propres de personnes et de lieux où elle était utilisée antérieurement à la présente instruction ainsi que dans les mots étrangers non encore intégérs. Exemples: Kamali, Kigali, Angola, telefoni.
>
> (The letter 'l' will only be used with proper names of persons and places where it was before the present instructions. It will also be used with borrowed words such as Kamali, Kigali, Angola, telefoni).

This article changed many things in the orthography of Kinyarwanda because all the environments in which the letter 'l' was used were replaced by the letter 'r'. This affected not only the orthography but also the sound where [l] was completely replaced by [r]. Now that this study on sound change is conducted, it has been 20 years since the instructions were released. In addition to that, since 1994 the Kinyarwanda speech

community has been made up of members who have been exposed to the instructions and others who have not. It is therefore in the interest of this study to find out how far the change has gone. The investigation on the variable /r/ in the speech of the Kinyarwanda speakers resulted into the following:

Language background		English	French	Total
Age group	Variants	Occurrences in %	Occurrences in %	Occurrences in %
GR1	[r]	100	100	100
	[l]	0	0	0
GR2	[r]	100	100	100
	[l]	0	0	0
GR3	[r]	100	100	100
	[l]	0	0	0
Total	[r]	100	100	100
	[l]	0	0	0

Table 10: Table of occurrences of the variants of /r/ in speech

The table above indicates that all respondents, in all age groups use the sound [r] in speech. A careful analysis of the recordings showed that all speakers use the same variant [r]. More than that, I realized that in words containing 'l' as in **politiki** 'politics' (see GR 121E) or **repubulika** 'republic' (see GR 322F) the 'l' sounds like [r]. However, this may require further investigation before drawing any conclusion because I could only find two instances in the entire sample.

It can be said that the variable /r/ underwent some changes attributable to the merger of phonemes /r/ and /l/ into /r/. Formerly, Kinyarwanda used the phoneme /l/ before front vowels /i/ and /e/, and /r/ before vowels /a/, /u/ and /o/. Due to loan words such as 'ikarita' [ikarita] 'card' from the French 'carte'/karte/ and other loan words displaying /r/ before /i/ and /e/ whereas it had to be followed by /u/ or /o/ or /a/, the language merged /r/ and /l/ into /r/. Nowadays, /r/ is used before all vowels while /l/ disappeared with one exception to be kept in proper names such as Kiga**l**i. It should be pointed out that the merger of /r/ and /l/ into /r/ is a consequence of language contact which made

Kinyarwanda borrow words such as [ika**ri**ta] from the French 'ca**r**te' or [**re**pubulika] from '**ré**publique'.

4.4.2 The variable /kj/

This variable has two variants [kj] and [tʃ]. In the speech, speakers use either [kj] or [tʃ], no one uses both variants. Table 11 below shows the frequency of occurrence in the respondents' speech.

Language background		English	French	Total
Age group	Variants	Occurrences in %	Occurrences in %	Occurrences in %
GR1	[kj]	75	50	63
	[tʃ]	25	50	37
GR2	[kj]	75	75	75
	[tʃ]	25	25	25
GR3	[kj]	75	50	63
	[tʃ]	25	50	37
Total	[kj]	75	58	67
	[tʃ]	25	42	33

Table 11: Table of occurrences of the variants of /kj/ in speech

The table indicates that most speakers use the variant [kj], i.e, 67% of the entire sample against 33% who use the variant [tʃ]. It can also be observed that the variant [tʃ] is mostly found among the French-speaking subjects, whose rate of use is 42% against 25% for the English-speaking subjects. Concerning age groups, the table shows that 50% of the subjects in GR1 and GR3 with a French language background use the variant [kj] and the other 50% use [tʃ]. Looking at what the same subjects gave in the questionnaire, I found that 3 out of 8 in both groups used words containing [tʃ], but others did not answer the question. Three subjects used the words **gu̲cura** (Kinyarwanda) 'to mend' (GR111F,

GR322F) and **chayi** (Kiswahili) 'tea' (GR112F) and, except in GR112F, 2 others use [tʃ] in speech. According to their speech, they all have Kirundi intonation which means that, although they speak Kinyarwanda, they have also been in contact with Kirundi which uses [tʃ] in place of Kinyarwanda [kj]. As for English-speaking subjects who gave words containing [tʃ] in the questionnaire, all of them gave words in Luganda, which means that they transfer the sound from Luganda to Kinyarwanda.

In order to be sure of the speaker's variant, I listened to different environments in which the sound /kj/ occurs in Kinyarwanda. The first environment is in the cluster **'cy'** as in **icyondo**[kj] 'mad', **icyicaro**[kj] 'seat'. The second environment is when /k/ spelt 'k' is followed by /e/ or /i/ as in **akeneye**[kj] 'he needs' or **ikiraro**[kj] 'bridge'. In Kinyarwanda, the letter **'c'** followed by any vowel is pronounced [tʃ]; it does not have any variant like [kj]. In addition, Kinyarwanda does not have /kj/ or any sound where the spelling is 'ch'.

The data in table 11 indicate that the variable /kj/ has two variants [kj] and [tʃ]. It can be said that the variable /kj/ underwent a split because one sound [kj] has a second variant [tʃ]. A sociolinguistic explanation for such a split is language contact because the variant [tʃ] for /kj/ is mainly found among speakers who have been in contact with foreign languages such as Kirundi, Kiswahili and Luganda, languages which use the sound [tʃ] but do not have [kj]. When listening to speakers who have a background of languages with more occurrences of [tʃ], one realizes that their Kinyarwanda speech contains [tʃ] in place of [kj] as in [tʃaane] which is normally [kjaane] 'often' in standard Kinyarwanda.

