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***THE IMPACT OF ENGLISH ON KIRUNDI AND FRENCH IN BURUNDI:  
USE AND ATTITUDES AMONG BURUNDIAN STUDENTS***

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in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master in  
Language Studies***

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# DEDICATION

To my beloved family

To my relatives

To my friends

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## ABSTRACT

Multilingualism does not necessarily bring to language shift, but the problem usually evolves from the power relationship existing between languages in contact. Considering today's power of the English language vis-à-vis other languages, the current work attempts to assess Burundians' use of this language and their attitudes towards this world language in Burundi with the aim of identifying the influence it exerts over French and Kirundi. In order to reach these objectives, the study has focused on Burundian students from Burundi state-owned University and Hope University. They were addressed a questionnaire and submitted to a month peer-participant observation. The main findings reveal that English has started to influence Burundian students' everyday 'Kirundi-French' speech patterns where it usually occurs as a status raising strategy in reference to the identity of updated young Burundians with lots of opportunities to achieve socio-economic stability, a status that would have been attributed to French ten years ago. In addition, English has started to be used in education as a language of instruction beside French. Above all, English is much appreciated by Burundian students to be the gate towards the longed development, more than French and Kirundi could achieve or have failed to attain. The attitudes towards the English language show that the sociolinguistic situation in Burundi may evolve in a weakening of the French language though this will be a gradual process as French is still judged more practical than English with regard to linguistic competence. However, Kirundi is considered as the beloved mother tongue, obligatory in ordinary settings to communicate, mainly with the monolingual illiterate who will constitute a barrier to English expansion in Kirundi domains. Therefore, the government shall understand the risk of promoting such a powerful language next to French and Kirundi, and put in place a careful linguistic management programme to balance the official status of these three languages in law and practice and avoid an overshadowing of one language in favour of another.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

CS: Code- Switching

EAC: East African Community

L 1: First Language

L 2: Second language

UB: University of Burundi.

## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

In multilingual communities, there are always more powerful languages and less powerful languages. Consequently, an unequal functional distribution results from the values attached to the languages or even more, a partial or complete shift towards the most powerful language or language variety may take place. This view is characteristic of the unbalanced power between English and other languages nowadays, a disparity that has led English to be considered as one of the major factor to many languages displacement and endangerment in all corners of the world where it is continuously adopted. This issue has led us to a reflection on the new sociolinguistic situation that is taking place in Burundi.

In fact, Burundi is witnessing a large spread of English as a result of its integration in the East African Community<sup>1</sup>but also as an overall outcome of globalization. Therefore, the increasing presence of English in Burundi has steered us to question the nature of coexistence that is taking (or may take) place between English and the other two Burundi official languages: Kirundi and French. Is English representing a threat to the latter or are they enough secured to resist influence against such a powerful language? Thus, the aim of this research is to investigate the English language use and attitudes in comparison to Kirundi and French to identify any influence of the English language that could be taking (or could take) place in Burundi vis à vis Kirundi and French. Hence, to help to address this goal, the following research questions have been formulated:

1. How have some language use patterns changed among Burundians?
2. What are the reasons behind the use or choice of English among Burundians?
3. How do Burundians perceive English in comparison to Kirundi and French?

According to theories and general observation of the present situation in Burundi, the researcher subsumes that:

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<sup>1</sup>East African regional intergovernmental organization involving the republics of Kenya, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania, the Republic of Burundi and Rwanda.

1. Burundians may use English in formal and everyday interactions where Kirundi or French are the principal codes.
2. The use of English by Burundians may be related to socio-economic aspects and prestige.
3. The attitudes may be more favourable to English than Kirundi and French.

Hence, a questionnaire and participant observation are the research instruments of the present case study constituted by Burundian students from the state-owned university: University of Burundi, and one of Burundi private Universities: Hope University.

Therefore, this work is divided into two chapters. The first chapter comprises two sections. The first section introduces the existing literature on language contact phenomena in relation to the present work objectives. The second section presents the sociolinguistic situation of Burundi in order to provide a good understanding of the research site. Finally, the second chapter explains, on the one hand, methods and procedures used to conduct this study, and on the other hand, it provides the analysis and discussion of the findings.

## **CHAPTER ONE: LANGUAGE CONTACT PHENOMENA AND BURUNDI MULTILINGUALISM**

### **1.1. Introduction**

The present chapter aims to create a context for this research work. While the first section reviews language contact phenomena in general, the second section narrows down the background to the multilingual situation in Burundi.

