

**The Central Role of Political Will in Advancing Kiswahili Development in Uganda: A
Critical Analysis of Government Administrations**

by

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ABSTRACT

The development and use of Kiswahili in Uganda are shaped by the interaction of political leadership, institutional arrangements, and sociolinguistic dynamics within a multilingual postcolonial context. As a regional lingua franca within the East African Community, Kiswahili contributes to national cohesion and regional integration. However, its trajectory in Uganda remains uneven, reflecting variations in political commitment, institutional capacity, and societal acceptance across historical periods. This study examines how political leadership under Milton Obote, Idi Amin, and Yoweri Museveni has influenced the development, promotion, institutionalization, and public perception of Kiswahili in Uganda. The study adopted a qualitative historical-comparative design informed by Language Policy and Planning (LPP) and Sociolinguistics. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, documentary analysis, and archival research. Purposive sampling identified 40 key informants, including linguists, scholars, policymakers, educators, media practitioners, and language policy implementers. Data were analyzed using thematic content analysis with iterative coding. Findings indicate that Kiswahili development reflects persistent interaction among political leadership, institutional capacity, and sociolinguistic perceptions. The Obote era was characterized by weak institutionalization and limited acquisition planning, the Idi Amin period by strong but militarized promotion with restricted civilian diffusion, and the Museveni era by structured policy recognition linked to regional integration but constrained by weak implementation, particularly in education. Across regimes, military institutions show stronger uptake than civilian sectors, while historical memory continues to shape public attitudes. The study develops the Political–Institutional–Sociolinguistic (PIS) model, which explains language development as an outcome of alignment among political intentions, institutional mechanisms, and societal attitudes. Misalignment results in fragmented implementation and weak acceptance, whereas alignment fosters sustainable development. The study concludes that language outcomes depend on the interaction of structural capacity, political commitment, and sociocultural legitimacy. The PIS model provides a transferable framework for multilingual postcolonial contexts.

Keywords: Political will; Kiswahili development; language policy; Uganda, sociolinguistics, East African Community

Introduction

Language policy remains a central concern across African states due to the continent's extensive linguistic diversity and complex colonial legacies. Postcolonial governments inherited European languages such as English, French, and Portuguese as official languages of administration, while indigenous African languages were often marginalized in governance, education, and public discourse. This linguistic hierarchy has significantly shaped language planning across the continent, where language policy is closely linked to nation-building, political integration, and administrative control. Foundational scholarship on African multilingualism emphasizes that language choices in governance are never neutral, but instead reflect broader political, ideological, and historical power relations (Bamgbose, 1991; Mazrui & Mazrui, 1998; Phillipson, 1992).

Within this broader context, Kiswahili has emerged as one of the most successful African lingua francas, particularly in East Africa, where it functions as a key medium of communication across ethnolinguistic boundaries. Its historical expansion from the East African coast into the interior was shaped by trade networks, migration patterns, Islamic influence, and later colonial administrative structures (Nurse & Hinnebusch, 1993; Mazrui & Shariff, 1994). In Tanzania and Kenya, Kiswahili was institutionalized early in the post-independence period and integrated into education systems, national identity projects, and state administration, thereby strengthening its political legitimacy and sociolinguistic acceptance.

In Uganda, however, Kiswahili has followed a more uneven and contested trajectory. The language was initially introduced through colonial military and administrative structures and remained largely confined to security institutions and limited state functions, with minimal diffusion into civilian life and the education system (Ladefoged et al., 1972). Following independence, efforts to promote Kiswahili were often linked to state authority rather than broad-based community participation. During certain political periods, the language became associated with coercive forms of governance in which its use was encouraged through centralized state directives and institutional pressure rather than through participatory sociolinguistic processes.

Consequently, historical and political experiences shaped public perceptions of Kiswahili, influencing both its societal acceptance and its everyday use among Ugandans.

Since independence in 1962, Uganda's language policy landscape has been shaped by successive political regimes, each advancing distinct ideological and strategic orientations. Under Milton Obote, Kiswahili was recognized as a potential regional lingua franca but received limited institutional support due to political instability and competing linguistic priorities. A contrasting phase emerged during the regime of Idi Amin (1971–1979), when Kiswahili was actively promoted, particularly within military and administrative structures. However, the language's association with authoritarian governance during this period contributed to negative public perceptions, which undermined its broader social acceptance and long-term sociolinguistic legitimacy (Ward, 2011).

In the contemporary period, the government of Yoweri Museveni has adopted a more structured approach to the promotion of Kiswahili. Through education reforms and regional integration initiatives, particularly within the framework of the East African Community, Kiswahili has been positioned as both a tool for national cohesion and a language of regional communication. These efforts reflect a shift from earlier politically driven approaches toward policies that emphasize educational integration, regional connectivity, and socioeconomic cooperation (Ward, 2011; Ministry of Education and Sports, 2019). Despite these policy efforts, the development and institutionalization of Kiswahili in Uganda remain inconsistent. Scholarship on African language policy highlights that such outcomes are common in multilingual postcolonial contexts, where competing linguistic identities, institutional constraints, and uneven implementation shape policy success (Bamgbose, 1991; Heugh, 2015). However, much of the existing literature focuses on contexts where Kiswahili has achieved stronger institutional consolidation, particularly Kenya and Tanzania, thereby limiting comparative insight into Uganda's distinct trajectory.

Existing studies on Uganda's language policy have examined different dimensions of Kiswahili development in a fragmented manner. Early post-independence analyses focus on state-building challenges and political instability (Rupesinghe, 1989), while studies on the Idi Amin period highlight the sociopolitical consequences of Kiswahili expansion under authoritarian governance (Mutibwa, 1992). Contemporary research tends to emphasize Museveni-era reforms, particularly

within education policy and regional integration initiatives (Ward, 2011). However, these studies often treat historical, political, and sociolinguistic factors separately rather than as interconnected processes.

As a result, there remains a gap in integrated analysis that systematically connects historical trajectories, political leadership dynamics, institutional capacity, and sociolinguistic outcomes across Uganda's post-independence periods. In particular, no study has comprehensively examined how shifts in political will, governance ideology, and institutional implementation collectively shaped the development and public reception of Kiswahili across the Obote, Amin, and Museveni eras. This limits a holistic understanding of how language policy outcomes emerge from the interaction of historical memory, political authority, institutional structures, and societal attitudes.

This study addresses this gap by integrating perspectives from Language Policy and Planning and sociolinguistics within a historically grounded, leadership-centered analytical framework. Moving beyond a binary distinction between top-down and bottom-up approaches to language policy, it conceptualizes Kiswahili development in Uganda as the outcome of dynamic interactions among political authority, institutional capacity, historical memory, and societal attitudes (Heugh, 2015). By comparatively examining the administrations of Obote, Amin, and Museveni, the study demonstrates how shifts in political will, governance strategies, and ideological orientations have influenced both policy formulation and public reception of Kiswahili in Uganda.