4.4.3 The variable /ʃˇ/

/ʃˇ/ is a sound represented as 'shy' in Kinyarwanda orthography. It occurs in the environment where the cluster 'shy' is followed by any Kinyarwanda vowel. However it appears that [ʃ] is a variant of /ʃˇ/ in some speech as it can be seen in the table 12 below:

Language background		English	French	Total
Age group	Variants	Occurrences in %	Occurrences in %	Occurrences in %
GR1	[ʃˇ]	75	0	37.5
	[ʃ]	25	75	50
	NA[7]	0	25	12.5
GR2	[ʃˇ]	0	0	0
	[ʃ]	75	75	75
	NA	25	25	25
GR3	[ʃˇ]	75	50	62.5
	[ʃ]	25	50	37.5
	NA	0	0	0
Total	[ʃˇ]	50	16.6	33.3
	[ʃ]	41.6	66.6	54.1
	NA	8.3	16.6	12.5

Table 12: Table of occurrences of the variants of /ʃˇ/

The statistics in the above table show that the variable /ʃˇ/ has two variants [ʃˇ] and [ʃ]. Apparently, [ʃ] occurs most frequently in the sample (54%) and it is especially used by the majority of the French-speaking subjects in GR1 and GR2, and by the English-speaking subjects GR2. In the questionnaire, the English-speaking respondents show that they read the underlined sound in the word **ibi<u>shy</u>imbo** 'beans' as [ʃ] because they give words such as the English word *<u>sh</u>yness*[ʃ] (GR211E) or Swahili *<u>sh</u>uleni*[ʃ] 'at school'

[7] NA = No answer

(GR222E). Similarly, the French-speaking subjects give words like *richesse*[ʃ] in French (GR121F) 'richness' or *ishari*[ʃ] in Kinyarwanda (GR211F) 'jealousy'. However, it can be noted that most speakers in GR3 (about 63%) use the variable [ʃˇ]. Compared to GR1 and GR2, in terms of the variable [ʃˇ], one can say that GR3 did not have as much external influence as it is in GR1 and GR2.

From the data, it appears that the variant [ʃ] may be originating from languages neighboring Kinyarwanda especially Kirundi and Swahili which use [ʃ] and do not have [ʃˇ]. It should be noted that speakers with this variant do not shift to [ʃˇ] either in their speech or from speech to questionnaire or vice versa (See appendix 2). Although these speakers are aware of the variant [ʃˇ] in their interlocutors' speech (see 4.3.1 and 4.3.2), they do not mix both variants in their speech. This phenomenon can be attributed to *substitution* (Weinreich 1968) where a person speaking more than one language replaces a sound of L2 (the Kinyarwanda [ʃˇ] in our context) with another which exists in L1 ([ʃ] from Swahili or Kirundi).

4.4.4 The variable /gj/

The sound /gj/ in Kinyarwanda occurs in two different environments. The first environment is in the cluster orthographically represented by 'jy' as in **amajyambere**[gj] 'development'. It is pronounced [gj] with any Kinyarwanda vowel and in any place in the word. The second environment where [gj] occurs is when the sound [g] spelt as 'g' is followed by the vowel /i/ or /e/ as in **igihugu**[gj] 'country' or **kwegera**[gj] 'to approach'. After listening to this variable focusing on the above-mentioned environments of /gj/, I found that this variable has two variants [gj] and [dʒ]. Table 13 illustrates how those variants occurred in the subjects' speech.

Language background		English	French	Total
Age group	Variants	Occurrences in %	Occurrences in %	Occurrences in %
GR1	[gj]	75	50	62.5
	[dʒ]	0	0	0
	NA	25	50	37.5
GR2	[gj]	25	25	25
	[dʒ]	50	25	37.5
	NA	25	50	37.5
GR3	[gj]	75	50	62.5
	[dʒ]	25	25	25
	NA	0	25	12.5
Total	[gj]	58.3	41.6	50
	[dʒ]	25	16.6	20.8
	NA	16.6	41.6	29.1

Table 13: Table of occurrences of the variants of /gj/

The table shows that the most frequently used variant in the sample is [gj] (50%). It is found most frequently in GR1 (about 63%) and GR3 (about 63%). Another observation from the table is that the majority of English-speaking subjects use [gj]. The variant [dʒ] was found both in speech and questionnaires. Some respondents who use the variant [dʒ] gave words such as **gentleman** [dʒ] (GR321E) or **juzi** [dʒ]/[gj][8] (Swahili for 'yesterday') (GR212F) in the questionnaire. In speech data, speaker GR321 uses the variant [dʒ] in both environments of [gj] as mentioned earlier. However, speaker GR 212F uses [gj] in speech. To know the reason for this discrepancy, I asked 3 Swahili speakers to pronounce the word **juzi** and 2 of them used [dʒ] and one pronounced [gj]. When I asked them why they have 2 different variants they answered that both [dʒ] and [gj] are Swahili. One said "People say for instance *Nakwenda mjini*[mdʒini] or *Nakwenda mjini*[mgjini]" (I am going to town), which means that speaker GR212F may have given the word *juzi* thinking of [gj] that he uses in the speech.

[8] There was no precision about the variant.

From the above evidence, it can be said that there is a wide probability that the variant [dʒ] originated from English or Kiswahili because Kinyarwanda does not have the phoneme /dʒ/.

4.4.5 The variable /ngj/

This variable is a Kinyarwanda sound which occurs in two different environments. The first environment is in the cluster /ngj/, spelt 'njy', as in **kubwa<u>njy</u>e** [ngj] (GR311F) 'for me' or **kin<u>jy</u>anire**[ngj] 'Take it for me'. The second environment is when the cluster /ng/ spelt 'ng' is followed by the vowel /i/ or /e/ as in **Icyo<u>ng</u>ereza**[ngj] 'English'(GR112F) or **<u>Ng</u>ira[ngj] ngo** 'I think that' (GR311F). After listening to various speech data from the respondents, two variants were found namely [ngj] and [ndʒ]. The frequency of occurrence for each variant among respondents is presented in table 14 below.