### **1.2 Language Contact Phenomena**

Basically concerned with how and why people use languages, studies in language contact have thrown light on the complexity of language choice and language use in multilingual settings. Recently, the linguistic effects of globalization have been the centre of much research in the field of language contact, mainly the power of the English language vis-à-vis the rest of the languages in the world. Indeed, the power of a language can be a strong indicator of its probability to be maintained or abandoned, for it has been noticed that language choice is mainly dependent on socio-economic and political values. Though multilingualism does not necessarily bring to language shift, the problem is the power relationship existing among co-existing languages. Therefore, since this work is concerned with power influence-relationship among co-existing languages, this chapter introduces in its first section, a brief description of some language contact phenomena and some of their issues, specifically multilingualism, diglossia, code-switching, borrowing, language shift and maintenance. Furthermore, given the significance of people's attitudes to all these phenomena, a short review of language attitudes is provided.

#### **1.2.1 Multilingualism**

Multilingualism subsumes the use of many languages. According to Clyne (2007, p.301), multilingualism can either be referred to as an ability of an individual to speak two or more languages, or can be used to describe the use of many languages in a particular society or nation. In addition, Kachru (1985, p. 159)

defines multilingualism as the “linguistic behaviour of the members of a speech community which alternately uses two, three or more languages”. However, it is also worth mentioning that, although a country is officially declared multilingual, it does not mean necessarily that every citizen is a bilingual. This is the case of some Canadians who are monolinguals despite the bilingual status of their country.

In fact, multilingualism is a result of language contact. Abioye (2013, p.2) defines multilingualism as “a result or form of language contact and it arises in societies where different languages co-exist in specific patterns.” Indeed, analysed historically, the birth and development of multilingualism can be well traced back to some socio-economic and political phenomena which have triggered contact between people of different languages. Cenoz and Gorter (2011), and Durk *et al.* (2005) try to provide some of the main factors underlying the rise and development of multilingualism, namely:

- Colonialism and imperialism:
- Economic interest and Immigration
- Worldwide communication
- Cultural interest for the revival and maintenance of minority languages
- Education
- Religious movements

Languages in contact result in very interesting patterns of language use either from the part of an individual or at the level of the whole speech community. The well-known patterns are diglossia, code-switching and borrowing.

### **1.2.3 Diglossia**

In multilingual communities, all languages or language varieties in use do not usually share the same values and, consequently are not allocated the same functions. Each variety tends to be associated with a specific set of situations. In Algeria, for instance, dialectal Arabic is used for ordinary functions while MSA is used in more formal settings such as education or administration. Such a sociolinguistic situation is termed diglossia

### **1.2.3.1 Diglossia defined**

. The well-known definition of diglossia is the one provided by Ferguson (1959, p. 336):

Diglossia is a relatively stable language situation in which, in addition to the primary dialects of the language (which may include a standard or regional standards), there is a very divergent, highly codified (often grammatically more complex) superposed variety, the vehicle of a large and respected body of written literature, either of an earlier period or in another speech community, which is learned largely by formal education and is used for most written and formal spoken purposes but is not used by any sector of the community for ordinary conversation.

In describing diglossia, Ferguson insisted on the existence of two genetically related varieties, namely, a Low Variety and a High Variety, coexisting in complementary distribution, i.e., each having its own set of functions to perform. The L variety is the L1 of the community and is used at home for ordinary and less prestigious tasks such as family conversations. In contrast, the H variety is only accessible through education and is associated with prestigious domains such as work, education or administration. Ferguson's study was a great attempt to explain language use in multilingual settings. However, his view of diglossia has been criticized as being very restrictive, and therefore has been castigated in many points.

Fishman (1971) extended the notion of diglossia to cover situations where distinct language varieties, not genetically related, are assigned separate roles. He explains that, in a given bilingual society, each variety seems to be used particularly for a specific domain or set of interactions. In African societies, for example, the L1 is mostly used at home or with friends, while the colonial languages are reserved for prestigious domains. The most important and common point for both Ferguson's Diglossia (classical Diglossia) and Fishman's (Extended Diglossia) is the compartmentalization of functions as supported by Wardhaugh (2006) who

considers that the major defining feature of Diglossia is the separation of functions. Actually, many sociolinguistic situations involving more than two varieties in complementary distribution are now identified as cases of triglossia.

However, it is of high importance to draw attention on the fact that this distinctness of functions is not absolute. Dorais (1989) explains that the clear-cut division in language use, as stated by Ferguson, occurs very rarely. He supports his idea by demonstrating that English in some Arctic areas is being used by many Inuit for everyday conversations, though it is the H variety in terms of diglossia. Furthermore, many researchers have observed that diglossia can be well described as a continuum because it is almost impossible to assert firmly that only one variety is exclusively used in a specific domain (Myers-Scotton, 2006). This is to mean that there is always a variety serving as a bridge between H and L varieties. Indeed, Ferguson (1959) noticed himself that in the Arabic speaking World, people can read a newspaper in Standard Arabic but discuss the content in dialectal Arabic. Moreover, in classrooms, teachers usually switch to dialectal Arabic to explain a difficult concept to students. This is also observable in many African societies, where the illiterate mass of population only use L1 while the educated, in addition to French, speak a mixture of L1 (L) and L2 (H) characterized with many instances of code-switching and borrowing from H. Therefore, the literate tend to use “pure” L1 with grandparents and parents, while they tend to code-switch from L to H or to borrow some H items when discussing with friends at work, and finally they will use French or English with the boss. This fact is also affirmed by Wardhaugh (2006) who mentions that the L variety often tends to borrow words from the H variety when it is used in more formal settings.