Building on this framework, the study investigated how political leadership has shaped the development, promotion, policy direction, public perception, and institutionalization of Kiswahili in Uganda. Specifically, it is guided by the following research questions:

RQ1: How did the language policies and political orientations of the Obote, Idi Amin, and Museveni administrations differ in shaping the development of Kiswahili in Uganda?

RQ2: What factors explain the gap between language policy intentions and their practical implementation across the three political regimes?

RQ3: How have historical experiences and political memory influenced contemporary public perceptions and attitudes toward Kiswahili in Uganda?

Literature Review

Language policy and planning in African states are deeply embedded in political history, nation-building processes, and sociocultural attitudes toward language use. In multilingual societies, language choices are rarely neutral; instead, they reflect power relations, ideological orientations, and state-building priorities. Across postcolonial Africa, colonial languages such as English continue to dominate formal domains, even as governments attempt to promote indigenous and regional languages. This coexistence has produced persistent tensions between political intentions and societal language preferences, particularly where official policies do not align with everyday language practices (Nshom & Croucher, 2024).

Within East Africa, Kiswahili has emerged as a major regional lingua franca that facilitates communication, trade, and political integration, particularly within the East African Community (EAC). Scholars of African sociolinguistics consistently emphasize that Kiswahili functions as a cross-border language that supports mobility and economic exchange across the region. Kenya and Tanzania represent relatively successful cases of Kiswahili institutionalization, where sustained political commitment has been reinforced through education systems, public administration, and strong links to national identity formation. In contrast, Uganda presents a more uneven trajectory characterized by fluctuating policy commitment, limited institutional support, and contested sociolinguistic legitimacy (Mazrui & Mazrui, 1993; Okombo, 2001; Lodhi, 1993).

Existing scholarship has examined Kiswahili in Uganda from multiple perspectives, including language policy, language attitudes, and its role in education and national development (Namyalo, 2015; Byakutaga, 2018). However, fewer studies have systematically analyzed how successive political regimes have shaped Kiswahili policy over time and how leadership decisions, institutional practices, and public attitudes have interacted across different historical periods. This gap is particularly evident in relation to the comparative language policies of the

Obote, Amin, and Museveni administrations, where shifts in political ideology and governance priorities significantly influenced the status and implementation of Kiswahili.

Some scholars argue that Kiswahili expansion in East Africa is driven not only by state policy but also by economic integration, cross-border trade, and labour mobility. From this perspective, Kiswahili functions as a pragmatic language of commerce that spreads through regional interaction, particularly within the East African Community, where economic exchange generates demand for a shared linguistic medium. While this market-driven explanation is important, the Ugandan case suggests that economic utility alone does not fully explain patterns of language institutionalization. Government decisions regarding curriculum design, teacher deployment, and administrative language use remain central in determining the extent to which Kiswahili is adopted and sustained in formal domains.

Language policy in Africa is also shaped by colonial legacies that established enduring hierarchies among languages. Colonial administrations institutionalized European languages as the dominant mediums of governance, education, and socioeconomic mobility, thereby linking language proficiency to access to power and opportunity (Mazrui & Mazrui, 1993). In the postcolonial period, many states retained these languages to ensure administrative continuity and manage linguistic diversity. As a result, language planning in Africa has remained closely tied to political authority and development ideology rather than functioning as a purely technical exercise.

Uganda's language situation reflects this broader colonial inheritance. Kiswahili's early development in Uganda is closely associated with colonial military institutions such as the King's African Rifles, where it functioned as a practical lingua franca among ethnically diverse recruits. However, colonial authorities simultaneously elevated English as the primary language of administration and education, restricting Kiswahili to limited functional domains. This historical positioning contributed to long-term language hierarchies in which English became associated with prestige and socioeconomic advancement, while Kiswahili remained secondary in formal institutional settings.

Although earlier studies acknowledge the colonial origins of Kiswahili in Uganda, fewer have examined how these historical processes continue to shape contemporary language attitudes and policy outcomes. From a language planning perspective, colonial language policies functioned as early status planning mechanisms that privileged English and constrained the institutional expansion of Kiswahili. Consequently, post-independence governments inherited a linguistic system in which efforts to promote Kiswahili must contend with deeply embedded ideological associations linking language to identity, authority, and social mobility.

The trajectories of language policy implementation across Africa have varied considerably, reflecting differences in political leadership, institutional capacity, and national development priorities. Within East Africa, Kiswahili has emerged as a major regional lingua franca that facilitates communication, trade, and regional integration, particularly within the East African Community. African sociolinguistic scholarship consistently demonstrates that Kiswahili functions as a key cross-border language supporting mobility, economic exchange, and political cooperation across the region (Mutasa, 2006; Okombo, 2001). Kenya and Tanzania are frequently cited as successful cases of language planning, where sustained political commitment has been reinforced through education systems, public administration, and national identity formation. These experiences show that language institutionalization depends less on formal policy declarations and more on long-term political support, institutional continuity, and consistent implementation across key societal domains.

Uganda presents a more complex and contested trajectory of Kiswahili development shaped by shifting political regimes and uneven institutional support. During the Milton Obote administration, policymakers viewed Kiswahili as a potential instrument for national unity in a linguistically diverse society. However, political instability, ethnic sensitivities, and weak institutional capacity limited effective implementation, demonstrating that political endorsement alone does not guarantee successful language policy outcomes (Derhemi & Moseley, 2023). As a result, Kiswahili remained peripheral in formal domains despite its perceived unifying potential.

A markedly different approach emerged during the Idi Amin regime, which introduced a form of state-driven language promotion that strongly elevated Kiswahili within military and administrative structures. This period reflects what can be described as coercive language

institutionalization. Although Kiswahili gained unprecedented official visibility during this period, its association with military governance and coercive authority undermined its sociolinguistic legitimacy. Consequently, the language developed strong negative perceptions among segments of the population, limiting its acceptance in post-Amin Uganda and affecting its long-term institutional trajectory.

Under the Yoweri Museveni administration, Kiswahili has been reintroduced as both a nation-building instrument and a strategic language for regional integration. Policy reforms promoting Kiswahili in education, security institutions, and public communication reflect renewed efforts in both status and acquisition planning (Coelho & Steinhagen, 2022). However, implementation has remained inconsistent due to limited instructional resources, competing curriculum demands, and institutional constraints within the education sector. These challenges illustrate the gap between policy intent and practical execution in language planning processes.

Comparative analysis across the three regimes demonstrates that Kiswahili policy outcomes in Uganda are shaped not only by political leadership but also by the interaction between institutional capacity and societal attitudes. Effective language institutionalization requires alignment between state policy, educational infrastructure, and public acceptance (Makonye & Ndlovu, 2023). Without such alignment, even politically supported language policies struggle to achieve long-term sustainability.

Although scholarship on Kiswahili in Uganda has expanded to include studies on language attitudes, policy implementation, and educational usage (Namyalo, 2015; Byakutaga, 2018), relatively limited attention has been given to how successive political regimes collectively shaped the historical trajectory of Kiswahili language planning. In particular, there remains a gap in understanding how political transitions, institutional reforms, and shifting public perceptions interact over time to influence the status and functionality of Kiswahili within Uganda's multilingual environment.