Language background		English	French	Total
Age group	Variants	Occurrences in %	Occurrences in %	Occurrences in %
GR1	[ngj]	100	50	75
	[ndʒ]	0	0	0
	NA	0	50	25
GR2	[ngj]	25	0	12.5
	[ndʒ]	50	25	37.5
	NA	25	75	50
GR3	[ngj]	50	50	50
	[ndʒ]	0	0	0
	NA	50	50	50
Total	[ngj]	58.3	33.3	45.8
	[ndʒ]	16.6	8.3	24.9
	NA	25	58.3	27.7

Table 14: Table of occurrences of the variants of /ngj/

From table 14 above, it becomes apparent that the variant [ngj] is the most used by the speakers in this study sample. This can commonly be proven by the percentages of occurrences in which [ngj] has 45.8% and [nd͡ʒ] 24.9%. It can be observed that the variant [ngj] is mainly used by speakers in GR1 and GR3 of both English and French-speaking subjects whereas the variant [nd͡ʒ] is only found in GR2. Given that most of the subjects in GR2 grew up out of Rwanda and that the majority of them claim to have learnt Kinyarwanda as adults (see table 2), it can be said that these speakers are influenced by sounds from foreign languages as can be seen in examples from both speech data and questionnaire as provided by speaker GR211F. In the questionnaire, he gives the Kirundi phrase **Ndi njenyene** [nd͡ʒ] 'I am alone' which shows that he pronounces the underlined Kinyarwanda sound in **njyewe** 'me' as [nd͡ʒ]. Similarly, in his speech, he pronounces the underlined sound in **nanjye** 'me too' as [nd͡ʒ]. This shows that the speakers in GR2 cannot distinguish between Kirundi and Kinyarwanda sounds. In other words, as Romaine 1995, Weinreich 1968 and Haugen 1972 argue, this phenomenon is an instance of linguistic transfer in which the previous knowledge (here the Kirundi sound [nd͡ʒ]) is extended to a new domain (here Kinyarwanda in which the sound [ngj] is replaced by [nd͡ʒ]).

4.4.6 The variable /rgw/

This sound has two variants [rgw] and [gw] that appear to occur in only one environment, i.e., in the Kinyarwanda cluster spelt as 'rw'. In the sample, both variants occurred and the following table presents the frequency of their occurrences.

Language background		English	French	Total
Age group	Variants	Occurrences in %	Occurrences in %	Occurrences in %
GR1	[rgw]	100	75	87.5
	[gw]	0	25	12.5
GR2	[rgw]	50	25	37.5
	[gw]	50	75	62.5
GR3	[rgw]	75	75	75
	[gw]	25	25	25
Total	[rgw]	75	58.3	66.6
	[gw]	25	41.6	33.3

Table 15: Table of occurrences of the variants of /rgw/

From the table above, it can be seen that the variant [rgw] is the most frequently used in almost all age groups. It is only in GR2 where numbers show that the most frequently used variant is [gw]. This sound was especially produced by the French-speaking subjects in GR2 where 75% represent the occurrence of the variant [gw] in GR2. Most French-speaking subjects in this age group such as GR211F and GR221F have acquired Kirundi as their first language and learnt Kinyarwanda as adults. Even their speech includes more Kirundi sounds than Kinyarwanda ones. As for the English-speaking subjects, those who use the variant [gw] in speech (GR211E and GR221E) gave words containing [rgw] in the questionnaire. These speakers learnt Luganda, which has the variant [gw] for the cluster spelt 'rw'.

From the arguments and examples above, a possible explanation for the occurrence of the variant [gw] for /rgw/ is that the Kinyarwanda cluster [rgw] does not exist in languages previously learnt by most speakers with the variant [gw]. Kirundi for instance has [gw] in

place of [rgw]. Thus, speakers transfer their previous language knowledge to the new language.

4.4.7 The variable /z/

The variable /z/ is a Kinyarwanda phoneme which currently has two variants [z] and [dz]. In speech, those variants occurred as shown in the table below.

Language background		English	French	Total
Age group	Variants	Occurrences in %	Occurrences in %	Occurrences in %
GR1	[z]	100	75	87.5
	[dz]	0	25	12.5
GR2	[z]	100	50	75
	[dz]	0	50	25
GR3	[z]	100	100	100
	[dz]	0	0	0
Total	[z]	100	75	87.5
	[dz]	0	25	12.5

Table 16: Table of occurrences of the variants of /z/

According to the statistics in table 16, the most prominent variant is [z] (87.5%). It is found in the speech of both English and French-speaking subjects and in all age groups. As for the variant [dz], it occurs more frequently (50%) in GR2 among the French-speaking subjects. The data shows that the users of the variant [dz] (GR211F and GR221F) are those with French language background who are more proficient in Kirundi than they are in Kinyarwanda. It is obvious from the table that no subject with an English background uses the variant [dz].

Kinyarwanda speakers who have been raised in Kirundi environments have the variant [dz]. They pronounce the Kinyarwanda words such as **byiza** [bgjiza] like [vgjidza] 'lovely' (GR211F) because of the influence of Kirundi. The most apparent origin of the

variant [dz] in Kinyarwanda is the neighbouring and very closely related language Kirundi, which uses the variant [dz] wherever Kinyarwanda has the variant [z].

4.5 Summary and conclusion

This chapter dealt with the findings from the questionnaires and speech data. It provided numbers reflecting the frequency of the respondents' answers and occurrences of variables for this study. Questionnaires served to give information about the subjects' language use and attitudes of speakers themselves towards their interlocutors during a conversation in Kinyarwanda, and backed up the analysis of the selected linguistic variables for this study in order to explain the causes of change. Speech data helped to identify linguistic variables for phonological change. In the analysis, speech variables were compared to written variables from the questionnaires for a discussion in order to find out the probable origin and reason of the occurrence of the variants.

In terms of language background, it was shown that some Kinyarwanda sounds underwent a *merger* and *split* because of borrowing words from French and English, and others developed variants under the influence of the sounds from neighbouring languages such as Kirundi, Kiswahili and Luganda. As for age groups, the data indicated that most changes occurred in GR2 in which members of the Kinyarwanda speech community were most exposed to foreign languages, which caused them to be the most affected by changes due to language contact.