In sum, diglossia is a sociolinguistic situation where language varieties are allocated different functions. Yet, it is important to keep in mind that this allocation is not absolute. Rather, it is better to say that one variety is often used for a particular domain or is the dominant variety in that domain.

### **1.2.3.2 Domains and Function Allocation**

In diglossic/ multiglossic speech communities, the notion of prestige is salient in determining which language variety is suitable to which language domain. However, before discussing this idea, it is important first to define the concept of ‘domain’.

The concept of ‘domains’ was introduced in language studies by Fishman who first used it as a model to study multilingualism. Fishman (1971, p. 586) holds that:

Domains are defined, regardless of their number, in terms of institutional contexts and their congruent behavioral co-occurrences. They attempt to summate the major clusters of interaction that occur in clusters of multilingual settings and involving clusters of interlocutors.

In other words, domains are like sets of identical interactions taking place in similar settings with the same interlocutors. Here, can be given the example of the ‘home domain’ that generally subsumes family members holding family conversations at home. Domains are, thus, very important in analysing language use as they can clearly indicate where, with whom and for what purpose a particular language variety is used.

In every multilingual society, domains are fundamental in the process of function allocation to existing languages or language varieties. Each domain is associated with its own characteristics and set of values, constructed in terms of its participants, subject-matter and settings. Therefore, the choice of the code to be used in a prestigious domain will probably be directed to a highly valued language variety in the society. The best example is the one of diglossia. The H variety is used in prestigious and formal domains or interactions, while the L variety is associated with less formal or less prestigious functions. In discussing diglossia, Myers-Scotton (2006, p.81) explains that:

In a given domain, most interactions are expected to display a specific set of values. Behaviour in such interactions, including language choice, reflects

these values. And diglossia is about dividing up language choice in terms of values.

Indeed, the choice is not random but depends on how the individuals or societies perceive the domain of the interaction at hand, then will choose a language variety that appropriately reflects their perceptions of the subject matter, settings, interlocutors involved, oneself identity and purpose, etc. (Abioye, 2013). In addition to prestige and status of the language and domain, Abioye carries on by citing other factors that determine language functions in multilingual context, specifically:

- Levels of development: A standardized language equipped with dictionaries and a rich lexicon as well as a register adapted to various interactions or domains of the modern life is likely to take prestigious functions. This is the case of English nowadays in a lot of domains such as technology, business and fashion, to mention a few.
- Historical and political profile: languages associated with great history and political achievements are often allocated more formal and high status functions. An illustrating example is the political power related to the English language according to its native speakers.
- Institutional policies and planlessness: the support of the government, different institutions, the media, etc., are also determining factors to language functions. In Tanzania, for instance, the support of the government to Swahili has given this language more prestige than before and hence probably more functions.
- Numerical strength: the number of speakers of a given language or language variety can play a salient role in function allocation. In Nigeria, the use of languages such as Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba is attached to the large number of its speakers.

In sum, function allocation to languages is mostly a question of individuals or speech community perceptions of the values of a particular domain and the language variety which is appropriate in terms of similar values. Nonetheless, in reality, there is no ideal one-to-one correspondence between a given language

variety and its domain, bilinguals display frequent occurrences of code-switching and borrowing in the same domain.

### 1.2.4 Code-switching

Code-switching is a common speech behaviour among bilinguals and is not a haphazard production. Rather, it is a strategy used to signal one's identity in relation to his/her interlocutor as described below after the following definition.

#### 1.2.4.1 Code-switching defined

Although there is no unanimous definition of code-switching, it is commonly viewed as the alternation between two codes in a given conversation. Wardhaugh (2006, p.101) tries to define code-switching by pointing out different ways by which people speak in multilingual communities:

People [...], are usually required to select a particular code whenever they choose to speak, and they may also decide to switch from one code to another or to mix codes even within sometimes very short utterances and thereby create a new code in a process known as code-switching. Code-switching (also called code-mixing) can occur in conversation between speakers' turns or within a single speaker's turn. [...] it can occur between sentences (intersententially) or within a single sentence (intra-sententially).