Beyond political and institutional considerations, language planning outcomes are strongly shaped by sociolinguistic attitudes, ideological orientations, and everyday language practices. In multilingual societies, language policies often encounter resistance when promoted languages are

perceived as lacking cultural legitimacy, economic utility, or social prestige. The coexistence of colonial languages such as English alongside indigenous and regional languages frequently generates structural tensions between state language objectives and public language preferences. As a result, successful language planning depends not only on formal policy enactment but also on societal acceptance, symbolic value, and alignment with communicative realities in everyday life (Bamgbose, 2000; Blommaert, 2005).

Uganda reflects these broader sociolinguistic dynamics. The barriers facing Kiswahili today are deeply rooted in historical experiences that have shaped public perceptions over time. Although Kiswahili initially entered Uganda through colonial military institutions such as the King's African Rifles, its association with state authority intensified during the Idi Amin period, when the language was strongly promoted through coercive state structures. This period contributed to enduring symbolic associations between Kiswahili, military power, and authoritarian governance. Consequently, negative attitudes formed during this era have persisted, complicating later efforts to reframe Kiswahili as a neutral language of national unity and regional integration (Mazrui & Mazrui, 1993).

These historical perceptions continue to influence contemporary language practices and policy outcomes. Despite renewed policy attention in subsequent administrations, Kiswahili continues to face sociolinguistic resistance rooted in identity politics, historical memory, and perceptions of socioeconomic value. Public uptake of the language has often lagged behind official policy directives, creating a persistent gap between formal recognition and everyday usage. This indicates that language institutionalization depends not only on policy declaration but also on whether language policies resonate with lived experiences and social identities.

Educational constraints further reinforce these barriers. Uganda continues to face shortages of qualified Kiswahili teachers, limited instructional materials, and uneven curriculum implementation. At the same time, English maintains its dominance in education, employment, and governance, reinforcing established linguistic hierarchies that privilege colonial languages over African lingua francas (Bamgbose, 2000). These structural conditions weaken acquisition planning efforts and limit opportunities for sustained language competence development across generations.

While sociolinguistic and institutional barriers explain much of Kiswahili's uneven development, alternative perspectives emphasize economic drivers of language spread. From this viewpoint, languages expand primarily when they provide tangible socioeconomic benefits, including access to employment, trade networks, labour mobility, and regional markets. The increasing importance of Kiswahili in East African trade and integration initiatives suggests that economic utility may encourage language adoption even in contexts where state support is weak (Okombo, 2001). However, the Ugandan case demonstrates that economic incentives alone are insufficient when institutional support and social legitimacy are weak.

Instead, economic utility interacts with political and institutional conditions rather than operating independently. Despite potential economic advantages associated with Kiswahili within the East African Community, its adoption remains uneven in Uganda due to weak implementation structures, limited educational capacity, and persistent negative attitudes. This indicates that successful language institutionalization requires a combination of economic relevance, political commitment, institutional support, and sociocultural acceptance.

Taken together, the literature shows that Kiswahili development in Uganda is shaped by the interaction of colonial legacies, regime-specific language policies, sociolinguistic attitudes, institutional capacity, and economic considerations. However, existing scholarship rarely examines how these factors interact across different political eras to shape long-term language planning outcomes. This study addresses this gap by offering a historically grounded and regime-centred analysis of Kiswahili development under Milton Obote, Idi Amin, and Yoweri Museveni, focusing on how political authority, institutional practice, public perception, and socioeconomic forces collectively influence language policy outcomes in Uganda.

Methodology and Design

This study adopted a qualitative-dominant mixed-method research methodology and a historical-comparative research design to examine the influence of political leadership on the development of Kiswahili in Uganda. The qualitative approach enabled an in-depth exploration of stakeholders' experiences, perceptions, and interpretations regarding the relationship between political will and language development (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The historical-comparative

design facilitated a systematic analysis of how successive political administrations shaped language policy formulation, institutional implementation, and public perceptions of Kiswahili over time (Mahoney & Rueschemeyer, 2003).

The study focused on three major political administrations in Uganda: those of Milton Obote, Idi Amin, and Yoweri Museveni. These administrations were purposively selected because they represent distinct political ideologies, governance approaches, and language policy orientations. Their examination provided a comparative framework for identifying continuities and shifts in governmental commitment to Kiswahili development. By integrating historical analysis with qualitative inquiry, the study assessed how variations in political support, policy prioritization, and institutional commitment influenced the status and development of Kiswahili in Uganda (Lisanza & Muaka, 2024).

Sample Size Determination

The target population comprised key stakeholders directly involved in, or possessing substantial knowledge of, Kiswahili development in Uganda. These included linguists, Kiswahili scholars, historians, policymakers, educators, media practitioners, and language policy implementers. Given the qualitative dominance of the study, purposive sampling was employed to identify information-rich participants with relevant expertise and experience.

Specific inclusion criteria were established to ensure the selection of participants with demonstrable knowledge of Kiswahili development. Linguists and Kiswahili scholars were required to hold at least a master's degree in linguistics, Kiswahili studies, or a related field, with a minimum of five years of academic or research experience. Historians required at least five years of documented research or teaching experience in Ugandan political, cultural, or linguistic history. Policymakers and language policy implementers were required to have direct involvement in language-related policy formulation or implementation at institutional or national level. Educators required a minimum of five years of Kiswahili teaching experience, while media practitioners required at least three years of professional experience producing Kiswahili-related content.

Exclusion criteria included individuals with less than three years of relevant professional experience, those without direct engagement in Kiswahili-related activities, and individuals unable to provide informed perspectives on language policy and political influences.

A total of 40 participants were purposively selected. This sample size was considered adequate to ensure diversity across stakeholder categories and to achieve thematic saturation in qualitative inquiry, where no substantially new themes emerged from the data.

Data Collection and Sampling Procedure

To ensure methodological triangulation, the study employed two complementary data sources: semi-structured interviews and a brief structured survey, alongside secondary documentary analysis.

Semi-Structured Interviews

Primary qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews with the 40 purposively selected participants representing linguists, Kiswahili scholars, historians, policymakers, educators, media practitioners, and language policy implementers. Semi-structured interviews allowed participants to express their experiences and interpretations while enabling the researcher to probe emerging issues in depth (Whiteley, 2023).

Interviews were conducted in professional settings convenient to participants, including offices and educational institutions, ensuring privacy and minimal disruption. Each interview lasted between 45 and 90 minutes. With informed consent, interviews were audio-recorded where permitted and later transcribed verbatim. In cases where recording was declined, detailed field notes were taken during and immediately after the interviews.