Chapter 5: Multilingualism and attitudes towards Kinyarwanda sound change

5.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses why and how multilingualism was adopted as an official policy in Rwanda and shows the attitudes of members of the Kinyarwanda speech community towards Kinyarwanda sound change as a result of language contact. The discussion in this chapter is mainly based on the findings in chapter 4.

5.1 Multilingualism in Rwanda

As described in section 2.1, multilingualism in Rwanda started after 1994 when the country emerged from a period of wars and discrimination within its population, and the time when it united its people who had been scattered to different places in exile. Multilingualism was adopted as an official language policy because of the then prevailing situation of language contact. There were a number of languages, namely Kinyarwanda, French, English and Kiswahili, which required some order by political authorities to avoid the chaos within the society's communication. For this purpose, the 1996 National Constitution defined each language's function in society and Kinyarwanda, French, and English were declared equal official languages.

Since the 1996 government declaration on language use, multilingualism in Rwanda can be characterized in terms of four languages (Kinyarwanda, French, English and Kiswahili) serving different functions. In addition to its official status, Kinyarwanda serves for in-group communication and as a lingua franca in the sense that it is used to unite French-speaking and English-speaking members of the Kinyarwanda speech community. French and English are used for specialized communication in administration, education, religion and any other public and international functions. Kiswahili is especially used for in-group communication within the Muslim community, but it is also taught as a subject in some options at school for business purposes.

According to the results of the 2003 general census of the population of Rwanda, the profile of languages in Rwanda is as follows: Kinyarwanda 93%, French 3%, English 2% and Swahili 2%, which can be presented in a chart as follows:

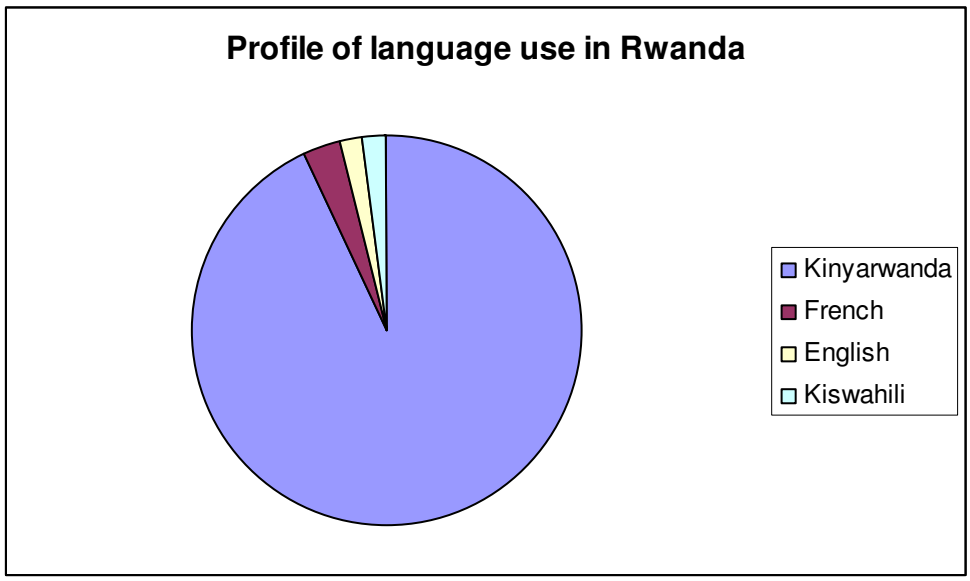


Figure 1: Profile of language use in Rwanda

One can easily see that languages are used to different extents in Rwanda. Kinyarwanda is highly used in that multilingual society, and this is not surprising because it is the L1 for almost all Rwandans. French and English are L2 which are spoken especially by people who have been to school, while Kiswahili is a minority language used for religious and business purposes.

Rwanda is a multilingual society which is not as complex as most other African nations such as Nigeria or South Africa, which are characterized by dense multilingualism. It has a type of multilingualism where one national language coexists with three foreign languages. However, though the Rwandan multilingual situation may seem to be simple in the eyes of the observers, languages in contact always influence each other as is discussed in the next section.

5.2 Kinyarwanda sound system and language contact

In this section, I will show how the Kinyarwanda sound system was affected by some sounds from foreign languages because of language contact which took place at different times and in different places.

Based on the data in this study, one can see that the Kinyarwanda sound system started changing with the borrowing of some words that it did not have in order to express new concepts. It also acquired new sounds from its neighbouring languages that a number of its speakers had learnt when they were abroad. This is proven in the data when one looks at the linguistic variables by age groups. My assumption in chapter 1 was that the sound change in Kinyarwanda could be attributed to language contact since some members of this speech community were more exposed to foreign languages whose sounds may have affected Kinyarwanda sound system. Given this assumption, I compared different counts of occurrences of sounds' variants by age groups in order to see which speakers have more variation in order to determine the reason for sound change. The chart below presents the frequency of the use of the target sounds (named 'standard sounds' in the chart) by age groups[9].

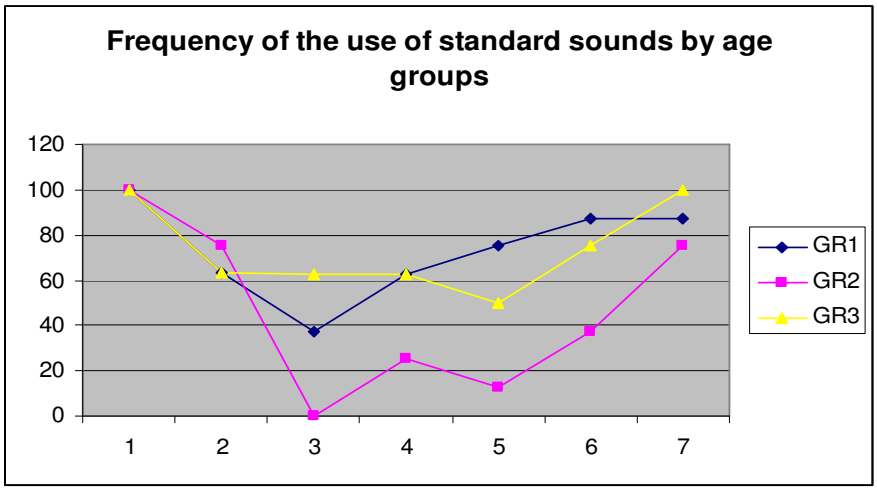


Figure 2: Frequency of the use of standard sounds by age groups[10]

[9] The standard sounds in this discussion are the first variants of the variables.