In fact, given the context and the meaning they want to transmit, people choose a code in their linguistic repertoire which is likely to perform successfully their purposes. Code-switching may take place between sentences or within the same utterance. Poplack (1990) distinguishes three types of Code-switching from a structural point of view:

- Intersentential: it involves switching at sentential boundaries (McSwan, 1999)

Example: - Jewe ndagiye : "Je pars."

- Tu pars déjà!

- Intrasentential: it occurs within sentential boundary (Hammers and Blanc, 2000)

Example: *Jewe ndagiye, je reviendrai la semaine prochaine kuraba ko muri prêts: ‘’ Je pars, je reviendrai la semaine prochaine pour voir si vous êtes prêts.’’*

- Tag- switching or extra code-switching: this type mostly concerns adding frozen or formulaic expressions (okay, donc, etc) to an utterance fully expressed in another language. (Hammers and Blanc, 2000).

Example: *Uzogaruka mu ndwi iza, n'est pas vrai? : ‘’ Vous reviendrez la semaine prochaine,... ? ‘’*

The term of Code-switching is problematic. Consequently, linguists do not agree absolutely on all situations it covers, and then it overlaps with many other situations such as code-mixing or borrowing. Though it is not ultimate to this work to draw the distinctions, it is worth mentioning that code-mixing is usually differentiated from code-switching as involving shorter elements such as stereotypical expressions, while code-switching includes longer elements (Harmers and Blanc, 2000). However, many other researchers use them interchangeably. Even though the term code-switching is conflicting, it has been recognized that alternating two codes in the same utterance is a strategy to convey meaning as discussed in the following lines.

#### 1.2.4.2 Meaning of Code-switching

The interest in code-switching started in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. However, throughout this period, code-switching was seen as a haphazard language choice, unpredictable and governed by no rules (Espinoza, 1917). Influenced by the ideal monolingualism and language purity, Weinreich (1968) also claimed that code-switching can only occur in the speech of bilinguals when there is a change in the context, but he strongly refuted the occurrence of code-switching within the same sentence under the same circumstances.

Nevertheless, the growing interest in language choice proved, through many studies and evidences, that code-switching was a meaningful and predictable behaviour, controlled by social and structural rules. Through their study of two Norwegian dialects, Bokmål and Ranamal, Bloom and Gumperz (1972) introduced two types of code-switching. Firstly, situational code-switching which results from the change in the speech context such as topic, interlocutors,... Secondly, metaphorical code-switching which is used to emphasize a given topic, or to produce a special effect vis-à-vis the subject under discussion. In addition, Gumperz (1982) compares the alternative use of two codes as a tactic of bilinguals to signal a particular meaning, simply as the contextualization cues employed by monolinguals such as prosodic features.

Indeed, code-switching is not a random use of language, but a strategy of conversing with a very complex function such as clarification as it can be noticed in the following example involving Kirundi/French C.S.:

-Student A: Ntuzokwibagire amakaye yanje ejo

*Don't forget my copy-books tomorrow*

-Student B: Uvuze ngo? *What did u say?*

-Student A: J'ai dit, n'oublies pas mes cahiers demain.

This conversation illustrates well that student A switched to French to clarify the message, and probably to signal seriousness in his request. Therefore, the choice of French was obviously done on purpose than coincidentally as far as in Burundi, French is mostly related to formal contexts. Understandably, French was the best choice for student A to warn his classmates about the seriousness of his message because they all share the same connotations of French use.

Myers-Scotton (2006) assumes that for interlocutors to understand the meaning underlying their code choices, they must share the same background because each variety is attached to different values and social meanings in a given speech community:

First, all linguistic varieties carry with them socio-psychological baggage. Each variety gets this baggage largely from the speakers most associated

with using that variety and from the situations in which the variety is used as the most appropriate choice. Second, the baggage is almost never unidimensional. (Myers-Scotton 2006, p.144).

Evidently, language varieties carry socio-psychological values, the same as the ones attached to the people who mostly speak them or to the contexts where they are usually used. Nowadays, for instance, the English language, is associated with power and modernity in reference to the United States of America, Americans and their achievements. In Burundi, someone who speaks English is assumed to have studied at one of the very expensive private schools, to live abroad or to travel a lot, to mention but a few. Thus, English is identifiable with power, wealth, education and prestige. Then, Myers-Scotton (2006:147) concludes that language varieties are “social indices” of social meanings.

Therefore, people intentionally choose one variety over another to be identified with the social meanings associated with the variety in a given context. In this sense, Myers-Scotton (1993a, 2006) views code-switching as a negotiation of identity between interlocutors. Indeed, the speaker switches to a particular code to introduce the set of rights and obligations that he/she wants to be the defining features of the ongoing interaction; i.e., how he/she wants to be viewed and treated by the interlocutor as illustrated in the following piece of Facebook conversation between two Burundians, one living abroad (A) and another one in Burundi (B).

-A: Bite? (Kirundi)

*Hi!*

-B:Hello!