Structured Survey

In addition to interviews, a brief structured questionnaire was administered to the same 40 participants to complement and triangulate qualitative findings. The questionnaire was self-administered or interviewer-assisted depending on participant preference and contained closed-ended Likert-scale items addressing key issues such as political commitment to Kiswahili, policy

consistency across administrations, and institutional support for language development. The instrument was administered after the interviews, allowing participants to reflect on issues raised during the qualitative discussions.

Responses were coded and analysed using descriptive statistics, specifically frequencies and percentages, to summarise patterns in stakeholder perceptions. The survey findings were not intended for statistical generalisation but rather to complement qualitative data by identifying areas of convergence and divergence with interview themes. This integration enhanced the credibility and robustness of the study through methodological triangulation.

Documentary Review

Secondary data were obtained from policy documents, historical records, government reports, academic publications, and institutional archives related to language policy and Kiswahili development in Uganda. These documents provided historical context and supported comparative analysis across the three political administrations.

Justification of the Mixed-Method Integration

The integration of qualitative interviews, a structured survey, and documentary analysis strengthened the study through methodological triangulation. While the qualitative interviews provided depth and interpretive richness, the structured survey offered a structured overview of stakeholder perceptions, and documentary sources provided historical verification. Together, these approaches enhanced the credibility, dependability, and trustworthiness of the findings while maintaining a qualitative-dominant orientation consistent with the historical-comparative design.

Each interview generated rich qualitative data concerning policy processes, institutional support, historical influences, and challenges affecting Kiswahili development. Secondary data were obtained from government policy documents, legislative records, historical archives, academic publications, and reports related to language policy and Kiswahili development in Uganda.

Data collection continued until thematic saturation was achieved, ensuring that the information gathered was sufficiently rich and comprehensive to address the study objectives. The integration of multiple data sources and the purposive selection of participants from diverse stakeholder categories facilitated methodological triangulation and enhanced the credibility and robustness of the study findings.

The researcher's positionality was considered throughout the study due to its focus on Kiswahili language policy and political developments in Uganda. The author's engagement with language policy scholarship in the East African context and training in sociolinguistics informed an interpretive stance toward the data. This positionality may have shaped interpretation of language policy and political processes; however, efforts were made to minimize bias through systematic coding, sustained engagement with the data, and peer debriefing with an experienced qualitative researcher. Reflexive memoing was used during analysis to record emerging interpretations and consider alternative explanations. This reflexive practice enhanced transparency and supported a more critically grounded interpretation of the findings.

Theoretical Framework

The study is grounded in Language Policy and Planning (LPP) and informed by Sociolinguistics. LPP provides an analytical lens through its three core dimensions:

- **Status planning:** the allocation of functions and official recognition of Kiswahili
- **Corpus planning:** the development and standardization of the language
- **Acquisition planning:** the promotion of Kiswahili through education and institutional systems

These are complemented by sociolinguistic perspectives that emphasize the role of power, ideology, and historical memory in shaping language attitudes and usage (Blommaert, 2005; Makoni & Pennycook, 2007). The integration of these frameworks enables a multidimensional analysis linking political authority, institutional processes, and societal responses.

Data Sources

To ensure analytical depth and triangulation, the study draws on both primary and secondary qualitative data. Primary data were collected through 40 representatives were engaged into the study. These were scientifically selected and semi-structured interviews with purposively used to the key informants, including linguists, Kiswahili scholars, and historians, policymakers, educators, and media practitioners (Whiteley, 2023). Participants were selected based on their expertise in language policy, education, and Ugandan political history.

Secondary data were obtained from documentary and archival sources, including:

- Government policy documents and white papers
- Parliamentary debates and legislative records
- National education curricula and syllabi
- Presidential speeches and official statements
- Ministerial reports (e.g., education, culture, and defense)
- Colonial administrative records and post-independence archives
- Military documents, particularly from the Amin period
- Newspaper archives and media publications
- Historical correspondences and reports

These sources provided comprehensive evidence for examining language policy development, institutional practices, and historical shifts in Kiswahili usage.

Data Collection Procedures

Data collection followed a systematic and theory-informed approach. Semi-structured interview guides were developed based on LPP and sociolinguistic frameworks, focusing on (Issel-Dombert, 2025):

- Language policy decisions and implementation (status planning)
- Educational integration and institutional support (acquisition planning)
- Language development and standardization (corpus planning)

- Political ideologies and narratives surrounding Kiswahili
- Public attitudes and identity-related dimensions

To enhance efficiency and maintain analytical rigor, a hybrid data collection strategy was employed, including selective transcription of key segment. The structured note-taking, post-interview audio summaries and thematic extraction matrices aligned with the study's analytical framework (Gomez & Carriedo, 2024).

Documentary and archival materials were systematically identified and analyzed using predefined criteria of relevance, credibility, and historical significance, particularly in relation to the three political regimes.

Data Analysis

Data analysis used thematic content analysis within a theoretically informed comparative framework. The researcher organized and coded all interview transcripts, policy documents, and archival records iteratively. The coding process relied on manual procedures and involved repeated reading and comparison of data sources to identify patterns, themes, and relationships.

To enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings, an experienced researcher participated in regular peer debriefing sessions and reviewed the coding structure, thematic interpretations, and analytical decisions. These sessions strengthened analytical validity by challenging assumptions, identifying potential researcher bias, and ensuring that interpretations remained grounded in the data. The researcher incorporated feedback from these discussions into the refinement of codes and themes.

The analysis proceeded in three stages. First, the researcher conducted open coding to identify key concepts, recurring patterns, and emerging issues across the dataset. Second, axial coding organized related codes into broader thematic categories and established relationships among themes. Third, theoretical mapping aligned the identified themes with Language Policy and Planning (LPP) dimensions and relevant sociolinguistic constructs.

Two overarching analytical categories guided the analysis. The first category focused on Language Policy and Planning dimensions, including status planning, corpus planning, and acquisition planning. The second category addressed sociopolitical themes, including political leadership and ideology, policy formulation and implementation, institutional promotion through education, the military, and public administration, public perceptions and societal attitudes, and regional integration within the East African Community.

The study adopted a cross-regime comparative approach to identify policy continuities and discontinuities and to assess differences in leadership strategies across historical periods (Wang et al., 2024). The researcher examined changes in institutional support and public perceptions over time. This comparative framework connected macro-level political structures with language policy outcomes and broader sociocultural dynamics. To enhance credibility, the study employed data triangulation across interviews, archival materials, and policy documents (Hoang, 2025). The use of multiple data sources enabled cross-verification of findings. In addition, purposive sampling ensured that participants possessed relevant expertise, while systematic coding procedures enhanced analytical consistency and transparency.