[10] The numbers on the category axis in figures 2, 3, 4 and 5 stand for 7 variables: 1 = /r/; 2 = /kj/; 3 = /ʃˇ/; 4 = /gj/; 5 = ngj; 6 = /rgw/; 7 = /z/. Variables are marked by points and lines are used to show the general frequency of occurrences in age groups.

The chart in figure 2 shows that most standard sounds are used in GR1 and GR3. The line for GR2 indicates a lower frequency of use of standard sounds. This is not surprising because most speakers in this age group are those who were born out of Rwanda and were exposed to foreign languages which interfere with Kinyarwanda in their speech. The higher frequencies in GR1 and GR3 indicate that most people in these age groups have good mastery of Kinyarwanda since they had more chance of acquiring their L1 in Rwanda. It should be pointed out that speakers in GR1 were born in Rwanda and have had opportunities of studying in Kinyarwanda while at primary school. Their speech is not greatly influenced by foreign sounds. One can also add that, with schooling, many children, even those whose parents are not proficient in Kinyarwanda, have made a lot of progress and their language sounds far different from their parents'. This kind of progress can easily be seen in figure 3 below where the data display a lower frequency of the use of variants of standard sounds by GR1. It should be noted that *variants of standard sounds* here refer to the *second variants* of variables.

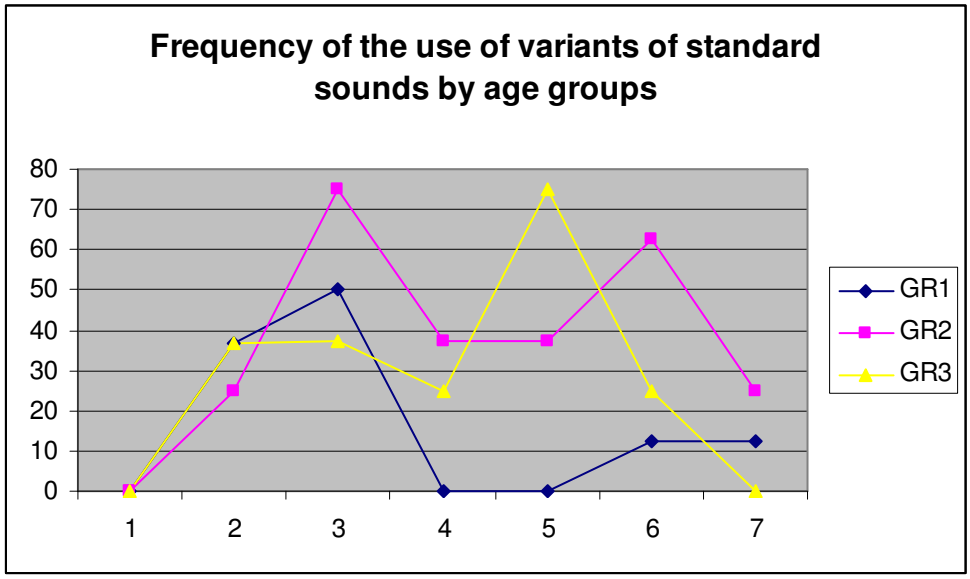


Figure 3: Frequency of the use of variants of standard sounds by age groups.

This chart shows how age groups differ in their use of variants of the standard sounds due to language contact. One can realize that GR2 has the highest frequency of use of

variants. This means that there are more changes of the standard sounds than are found in GR1 and GR3. As previously mentioned (see figure 2), GR2 is the most affected by sound change because of the languages the subjects in this group were exposed to. It can also be observed that fewer variations of the standard sounds are found among GR1 subjects.

As for language background, the counts of the sounds and their variants in chapter 4 are illustrated in figure 4 and figure 5 below.

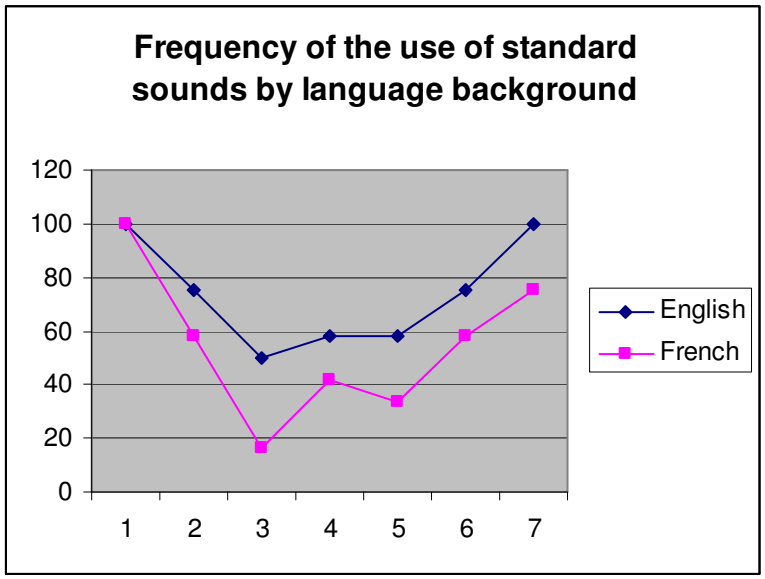


Figure 4: Frequency of the use of standard sounds by language background.

We can observe from the chart above that the subjects with an English background use more standard sounds than those with a French language background. This is shown by the fact that the line indicating the frequency of the use of standard sounds by English-speaking subjects is higher than that for French-speaking subjects from the first sound to the last. The use of less standard sounds by subjects with a French language background can also be seen in the chart illustrating the use of the variants of the standard sounds in figure 5.