-A: Imisi myinshi, uraho?

*Long time.How are you doing?*

-B: I am fine, you?

This interaction shows clearly how code-switching is a matter of identity negotiation. The first speaker (A) wants to show solidarity to his interlocutor and

put him at ease by using Kirundi; i.e., the choice of Kirundi carries a message like “though I am abroad, I am still Burundian, I am still one of yours.” However, speaker (B) seems not to appreciate the choice. His use of English is not certainly a rejection of solidarity but a way to say “Though I am in Burundi, you are not more powerful than I am. I can speak the English you speak there, I am updated, so do not underestimate me.” Speaker (B) claims for his identity as a skilled, modern intellectual as the one abroad despite the difference in their places of residence. As stated by Wardhaugh (2006), code switching can be used as an identity marker. In addition, Wei (2008, p.13) maintains that people choose a particular code to assert their group membership, or to redefine their identity and nature of their relationships with the other.

The previous example indicates that code choice is a result of an evaluation of rewards associated with the chosen variety. This idea was supported by Myers-Scotton (1993a) who goes further to draw attention on the fact that code-switching itself can be the unmarked choice, i.e., the expected use of language. This is a case she described as peculiar to Africa after her analysis of Nairobi and Harare youth speech:

The young men [...] are not satisfied with either the identity associated with speaking English alone or that associated with speaking Shona or Swahili alone when they converse with each other. Rather, they see the rewards in indexing both identities for themselves. They solve the problem of making a choice by evolving a pattern of switching between the two languages. Thus code switching itself becomes their unmarked choice for making salient simultaneously two or more positively evaluated identities. (Myers-Scotton 1993a, p.122)

Indeed, this pattern of speech is very particular in Africa, not only with young people but also with educated people. They switch from their local dialects to English, French or any other colonial language to signal their double identity. In Burundi for example, speaking Kirundi would only give you a connotation of

someone living in the countryside, while speaking French only indexes pride. Therefore, educated people prefer to use both varieties among themselves to balance rewards and negative views reflected by the chosen language varieties.

In short, code-switching is not a simple game of interchanging codes. Rather, it is a strategy used to signal who the speaker is or who he wants to be in front of others.

### **1.2.5 Borrowing**

Borrowing is one of the language contact phenomenon, and is sometimes the result of a dominant-dominated relationship between two languages.

#### **1.2.5.1 Borrowing defined**

Broadly defined, it refers to the adoption of a foreign or L2 item into L1. Thus, L2 is the donor language, while L1 is the recipient Language. Schmid (2011) describes borrowing as a process through which “elements from one language are integrated into another language” (p.20). The integration can be partial in a particular speech or total when the entire speech community accepts it and adopts it.

The phenomenon of borrowing is sometimes confused with code-switching. Though they are somehow related, Muysken (1995, p. 189) distinguishes the borrowing process from Code-switching by identifying three steps through which borrowing occurs:

1. The L2 item is firstly inserted in L1
2. The insertion of the item becomes frequent in the speech community
3. Finally, the item is adapted phonologically, morphologically syntactically to the rules of L1. Therefore it becomes fully integrated in L1 lexicon and its monolingual speakers recognize it as part of their language.

Many researchers, Poplack *et al.* (1988), Myers-Scotton (2006), Schmid (2011), to mention just a few, all agree that borrowings undergo phonological, morphological and syntactic transformation to fit in L1 system. The process of borrowing is almost always one-way, i.e.; not from L1 to L2, but from L2 to L1, L2 being the dominant prestigious language (Myers-Scotton, 2006). She goes further to explain that the donor language is the one related to socio-economic and political power and that “what counts as prestige will vary from one era to another, and from one pair of languages to another” (p.211). Observably, while in most African French-speaking countries (e. g: Burundi, Gabon,...), French has long been the principal source of borrowings, now English is the leading language donor.

### 1.2.5.2 Reasons for borrowing

Usually, borrowing occurs to name new items from a new culture such as *pizza, spaghetti*,... Nevertheless, borrowed words are also used to replace existing items in L1. This is referred to as ‘core borrowing’ by Myers-Scotton (2006), whereas the first is named ‘cultural borrowing’. The reasons for cultural borrowing are clear, however to understand core borrowing, Field (2002:5) and Myers-Scotton (2006) support the idea that the cultural dominance of one language over another is the principal cause of borrowing. Indeed, as mentioned previously, donor languages are used in prestigious language domains and are also associated with political and economic power. Hence, people probably engage in borrowing to raise their status, to identify themselves with the group of speakers who mostly use the donor language in order to sound prestigious. This is the case of English among the youth throughout the world who define English borrowings as ‘cool language’ as long as English is the language of technology, music, fashion and movies.