Ethical Considerations

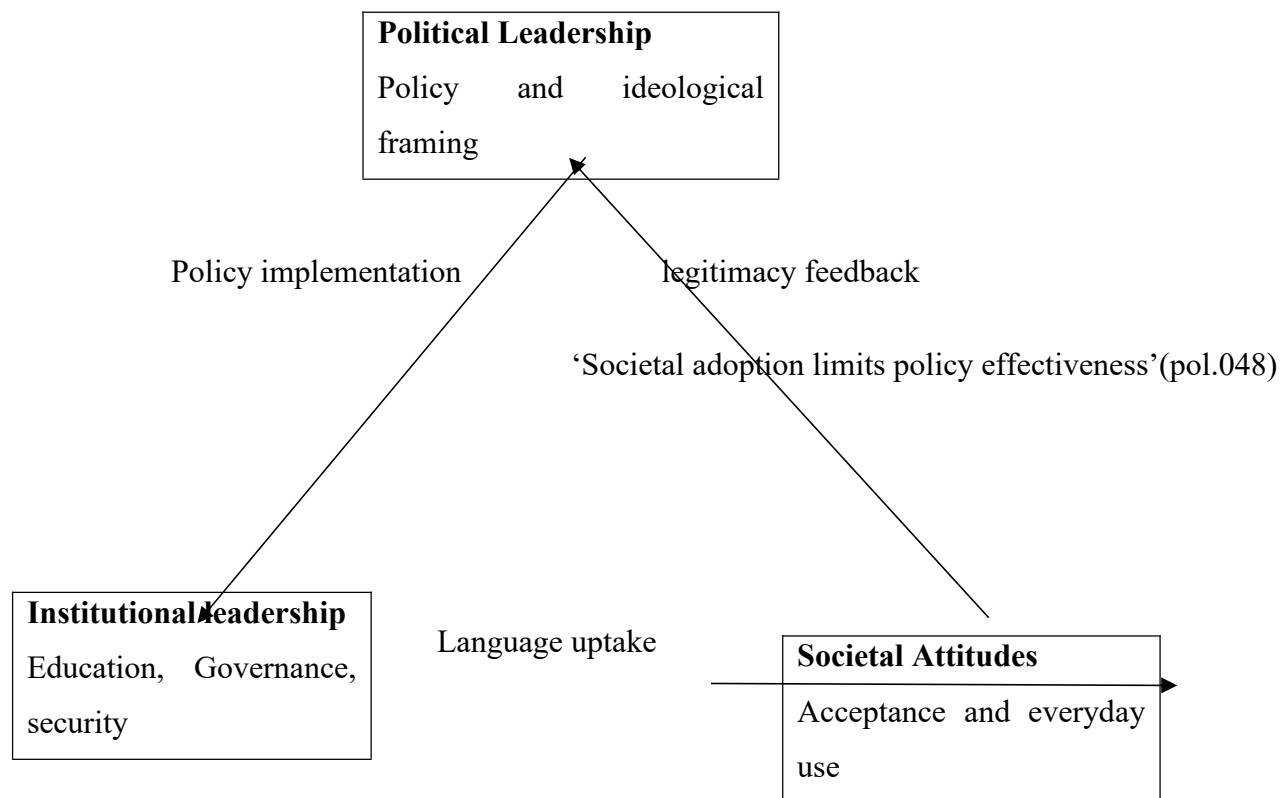
The researcher provided participants with detailed information regarding the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, their right to withdraw at any stage without penalty, and the measures in place to protect their privacy and confidentiality. Participants gave written informed consent prior to the commencement of interviews. The researcher ensured confidentiality by anonymizing participants' identities and responses during data processing, analysis, and reporting (Müller, 2023). The researcher securely stored audio recordings, transcripts, and related research materials and restricted access to these materials to themselves only. The researcher also utilized archival and documentary sources in accordance with relevant academic, legal, and institutional guidelines governing the use of secondary data.

Results

The findings indicate that political and social factors, rather than purely linguistic processes, drive the development of Kiswahili in Uganda. Across respondent groups, political leadership,

institutional capacity, and societal attitudes consistently shape its trajectory. To explain this interaction, the study proposes the Political Institutional Societal (PIS) Model, which conceptualizes language development as the outcome of interactions among political leaders, institutional systems, and societal attitudes. The model highlights why Kiswahili develops unevenly despite sustained policy attention.

The Political Institutional Societal (PIS) Model



R1: reinforcing Language development cycle.

Language development outcome in Uganda

Determined by alignment across political, institutional, and societal systems

The PIS Model conceptualizes language development as the interaction of three interdependent layers:

- i. Political leadership: directing policy and framing ideology
- ii. Institutional systems: implementing language policy through education, governance, and security structures
- iii. Societal attitudes: shaping acceptance, legitimacy, and everyday language use

A policymaker explained this interaction:

“Even when government supports Kiswahili, progress is slow if society does not fully adopt it.”
(POL-048)

The model emphasizes that language policy outcomes depend on the degree of alignment among political commitment, institutional implementation, and societal acceptance. When these dimensions reinforce one another, language development is strengthened; when they are misaligned, outcomes become fragmented and uneven.

Table 1 compares language planning across Uganda’s major political regimes.

Regime	Status Planning	Acquisition Planning	Public Reception	Key Constraints
Obote era (1962–1971)	Weak and inconsistent status allocation; English retained dominance in official domains with minimal Kiswahili	Limited institutional support for Kiswahili in education; weak curriculum integration and minimal	Low functional visibility of Kiswahili in formal schooling; perception of limited academic value persisted	Weak institutional capacity, limited policy coherence, and low resource allocation for language-in-education implementation

	elevation	classroom enforcement		
Idi Amin era (1971–1979)	Strong symbolic and functional elevation of Kiswahili, particularly as a language of military administration and national command	Minimal formal education planning despite strong state-level status promotion; acquisition remained sectorally confined	High functional acceptance within military contexts; ambivalent or limited civilian adoption outside security institutions	Militarized policy orientation, lack of civilian institutional diffusion, and weak translation into education systems
Museveni era (1986–present)	Structured policy recognition of Kiswahili linked to regional integration (EAC) and national cohesion; English remains dominant official language	Partial integration into education system (especially lower primary), but weak progression and examination dependence limits sustained acquisition	Increasing but uneven acceptance; strong use in trade and border contexts, but persistent perception of secondary academic value	Implementation gaps, limited teaching resources, examination-driven curriculum design, and uneven institutional coordination
Contemporary cross-regime pattern (synthesis)	Gradual formalization of Kiswahili within policy	Expansion in policy intent not matched by systemic	Shift from stigma to pragmatic acceptance,	Systemic policy–implementation gap, institutional asymmetry (military

	discourse but persistent dominance of English in official governance	acquisition mechanisms; weak continuity across education levels	especially in commerce and mobility contexts	vs civilian sectors), and historical memory effects on attitudes
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Source of the table

Author's construct based on comparative analysis of language policy trajectories across Uganda's political regimes (Obote, Idi Amin, and Museveni eras), synthesized from policy documents, literature review, and interview data.

Colonial Foundations of Kiswahili Development

The findings suggest that contemporary Kiswahili development cannot be understood without considering the historical foundations established during the colonial period. Respondents consistently linked present-day language attitudes and institutional practices to earlier language hierarchies in which English occupied the highest official status while Kiswahili received limited educational and administrative support.