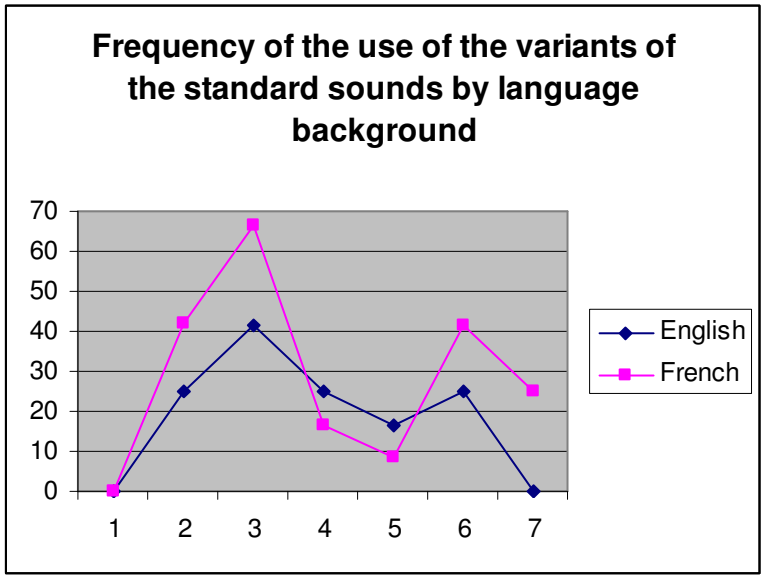


Figure 5: Frequency of the use of the variants of the standard sounds by language background.

The chart above shows that most variation is found among subjects with a French language background whose line of variants is generally higher than that for English-speaking subjects. A comparison of figure 4 and figure 5 reveals that there are more features of sound change among the French-speaking subjects than there are among the English-speaking subjects. I would attribute this phenomenon to the level of exposure of the subjects to the external languages with sound features that are somewhat related to those in Kinyarwanda. In other words, there are some sounds like [kj] and [tʃ], [ʃˇ] and [ʃ] which, in Kinyarwanda, make minimal pairs as in [umukjo] 'brightness' and [umutʃo] 'culture', [iʃˇira] 'rabbit tail' and [iʃira] 'end' respectively. These pairs of words are pronounced similarly by some speakers who use [tʃ] for both [umukjo] and [umutʃo] pronouncing both [umutʃo] or [ʃ] for both [iʃˇira] and [iʃira] pronouncing both [iʃira]. One would argue here that these speakers are influenced by other languages that they can speak especially Kirundi and Kiswahili which only have one variant for each pair, [tʃ] and [ʃ] respectively. This reflects an instance of sound transfer due to the previous knowledge in other languages that the French-speaking subjects can speak.

One striking observation is that the data in chapter 4 shows that most French-speaking subjects acquired Kinyarwanda in Rwanda, when they were children. They also claim that the language they spoke most frequently and feel that is easier for them is Kinyarwanda while for English-speaking subjects, their majority claim to have learnt Kinyarwanda as adults, when they were abroad, and state that the language which they speak most frequently and that is easier for them is English (see tables 2, 3, 4, 5). Given this observation, one would expect the French-speaking subjects to produce more standard sounds than the English-speaking subjects since the former were apparently better exposed to Kinyarwanda than the latter. The argument previously given can explain the reason for this anomaly. In addition to that, one can assert that English and Luganda, languages which English-speaking subjects claim to have grown up speaking, did not affect Kinyarwanda at the same level as French and its local language partners did.

5.3 Language attitudes and sound change

This section focuses on the Kinyarwanda speakers' attitudes towards the Kinyarwanda sound change. It discusses people's feelings about sound variation in Kinyarwanda and possible reasons for that change.

Based on the data in chapter 4, I found the subjects' answers extremely revealing on the level of sound change of Kinyarwanda. What is strikingly clear from the answers is the subjects' awareness of sound variation in the Kinyarwanda spoken by various speakers. It is apparent that Kinyarwanda speakers notice when their interlocutors are using different sounds from theirs. This has become evident in the Kinyawanda speech community where some people are named for example 'Anglophone from Uganda' or 'Francophone from Burundi' or 'Francophone from Congo' simply because of the variants in their Kinyarwanda. It is well recognized that, except for some instances of the regional dialects

due to geographical language influences[11], there are variants such as [tʃ] for [kj], [dz] for [z] and [ʃ] for [ʃˇ] that are typically Kirundi variants.
This makes the Kinyarwanda speakers with the variants [kj], [z] and [ʃˇ] respectively to name their interlocutors with [tʃ], [dz] and [ʃ] as 'Francophones from Burundi', while the latter also call the former 'Francophones from Rwanda'.

Particularly interesting in attitudes towards sound change is that both French-speaking subjects and English-speaking subjects are aware that the Kinyarwanda sound system has changed because of a variety of sounds from different languages and areas. This is also evident in age groups where younger generations (GR1 and GR2) and older generation (GR3) are all aware of the sound variation in Kinyarwanda. This is a very important aspect of attitudes because it helps the members of the speech community who have not yet fossilized their language to improve their ways of speaking or follow the language planners' instructions related to the standard version of the language in the country.

Equally surprising was the fact that subjects who have had a lot of exposure to Kinyarwanda and others who have had a little were all motivated to speak Kinyarwanda despite some difficulties of expression in the language. The sample for this study showed that even those speakers who were less proficient in Kinyarwanda tried to code-switch or code-mix with the languages they were familiar with but managed to hold a three to five minute long talk. In terms of attitudes, such speakers are also aware of their weakness in handling a speech in Kinyarwanda and feel apologetic about that. But very importantly, the hearers of this category of speakers judge them not by their production of code-switching or code-mixes but by their variants in the few words they can use in Kinyarwanda. This is often seen in the corrections that some people do when they are listening or talking to a speaker who is not proficient in Kinyarwanda. They tend to correct some sounds as if they were teaching that person the correct version of the variant badly used.

[11] Note that due to the present research site, regional dialects were not considered.