### 1.2.6 Language maintenance and Language shift

Mostly, within a speech community where two or more languages are in contact, the main challenge is to maintain dominated languages or language varieties and avoid involuntary language shift. The following lines explains first the concepts and provides also an account of the major factors of language shift and its indicators.

### **1.2.6.1 Language maintenance and language shift defined**

Language maintenance is a process whereby a particular language is continually used in a given speech community from one generation to another. In other words, the community persists in using the language in all or some domains (Clyne, 1998). In contrast, that language or language variety can also be replaced entirely or partly by another language existing in the community. Put differently, the whole speech community (or an individual) shifts from the use of one language to the use of another.

Actually, language shift is generally used to refer to a sociolinguistic phenomenon whereby a language is replaced progressively by another one. Holmes (2001:68) states that “Language shift generally refers to the process, by which one language displaces another in the linguistic repertoire of a community”. Similarly, Weinreich (1953, p. 79) defines the phenomenon as the shift from one usually used language to another.

Rather than being seen as two separated phenomena, language maintenance and language shift should be looked at as a continuum. At one extreme, only L1 is used while at the other extreme, only L2 is used.

### **1.2.6.2 Factors of Language maintenance and language shift.**

Though many models have been suggested to account for language maintenance or shift, they are usually used in combination as long as language maintenance and shift are often results of multiple intertwined dynamics. In many cases, languages that are associated with socio-cultural values, high economic status and political support are likely to be maintained in a particular society. In the same line of thought, Smolicz (1980, as cited in Clyne, 1998) holds the fact that languages that are identified with core values such as religion or historical instances are expected to be kept. This is the case of the Arabic language and Islam. Furthermore, the use of a language as a medium of instruction and the nature of job opportunities associated with the language also contribute to language maintenance (Myers-Scotton, 2006).

Not all factors can be enumerated here. However, it is commonly observed that the replacing language is almost always dominant and powerful while the replaced language is habitually dominated and non-prestigious. This is the case of a few Western languages that have replaced most of the indigenous African languages in a range of domains, limiting them to home use only or, in the worst cases, have displaced them totally.

Obviously, language shift is not an individual concern but a speech community fact since it usually reflects a change in socio-political settings of a given speech community. Brenzinger (2007) distinguishes three situations where language shift is likely to occur:

- Regional settings: Language displacement may occur as a result of long-term cohabitation of languages. In Tanzania, for instance, Swahili, which is considered as a neutral lingua franca, has been highly supported in education, administration, business, etc..., to the extent that it started replacing vernaculars which compared to Swahili are not very useful for interethnic communication or elsewhere.
- Imperial settings: Historically speaking, several cases of language displacement occurred under these settings. This can be better illustrated through the colonization period where the colonized were forced to adopt the rulers' languages. Brenzinger (2007, p. 5) describes how exactly displacement takes place in an imperial environment:

Language displacement in imperial settings is characterized by the fact that the replacing language is the language of intruding powers which regard themselves as superior, and who expand with the ambition to extend their influence into other territories.

During colonization, In West Africa, France, for instance, imposed its culture and ideologies through a forced adaptation of the French language by supporting the

fact that African vernaculars cannot help in the development of its people as Davesne (1933, p.6) states: “African dialects are not languages of civilisation.”<sup>2</sup>.

- Global settings: Though in the past, language displacement was usually forced under imperial settings, for instance, nowadays, it usually occurs as a result of voluntarily chosen socio-political adaptation by governments to adjust to the world economy demands, international communication, etc., or simply to fulfil the requirements of the new global world. However, it would be very confusing to describe this shift as a voluntary one, since, though the shift is not achieved through direct imposition, it may be described as an indirect pressure from powerful states’ ways of life.

Indeed, the global world is characterized by the spread and use of a few dominant languages, the most striking example being the English language that has become the *de facto* language in important domains such as science and technology, business, media, etc. Thus, its spread is associated with the benefits it provides. On this point, Holmes (2001, p.58) says that “the rapid shift occurs when people are anxious to “get on” in a society where knowledge of the second language is a prerequisite for success.” In other words, the speed of language shift is dependent on the rewards the newly introduced or replacing language provides to its speakers. Therefore, as stated above, the replacing language is almost always the one associated with highly valued domains, symbols of success, or the one greatly admired by young people such as English, the language of music stars, fashion and movies.

### 1.2.6.3 Indicators of language shift

Definitions as well as leading factors of language shift are plenty. However, the most challenging question to answer is how to identify languages that are safe, or expected to be maintained, and those that risk to be replaced. Though, some indicators for assessing minority languages have been proposed, they are far from

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<sup>2</sup> The source language statement : “Les dialectes africains ne sont pas des langues de civilisation”

being satisfying to account precisely for all cases of language shift. The size of speakers and language domains are the most discussed indicators.