These historical foundations contributed to the persistence of perceptions that Kiswahili possesses lower academic value than English. Teachers reported that some learners continue to view the language as less important for educational advancement:

“Some students think Kiswahili is not important academically, so they ignore it.” (TCH-031)

The findings further indicate that historical language hierarchies created long-term structural weaknesses in acquisition planning. Limited institutional investment during earlier periods contributed to enduring challenges in curriculum implementation, teacher preparation, and educational resource provision. These colonial legacies continue to influence contemporary language policy outcomes and public perceptions.

Regime-Specific Policies and Comparative Transitions

The findings indicate that distinct political orientations across successive administrations shaped Kiswahili development in different ways.

During the Obote period (1962–1971), government support for Kiswahili remained limited, particularly within education. Weak acquisition planning and minimal curriculum integration restricted the language’s institutional development and produced long-term implementation challenges.

Under Idi Amin (1971–1979), Kiswahili experienced substantial status elevation, particularly within military institutions. A military respondent explained:

“In the army, Kiswahili is the language of command. It ensures unity among soldiers.” (MIL-011)

Although Kiswahili gained strong functional status within the military, this institutionalization remained largely confined to security structures and did not extend effectively into civilian sectors.

Under the Museveni administration (1986–present), Kiswahili has been increasingly linked to national cohesion and regional integration within the East African Community. Policymakers emphasized:

“Kiswahili is important for East African integration, but English still dominates official communication.” (POL-055)

Despite this more structured policy orientation, implementation remains uneven. Teachers noted:

“Kiswahili is only compulsory in lower classes. After that, students drop it because it is not examined.” (TCH-014)

Comparatively, Kiswahili development has progressed from weak institutionalization during the Obote era, to strong but sectorally confined expansion during the Amin era, and finally to a more

structured yet inconsistently implemented policy framework under the Museveni administration. This transition reflects both continuity and change in Uganda’s language planning trajectory.

Sociolinguistic Barriers to Kiswahili Development

Across all respondent groups, sociolinguistic and institutional barriers emerged as significant constraints on Kiswahili development.

A persistent policy–implementation gap was identified across all political periods. Policymakers attributed this challenge to limited resources and competing national priorities:

“The policy is there, but implementation depends on available resources.” (POL-041)

Teachers highlighted shortages of teaching materials and trained personnel:

“We do not have enough textbooks, so teaching becomes very difficult.” (TCH-022)

Academics emphasized the importance of sustained political commitment:

“Progress in Kiswahili depends heavily on political will and sustained implementation.” (ACM-013)

Respondents also reported institutional asymmetry. While military institutions demonstrated relatively strong implementation capacity, civilian sectors—particularly education—remained comparatively weak:

“We use Kiswahili in operations, but outside that environment its use is limited.” (MIL-027)

Historical memory further shapes public attitudes toward the language. Although negative perceptions persist among some groups, respondents reported growing practical acceptance associated with trade, mobility, and regional integration.

“Here at the border, students use Kiswahili daily for trade and communication.” (TCH-008)

“People are now using Kiswahili more for work and travel than before.” (CMM-023)

Academics also highlighted Kiswahili's emerging symbolic value for national cohesion:

“It has the potential to unify the country, but it is not fully utilized.” (ACM-009)

Overall, respondents described a gradual transition from historically rooted stigma toward pragmatic acceptance. However, institutional weaknesses, implementation challenges, and lingering negative perceptions continue to constrain broader language development.

Synthesis Through the Political Institutional Societal (PIS) Model

The findings support the PIS Model, which conceptualizes language development as the interaction of political leadership, institutional systems, and societal attitudes. Across all themes, evidence demonstrates that misalignment among these dimensions contributes to fragmented and uneven language outcomes. Colonial legacies influence societal attitudes, political regimes shape policy direction, and institutional capacity determines implementation effectiveness. Consequently, successful Kiswahili development depends on sustained alignment among political commitment, institutional support, and public acceptance.

Summary of Results

The study demonstrates that Kiswahili development in Uganda is shaped by:

- i- Colonial language legacies that continue to influence policy and attitudes;
- ii- Regime-specific policy trajectories characterized by both continuity and change;
- iii- Persistent sociolinguistic and institutional barriers, including implementation gaps and historical stigma;
- iv- Uneven alignment among political leadership, institutions, and societal attitudes as conceptualized in the PIS Model.

Discussion

The findings demonstrate that the development of Kiswahili in Uganda is shaped by the interaction of historical legacies, political leadership, institutional capacity, and societal attitudes. Evidence from Teachers/Educators, Policymakers, Military Personnel, Academics, and the General Public reveals that language development extends beyond formal policy adoption and is

influenced by broader political and sociocultural processes (Lloyd & Hannikainen, 2022). The Political Institutional Societal (PIS) Model developed in this study illustrates how language outcomes emerge from the alignment or misalignment of political leadership, institutional implementation, and societal acceptance.

Colonial Foundations and the Legacy of Language Hierarchies

The findings suggest that contemporary Kiswahili development in Uganda remains strongly influenced by colonial language legacies. Colonial language policies established hierarchical relationships among languages, with English occupying the dominant position in administration, education, and socioeconomic advancement. These historical arrangements contributed to enduring perceptions of English as the language of prestige and upward mobility, while Kiswahili occupied a more ambiguous position within national language hierarchies.

From a Language Policy and Planning (LPP) perspective, these findings demonstrate how historical language arrangements continue to influence status and acquisition planning long after formal colonial rule has ended (Ingham, 2025). Teachers' accounts of learners viewing Kiswahili as having limited academic value suggest that colonial-era language ideologies remain embedded within educational institutions and public perceptions. The persistence of such attitudes reflects the long-term consequences of uneven institutional investment in Kiswahili and helps explain contemporary challenges in language implementation.

The findings therefore support the argument that language policy outcomes are historically conditioned. Current implementation challenges cannot be understood solely through contemporary policy decisions but must also be interpreted within the broader context of inherited language structures and historical patterns of linguistic inequality.

Regime-Specific Policies and Comparative Transitions

The study demonstrates that successive political regimes adopted distinct approaches toward Kiswahili, resulting in different trajectories of language development. These findings are

consistent with LPP theory, particularly the interaction between status planning and acquisition planning.

During Milton Obote's administration, Kiswahili was recognized rhetorically as a potential national language, yet institutional support remained limited. Weak acquisition planning and inadequate educational integration constrained the language's expansion and created structural weaknesses that persisted into subsequent periods. The findings therefore suggest that symbolic recognition alone is insufficient to produce meaningful language development without sustained institutional support.

The Idi Amin period marked a significant shift in status planning. Kiswahili gained substantial visibility and functionality within military and state institutions, where it served as a language of command and administration (Bizhan, 2022). However, the findings reveal that institutional expansion within coercive structures did not translate into broader societal legitimacy. Although military respondents reported continued operational importance for Kiswahili, teachers and community members associated the language with authoritarian rule and coercion. This finding contributes to LPP scholarship by demonstrating that status planning can expand institutional usage without necessarily generating positive public acceptance.