5.4 Summary

This chapter dealt with multilingualism and attitudes towards Kinyarwanda sound change. It described the type of multilingualism that is the case in Rwanda and showed when and how this started as the country's official language policy. It also tackled the speakers' attitudes towards the Kinyarwanda sound change and showed that most Kinyarwanda speakers with French and English background in all age groups are aware of the sound variation of Kinyarwanda.

Chapter 6: Kinyarwanda sound change and standardization perspectives

6.0 Introduction

In this chapter, I present an overview of the Kinyarwanda sound change, highlighting the extent to which this sound change has occurred in the Kinyarwanda speech community. In particular, I propose some possible ways of standardizing the Kinyarwanda sound system, taking into account the type of multilingualism that is found in Rwandan society.

6.1 Perceptions on the Kinyarwanda sound change

As previously discussed in chapters 4 and 5, the rush of various linguistic features into the Kinyarwanda speech community after 1994 has impacted on the sound system of this language. One would argue that there have been various instances of shifts in use of variants that can be described in three sound categories:

The first category is the instance of variants like [kj] [tʃ], [ʃˇ] [ʃ] and [rgw] [gw], which make minimal pairs in Kinyarwanda (see section 5.2). Although these pairs of variants are also phonemes or clusters of phonemes in Kinyarwanda, this study showed that each pair includes variants of the same variable. In this case, the speakers who use the variant [ʃ] for the variable /ʃˇ/, for instance, cannot distinguish between the sounds in words such as [iʃˇira] 'rabbit tail' and [iʃira] 'end' because they pronounce both words [iʃira], which may complicate the hearer's understanding of the meaning of the word if it is not placed in a clear context. It should be noted here that this phenomenon has become normal and accepted in the speech community though each variant has its own orthographic spelling different from its counterpart. As far as variables for this sound category are concerned, one would say that they underwent split, that is, an increase in the number of sounds since a single sound yielded two sounds (Campbell 1998).

The second sound category is the instance of variants like [ngj] [nd͡ʒ], [gj] [d͡ʒ] and [z] [dz]. These sounds do not make minimal pairs in Kinyarwanda because this language has only [ngj], [gj] and [z] as phonemes or clusters of phonemes. The data showed that the variants [nd͡ʒ], [d͡ʒ] and [dz] are mostly found among the French-speaking subjects, and particularly originate from languages neighbouring Kinyarwanda, namely Kirundi and Kiswahili. In fact, this phenomenon can be attributed to interference of one language with another, more specifically, to the phenomenon that Weinreich (1968) calls 'sound substitution' (see 2.3). It is also worth mentioning that speakers who say that they use the "right" variants [ngj], [gj] and [z] believe that [nd͡ʒ], [d͡ʒ] and [dz] are not Kinyarwanda sounds. This is mainly found in older generation, where some old people are surprised by those sounds which were unfamiliar in Kinyarwanda before the rush of foreign language features into Kinyarwanda and call that '*the language of the youth*'.

The third sound category is the merger of [r] and [l]. It is believed that this merger has been both linguistic (it occurred because of borrowing) and political (it was established by political authorities, i.e., language planners). Campbell (1998:60) would qualify this as 'direct phonological diffusion', a phenomenon which affects the phonemic system of the recipient language by introducing new phonemes or new sound environments into a language which borrows words from another language. What happens in this case is that borrowed words bring new sounds or environments which did not exist in the recipient language, and they become a part of that language because of language contact situations. For example Kinyarwanda obtained new /r/ environments, i.e., /r/ before /i/ and /e/ because of contact with French. These new environments of /r/ were brought into Kinyarwanda by borrowed words such as [ikarita] from the French word *carte* 'card' or [repubulika] from *République* 'Republic'(see also section 4.4.1). This phenomenon made the former Kinyarwanda phoneme /l/ shift from its previous use as a phoneme to become an allophone of /r/ only in the situations issued in the 1985 ministerial instructions on the Kinyarwanda phonemes and orthography (see section 4.4.1).

Based on the findings in chapter 4 and discussion of the data in chapter 5, one can assert that the Kinyarwanda sound system has undergone variation due to language contact. As

discussed earlier in this section, there have been instances of split, merger, phonological diffusion and sound substitution which impacted on the sound system of Kinyarwanda. In other words, with multilingualism and intensity of language contact in Rwanda after 1994, Kinyarwanda acquired new sounds such as [nd͡ʒ], [d͡ʒ] and [dz] which are found in languages such as Kiswahili, English and Kirundi, languages that are also spoken by some members of the Kinyarwanda speech community. Although these sounds are not yet recognized as phonemes of Kinyarwanda, they have become prominent in current speech to the extent that they seem to be taken as phonemes.

In brief, this study found that there have been shifts in the sound system of Kinyarwanda post-1994. It has been shown that some variants were modified or shifted to other sounds which exist in neighboring languages because of contact. In addition to that, it has been argued that this sound variation has been made possible mainly because Kinyarwanda got into contact with other languages which have different sound systems.

6.2 Standardization perspectives

In a situation such as that of Kinyarwanda where a language has acquired different sound varieties from different sources, it is of paramount importance to avoid the chaos by looking at how that language sound system can be standardized. Standardized language in this discussion will be taken as a "codified form of a language, accepted by, and serving as a model to, a larger speech community" (Garvin and Mathiot 1960:783).

As mentioned in section 2.9, standardization processes go hand in hand with the speakers' attitudes towards the use of their language. In other words, a codified standard language should be that correct usage that has also been accepted within a speech community. It is in this way that Kinyarwanda language planners should choose certain Kinyarwanda sound varieties and promote them as being the norm. This can be done following some recommendations that I propose in order to have the Kinyarwanda sound system restored to its real status.