But, before any attempt to discuss the two indicators cited above, it is important to clarify the term ‘minority language’. Sometimes, the term is used to refer simply to a language under the process of displacement without reference to the size of its speakers. It is in this sense that the term ‘minority language’ will be employed in this work. Indeed, it is arguable whether the size of speakers could be an indicator of language displacement as some languages with a considerable size of speakers are claimed to be in danger while others with only few remaining speakers are considered as safe languages thanks to their speakers’ loyalty. Agheyisi (1984) discusses the case of Nigeria where four hundred languages spoken by an estimated hundred million speakers are presumed to be in danger, whereas, for instance in Australia, aboriginal languages used only by two hundred speakers are judged to be safe. Drawing from these instances, it is obvious that the size of speakers is not the best indicator of language shift.

One noticeably less controversial and commonly claimed indicator by researchers is the criterion of language domains. Fasold (1984) claims that language shift refers to changes in language use among a community of speakers, precisely when a community starts to use one language in domains and functions that were previously reserved to another language or language variety. Holmes (2001, p. 65) goes on saying that:

The less domains of language use, the more potential language shift occur, vice versa, the more domains of language use, the more potential language maintain.

Certainly, when a language is progressively used in few domains, it is expected to face extinction. Brenzinger (2007, p. 3) also draws attention to the importance associated with the domains where minority languages are dominated as follows:

As they are limited to being used exclusively within the speech community, the external threat to minority languages derives from these

other domains (schools, media, administration...) and the weight of pressure falls in line with the importance these domains hold.

The importance given to the domains cited above can be an accelerator of language shift mainly when the minority language is not adapted to carry out functions in those domains, or simply when it is not its area of use. Here, can be named the example of international communication which is reserved to only a few languages in the world. A second illustration of the case can be one of new domains such as technology. Due to its rapid development, many languages are not equipped to describe technological tools and their mechanisms.

It is noteworthy to mention that some minority languages manage to remain functional in some speech community domains such as family or home. This is the example of most languages in ancient colonies that have been dominated and replaced by western languages in many other areas than home and family. The family domain is very important in the process of language maintenance because it prevents a language from total extinction. Understandably, home displacement results undoubtedly in the absence of the language transmission from one generation to another, and that is the first indicator of language extinction rated by UNESCO (2003) which, in an attempt to identify languages in danger of extinction, endangered languages, claims that no single factor or indicator should be alone to assess language vitality. Therefore, UNESCO suggested a model based on the following criteria:

- Intergenerational language Transmission: As stated earlier, the indicator of language transmission is very important and commonly used to assess language vitality. Certainly, a language cannot survive without any young generation to speak it and ensure its maintenance through transmission to the coming generations.
- Absolute number of speakers: the number of speakers is a problematic measure as discussed in the previous lines. However, one can agree that a small speech community is always at risk as it can be easily assimilated in a larger and powerful one.

- Proportion of speakers within the total population: According to the UNESCO (2003), in a given group, whether ethnic, regional, etc., a language is safe when all the population speak it, whereas, it is critically facing danger when only few use it.
- Trends in existing language domains: the domains in which a language is used can be determinant of its continual existence or its shift. In a monolingual community, a language is used for all domains and all purposes. However, in multilingual settings, the dominant languages tend to be used for formal domains while the non-dominant languages tend to be used for home and other informal domains. Therefore, speakers may come to prefer the dominant language for it holds bigger opportunities for them and thus they may neglect or abandon the non-dominant one, though older people may continue to use it. In some other cases, the dominant language penetrates the home environment and consequently the children become ‘semi-speakers of their own mother tongue’. In some other situations, it may happen that the non-dominant language is only used in traditional or family ceremonies where elder people meet. In such a situation, many of the community members can understand the language but cannot speak it. Another situation of distribution of language function is the one where the non-dominant language is only used by a few people and is restricted to high formal domains or special occasions such as ceremonies. Lastly, the final step that characterizes language extinction is when the language is no more used in any domain for any function.
- Response to new domains and media: With the world development, new domains of language use take birth. However, the challenge is that dominant languages seem to be the only ones promoted in these new domains at the expense of minority languages. This situation can be better illustrated by the field of technology and the English language nowadays. The absence of minority languages in new domains, though they may keep their existing

domains, can cause them to be more ‘stigmatized and irrelevant’. Similarly, Coulmas (1992, p. 170) expresses his worry by saying:

Today the future of many languages is uncertain not only because their functional range is scaled-down, but because they are never used for, adapted to, newly emerging functions which from the start associated with another. Lack of functional expansion and adaptation is thus a correlate and counterpart of scaled down use.