Under Yoweri Museveni, Kiswahili policy adopted a more structured and integrative orientation. Policymakers increasingly linked the language to national cohesion and regional integration within the East African Community. This represents a transition from military-centered promotion toward broader developmental and regional objectives. Nevertheless, respondents consistently reported implementation challenges, including inadequate instructional time, shortages of qualified teachers, and insufficient teaching materials. These findings indicate that policy articulation has advanced more rapidly than institutional capacity.

Viewed comparatively, the three regimes reveal both continuity and change. While policy commitment has gradually strengthened over time, implementation challenges remain persistent. The findings therefore suggest that successful language development requires not only policy

continuity but also sustained investment in institutional mechanisms that support acquisition and everyday use.

Sociolinguistic Barriers and Contemporary Challenges

The findings highlight sociolinguistic barriers as a major constraint on Kiswahili development in Uganda. Historical memory emerged as a particularly significant factor shaping language attitudes. Consistent with sociolinguistic theory, respondents demonstrated that language ideologies are socially constructed and transmitted across generations (Lisanza & Muaka, 2024). Negative perceptions associated with military rule continue to influence attitudes toward Kiswahili despite changes in political circumstances.

At the same time, the findings reveal evidence of attitudinal change. Community members increasingly associate Kiswahili with trade, employment, mobility, and regional communication. This shift suggests that functional utility can gradually reshape language attitudes and reduce historical stigma. The coexistence of negative historical associations and growing practical acceptance demonstrates that language attitudes are dynamic rather than fixed.

Beyond attitudes, respondents identified significant institutional barriers to language development. Persistent gaps between policy formulation and implementation were reported across all sectors. Teachers emphasized shortages of instructional materials and qualified personnel, while policymakers highlighted resource limitations and competing priorities. Military respondents further revealed an institutional asymmetry in which Kiswahili enjoys strong implementation within security institutions but remains weakly embedded within civilian structures, particularly education.

These findings support the central proposition of the PIS Model: language development depends on the interaction of political commitment, institutional capacity, and societal acceptance. Misalignment among these dimensions produces uneven outcomes. Although political support for Kiswahili has increased, institutional weaknesses and lingering sociolinguistic barriers continue to limit broader language diffusion.

An alternative interpretation might emphasize economic constraints as the primary explanation for uneven language development. Factors such as limited educational funding, shortages of teaching materials, and inadequate teacher training undoubtedly affect implementation. However, the findings indicate that economic explanations alone are insufficient. Historical shifts in political commitment, differences in institutional support across regimes, and persistent sociolinguistic attitudes demonstrate that language development is shaped by a combination of political, institutional, and social factors.

The Ugandan experience also reflects broader regional patterns. Similar challenges have been observed in Rwanda, South Sudan, and Burundi, where Kiswahili has been promoted as a language of regional integration and national development. Across these contexts, successful language expansion appears most likely when political commitment is accompanied by strong institutional capacity and positive societal attitudes. Uganda's experience is distinctive, however, because historical memories associated with military rule continue to influence contemporary perceptions of the language. Consequently, strengthening Kiswahili development requires not only policy commitment but also sustained efforts to address implementation deficits and foster broader societal acceptance.

Contributions and Theoretical Implications

The findings contribute to Language Policy and Planning (LPP) scholarship by reinforcing key insights from Bernard Spolsky's tripartite model of language policy, which conceptualizes language policy as the interaction among language management, language practices, and language beliefs. The Ugandan case demonstrates that language policy outcomes depend not only on governmental directives but also on institutional implementation and public acceptance. The findings further extend existing scholarship by illustrating how historical legacies, regime-specific policy trajectories, and sociolinguistic barriers interact to shape language development.

Colonial Foundations and Language Beliefs

The first theoretical contribution concerns the enduring influence of colonial language hierarchies on contemporary language policy outcomes. The findings show that English continues to dominate education, administration, and other formal domains because colonial institutions established and reinforced its prestige over time. These historical arrangements shaped language beliefs that continue to influence perceptions of linguistic value and utility. Consequently, although policymakers have increased support for Kiswahili, colonial legacies remain embedded within institutional structures and public attitudes, limiting the language's expansion. This finding supports Spolsky's argument that language beliefs are central to language policy outcomes and demonstrates how historical language ideologies can persist long after the political conditions that produced them have changed.

Regime-Specific Policies and Comparative Transitions

The second contribution relates to the role of political leadership and language management across successive regimes. The findings reveal that different governments adopted distinct approaches to Kiswahili promotion, resulting in varying patterns of institutionalization. While successive administrations sought to elevate the status of Kiswahili, their strategies differed in emphasis, ranging from limited institutional support during the Obote era to military-centered promotion under Amin and regional integration-oriented policies under Museveni. These transitions illustrate that language management is shaped by changing political priorities and ideological orientations.

The findings also reveal a tension between national and regional language functions. Policymakers have increasingly promoted Kiswahili as both a language of national cohesion and a regional lingua franca within the East African Community. These dual objectives create competing demands on educational institutions, government agencies, and language planning mechanisms. The Ugandan case therefore highlights how language policy goals may evolve across political periods while simultaneously generating new implementation challenges.

Sociolinguistic Barriers and Policy Implementation

The third contribution concerns the relationship between political authority, institutional implementation, and sociolinguistic legitimacy. The findings demonstrate that government efforts to promote Kiswahili have not always translated into widespread societal acceptance. Despite policy reforms and official support, many respondents continue to associate the language with historical experiences of military rule and political coercion. This illustrates a central sociolinguistic barrier: political authority can promote a language institutionally, but it cannot automatically generate positive language beliefs among the population.

The findings further demonstrate that language practices remain constrained by implementation challenges, including shortages of teaching materials, inadequate teacher preparation, and uneven institutional coordination. These barriers contribute to a persistent gap between policy intentions and actual language use. Consequently, the uneven trajectory of Kiswahili development in Uganda reflects a partial misalignment among language management, language practices, and language beliefs.

Overall, the study supports broader LPP perspectives that conceptualize language development as a multidimensional process shaped by both state intervention and societal acceptance. The Political Institutional Societal (PIS) Model proposed in this study extends these perspectives by demonstrating how political leadership, institutional capacity, and societal attitudes interact across historical periods to influence language outcomes. The findings suggest that successful language development requires not only policy commitment but also sustained institutional support and the cultivation of positive public attitudes toward the language.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the development of Kiswahili in Uganda has been shaped by three interconnected historical and sociopolitical processes: colonial foundations, regime-specific language policies and transitions, and persistent sociolinguistic barriers. Through an examination of these themes, the study advances the Political–Institutional–Sociolinguistic (PIS) model as a framework for explaining how language development evolves within multilingual postcolonial

societies. The findings reveal that Kiswahili's trajectory cannot be understood through policy decisions alone; rather, it reflects the interaction of historical legacies, shifting political priorities, institutional implementation mechanisms, and societal attitudes toward the language.