First, the fact that, in Kinyarwanda, some instances of two variants of the same variable are both phonemes in this language indicates that there are members of the speech community who have not grasped the sound system of Kinyarwanda correctly. This should urge the language planners to review the ways of teaching the sounds of this language that are not confusing the learners who commit errors owing to the influence of the previously learnt languages. For instance, in the case of [kj] and [tʃ], which are both pronounced [tʃ] in some people's speech, it should be emphasized that these are sounds which cannot occur in complementary distribution since they distinguish [umukjo] 'brightness' from [umutʃo] 'culture' and therefore both should be taught as distinct sounds.

Second, there should be a review of the Kinyarwanda phonemes based on how sounds behave in that language. It has been realized that a sound can occur in different environments which do not have similar spellings. According to the current spelling of Kinyarwanda, for example, the sound [gj] in the word [igji] 'egg' can have two possible orthographic spellings based on the [gj] environments (see section 4.4.4), 'igi' and 'ijyi'. This often confuses the learners of Kinyarwanda, who might write 'ijyi' and pronounce it as [idʒi] referring to their knowledge of the other languages, while the only accepted Kinyarwanda spelling of the same word is 'igi', which is pronounced [igji]. For this reason, there should be a synchronization of Kinyarwanda sounds and standard orthography to avoid any confusion which may lead learners to a trial and error pronunciation of the sounds they have not been well taught.

Third, there should be a standardized program of teaching about Kinyarwanda phonemes and allophones, and their standard orthography at school. This will help speakers who use foreign sound features to use the correct and accepted sounds in Kinyarwanda.

Forth, given the fact that the language planners are tasked with the management of multilingualism, they should be publishing and distributing rules related to approved use of phonemes and clusters of phonemes in Kinyarwanda. This would show approved

borrowed sounds, and new words and their sounds, in order to fill the gaps which may be due to the mismatches of languages in multilingual situations.

Fifth, since nothing can be done out of the language which is, itself, the mirror of all progressive or regressive changes, language planners should encourage and support research on language variation, dialectal and historical studies on Kinyarwanda in order to help them know which decisions on language management they have to take. In the direction of the present study, it is worth conducting an extensive study on sound variation in the widest area where Kinyarwanda, its regional dialects and neighboring languages are spoken. This would yield more data and clarifications on the extent to which the Kinyarwanda sound system has changed to give a way to appropriate and updated language policy.

6.3 Summary

This chapter focused on Kinyarwanda sound variation that has arisen due to language contact. It showed the extent to which this variation has occurred in the language by indicating the processes of change that have taken place namely split, sound substitution and merger. It also came up with some recommendations for the standardization of the Kinyarwanda sound system.

Chapter 7: General summary and conclusion

This research report has dealt with multilingualism and phonological change in the Kinyarwanda sound system, focusing on the post-1994 language situation in Rwanda. The whole work comprised seven main chapters: The first chapter introduced the reader to the subject which shed lights on the motivation for the research, and its background, aims and rationale. The second chapter was an overview of the literature on multilingualism, sociolinguistic position of sound change, language attitudes in multilingual societies and other useful points for the analysis of the data for this study such as transfer, interference, diglossia, language maintenance and shift. The third chapter focused on the methodology used in this research. The fourth chapter was a presentation of the findings and analytical discussion of the data. The fifth chapter was about multilingualism and attitudes towards Kinyarwanda sound change. The sixth chapter dealt with perceptions on the major issues of the findings and yielded recommendations for the Kinyarwanda sound system standardization. The seventh and last chapter summarized and concluded the whole work.

Throughout this research, I was mainly concerned with sound change as a result of language contact that gave a way to multilingualism as an official language policy in Rwanda. This research was carried out as a pilot study whose subjects were members of the Kinyarwanda speech community in South Africa. The nature of the data for the present study was speech data backed up by questionnaires. I selected the sample population for this research taking into account three main factors namely age group, gender and language background. I recorded speech data and collected questionnaires from 24 members of the Kinyarwanda speech community who had spent less than six months in South Africa.

The data were analyzed in the framework of the literature review. This latter discussed issues related to multilingualism, language policy and planning, language variation and sound change. The review of this literature served to explain and match the data with

established theories in sociolinguistics in order to enable the researcher to come up with reliable academic and scientific results.

The findings from the interview and questionnaire's data indicated that the Kinyarwanda sound system has accommodated varied sound features from foreign languages that are also spoken by members of the Rwandan community. This was especially due to the fact that a number of Kinyarwanda speakers were also exposed to a multitude of foreign languages that they were required to learn for survival in exile. It was also shown that, due to unfavorable conditions of learning, Kinyarwanda was not always the first language learnt, which impacted on the individual's language proficiency.

With regard to attitudes towards multilingualism and the Kinyarwanda sound system, this study showed that most respondents believe that Kinyarwanda underwent sound variation due to language contact. This was proven by the respondents' answers showing that Kinyarwanda speakers can recognize where their interlocutors grew up by merely listening to their speech sounds.

As for perceptions on Kinyarwanda sound change, this study highlighted that the changes which occurred in the Kinyarwanda sound system are instances of split, sound substitution and merger. It was found that the intensity of varied sound features from external languages are the major factors to the current sound variation in Kinyarwanda, and was suggested that language planners should embark on the processes of standardization which would favour the speakers' attitudes regarding the choice of the correct and accepted sounds in Kinyarwanda. It was also proposed that there should be a general review of the Kinyarwanda phonemes which would be published and taught at school. A further suggestion that was given is related to the encouragement and support of research on the Kinyarwanda sound system.

Generally speaking, this study has provided information regarding multilingualism and its effects on the Kinyarwanda sound system. The focus on phonological change in this study indicated that the type of multilingualism that Rwanda has adopted as an official

language policy after 1994 deserves further follow-up measures in favour of Kinyarwanda which apparently lost its status in the flux of sound features from a number of languages that were in contact when the Rwandan population was united again after many years of separation.

Finally, this research project was limited in the sense that I worked with participants selected at random in a foreign research site, and because of the time constraints and limited financial means. A similar project could be conducted with a larger sample selected from Rwanda (the actual field). This would help the researcher take into consideration more research variables such as social classes, gender, regional dialects and so on. It would also provide the researcher with more opportunities to discover more variants for an extensive study on sound variation.

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