The first theme, colonial foundations, demonstrates that the origins of contemporary language policy debates can be traced to colonial language practices. During the colonial period, Kiswahili was primarily associated with military administration, policing, and colonial control rather than education or social mobility. These early functions shaped public perceptions of the language and established historical associations that continued to influence attitudes toward Kiswahili long after independence. The study shows that colonial legacies created both structural and attitudinal conditions that affected subsequent language planning efforts.

The second theme, regime-specific policies with comparative transitions, highlights the central role of political leadership in shaping the status and development of Kiswahili across different periods of Uganda's history. Successive governments adopted varying approaches to the language, reflecting changing political priorities, national integration agendas, and regional considerations. While some regimes actively promoted Kiswahili through legislation and institutional reforms, others provided limited support or pursued inconsistent implementation strategies. Comparative analysis across political transitions demonstrates that language policy outcomes are strongly influenced by the degree of political commitment and the institutional capacity available to translate policy intentions into practice. These findings underscore the importance of sustained political and institutional support in achieving long-term language development goals.

The third theme, sociolinguistic barriers, reveals that public perceptions, historical memories, and language attitudes remain significant determinants of language policy outcomes. Despite formal recognition and policy support, Kiswahili continues to encounter resistance rooted in historical experiences and social perceptions. The findings suggest that language development depends not only on official policy frameworks but also on the extent to which communities perceive a language as socially legitimate, culturally relevant, and economically valuable.

Sociolinguistic barriers therefore represent a critical challenge to the effective implementation of language policies.

Taken together, these themes demonstrate the dynamic interaction of political leadership, institutional capacity, and sociolinguistic perceptions, which form the basis of the Political–Institutional–Sociolinguistic (PIS) model proposed in this study. The model explains how colonial legacies shape sociolinguistic attitudes, how political regimes influence language policy directions, and how institutional mechanisms mediate the implementation of those policies. The findings show that language development is most effective when political commitment, institutional support, and public acceptance operate in a mutually reinforcing manner.

The significance of these findings extends beyond Uganda. Many postcolonial societies continue to face challenges related to multilingualism, nation-building, and language policy implementation. The PIS model provides a useful analytical framework for understanding why language promotion initiatives succeed in some contexts while encountering resistance in others. By integrating historical, political, institutional, and sociolinguistic dimensions, the model offers a comprehensive approach to analyzing language development processes across diverse multilingual settings.

From a practical perspective, the findings suggest that policymakers must address the enduring effects of colonial language legacies, sustain political commitment across changing regimes, strengthen institutional mechanisms for language implementation, and actively engage with public perceptions that influence language attitudes. Investments in educational infrastructure, teacher preparation, curriculum implementation, and public awareness initiatives are essential for overcoming barriers to language development and ensuring long-term policy effectiveness.

Overall, this study contributes to Language Policy and Planning and Sociolinguistic scholarship by demonstrating that language development is a historically embedded, politically mediated, and socially negotiated process. The Political–Institutional–Sociolinguistic (PIS) model provides a transferable framework for understanding how colonial foundations, regime-specific policy trajectories, and sociolinguistic barriers interact to shape language outcomes in multilingual

postcolonial societies. As such, the model offers both scholars and policymakers a foundation for designing more inclusive, effective, and sustainable language policies.

Limitations of the Study

This study is subject to several limitations inherent in its design and data sources. First, given its historical-comparative nature, the study relied partly on participants' retrospective accounts, which may be affected by recall bias and selective memory, particularly when reflecting on earlier political periods such as the Obote and Idi Amin eras.

Second, access to documentary and archival materials from the Idi Amin period was limited in some cases due to incomplete records, restricted availability, and gaps in historical documentation, which may have constrained the comprehensiveness of some historical interpretations.

Third, the political sensitivity surrounding language policy and governance in Uganda may have influenced the openness of some participants, potentially leading to cautious or moderated responses, especially among policymakers and institutional actors. Despite these limitations, the study mitigated their impact through triangulation of multiple data sources, including interviews, archival materials, and policy documents, as well as systematic thematic analysis to enhance the credibility and reliability of the findings.

Recommendations

The findings of this study demonstrate that the development of Kiswahili in Uganda depends on the dynamic interaction of political commitment, institutional capacity, and sociolinguistic acceptance. Consistent with the Political–Institutional–Sociolinguistic (PIS) model developed in this study, this section organizes recommendations around these three interconnected dimensions and prioritizes them across short-, medium-, and long-term implementation horizons. This structure aims to support sustainable development, institutionalization, and societal integration of Kiswahili in Uganda.

Short-term Recommendations (1–2 years)

Political and Sociolinguistic Actions

The Government of Uganda should fast-track and operationalize a comprehensive national language policy framework for Kiswahili. This will improve coordination across education, public administration, security institutions, and the media, thereby reducing fragmentation and strengthening policy coherence.

Government agencies, media organizations, cultural institutions, and community leaders should launch nationwide sensitization campaigns that address historical misconceptions and negative stereotypes about Kiswahili. These campaigns should emphasize Kiswahili's role in promoting national cohesion, expanding economic opportunities, and supporting regional integration.

Medium-term Recommendations (3–5 years)

Institutional Strengthening and Educational Expansion

3. The government should address structural constraints that hinder effective Kiswahili policy implementation by increasing funding for language programs, improving teacher recruitment and retention, providing adequate instructional materials, and strengthening curriculum delivery systems.
4. Universities and teacher-training institutions should expand pre-service and in-service Kiswahili training programs to build a sustainable pipeline of qualified teachers capable of delivering high-quality instruction at all levels of education.
5. Education authorities should progressively integrate Kiswahili across all levels of schooling rather than limiting its instruction to lower secondary education. Continuous exposure will strengthen learners' proficiency and ensure long-term language sustainability.
6. Uganda should align its language policies with East African Community frameworks by promoting standardized Kiswahili use in trade, diplomacy, cross-border education, and official documentation. This alignment will strengthen regional integration and linguistic harmonization.

Long-term Recommendations (5–10 years)

Research, Policy Consolidation, and Structural Development

7. Government institutions, universities, and research organizations should sustain long-term research on the social, educational, political, and economic dimensions of Kiswahili development. Researchers should examine policy implementation, language attitudes, educational outcomes, and the broader applicability of the PIS model in multilingual and postcolonial contexts.

8. Researchers should conduct longitudinal studies on Kiswahili acquisition among youth in urban and rural Uganda. These studies will generate evidence on differential language uptake patterns and guide more targeted and effective language planning interventions.

Finally, the sustainable development of Kiswahili in Uganda requires a phased, integrated, and evidence-informed approach that aligns political leadership, institutional capacity, and sociolinguistic acceptance. Short-term actions should prioritize policy activation and attitude change, medium-term actions should focus on institutional strengthening and educational expansion, and long-term strategies should emphasize research, policy consolidation, and continuous evidence-based refinement. Sustained alignment of these three dimensions will enable Kiswahili to function more effectively as a language of national cohesion and a regional lingua franca in the Great Lakes region.

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