- Materials for language education and literacy: Education is a key domain for a language to be maintained. A language that serves as a medium of instruction and used in everyday writing such as print media, texts, etc. is much stronger and powerful in comparison to another with no literacy tradition.
- Amount and quality of documentation: Type and quality of existing language material is a useful indicator of language vitality. Indeed, a language with grammars, dictionaries, constant flow of texts and high quality audio and video recordings is ‘a language with an army’.

Likewise, the UNESCO (2003) mentions language attitudes and language policy as language vitality indicators. Given the importance of such dimensions for this study and in order to avoid redundancy, the two will be elaborated in the following subsections.

### **1.2.7 Language attitudes**

As discussed previously, there are many factors that contribute to language maintenance or to its shift, and language attitude is one of the major determiners. The studies of language attitudes became very important with the attempt, from many linguists, to explain the phenomena of language maintenance, language shift as well as situations of endangered languages and how they can be revitalized (Romaine, 1994; ...).

Yet, ‘language attitude’ is a very complex concept to define satisfactorily for it entails many psychological aspects. Garrett (2007, p.116) points out that attitudes

are a “mental construct”. Indeed, language attitudes represent internal images, thoughts, feelings towards a particular language or variety. Eagley and Chaiken (1993, p.1-3) also refer to language attitudes as representations of people’s allocation of various degrees of ‘goodness or badness’ to a given language (cited in Abioye, 2013, p. 107). Furthermore, Hidalgo (1986) explains that language attitudes are more like evaluations of languages or dialects, an assessment through which speakers determine values of the involved languages or varieties in comparison to others.

Language attitudes are not innate but are constructed throughout the socialization process and life experience. Clearly, attitudes towards a given language are usually built on how its speakers are perceived by the remaining part of the society. It is true that in many speech communities, the prestigious variety is the one associated with high-status (socio-economic mainly) groups of people. In discussing the relationship between language, power and identity, Myers-Scotton (2006) makes reference to Bourdieu’s (1982, 1991) statement that the languages an individual speaks are indicative of his/her position in the society and that people tend to choose languages that reflect their positions or identity. Therefore, the users, use and the setting where a language is used determine the values attached to it or the way it is perceived by the whole speech community or individuals.

Still, attitudes are not only based on socio-economic facts but can also be moulded by emotions and feelings of nationalism, solidarity, and loyalty towards an ethnic group or any other type of group. Here, can be cited the case of young Dominicans in the period preceding and following their independence. Christie (1982) mentions in her study that though the creole (in Dominica) is still related to illiterate and countryside old people, young Dominicans display favourable attitudes towards the creole, probably because of their consciousness of their membership to an independent nation.

Languages attitudes constitute a very broad subject that cannot be wholly covered in this work. However, it is crucial to keep in mind the strategic role of

individuals or societal language attitudes in the process of language maintenance and shift.

### **1.2.8 Language planning and language policy**

Language planning is another key element in language maintenance and shift. Parents generally transmit their native language to their children through the socialization process, by teaching them correct forms of the language. This transmission can be seen as a way and attempt to maintain their mother tongue. However, parents may also prefer to teach their children another language for different purposes, mainly socio-economic ones. Whether parents decide to preserve the mother tongue maintenance or shift to a different valuable language, the action can be regarded as an instance of language planning. Evidently, language planning can occur at different levels, either individual, familial, social or governmental. Nevertheless, the terms language policy and language planning are often used to refer to a more systematic, political and legislative management of language, planned at the governmental level of a given country.

According to Rubin and Jernudd (1971, p. xvi), language planning aims at changing the language and linguistic behaviour of a particular speech community (Cited in Ferguson, 1996). In the same sense, Cooper (1989) defines language planning as an intended decision to influence the use of a language within a speech community in terms of function, structure, or acquisition.

Actually, language planning, as stated previously, is a will decision – taking to change and regulate both the form and functions of a language. Mostly, language planning and language policy are amounted to the following three levels (Kloss 1969; Cooper, 1989; Myers-Scotton, 2006):

- Status planning: This level deals with the promotion of a language to an official position (or as a national language, regional language,...) and the distribution of functions. Here, can be cited as an example the shift from French to English as an official language in Rwanda around 1996.
- Corpus planning: This category is widely concerned with the structure of the language and includes mainly activities such as writing system creation,

dictionary production or new words coining, to mention a few. For instance, in the late 1920's, Turkish abandoned the Arabic script to adopt the Roman alphabet (Daoust, 2008)

- Acquisition planning: This set treats the implementation of the status and form of the selected language, i.e., the organization of how the speech community or nation will adopt the status and acquire the new structure of the language, particularly through the educational system.

Behind any language policy, there is always an underlying goal, whether linguistic, social, political or economic. Yet, the goals are not easily identifiable as they are, most of the time, rather interrelated. Dekhir and Abid (2011) point out some reasons such as the need of modernization, the desire to achieve national unity through standardization and implementation of a national language, etc. The conspicuous reason behind many new worldwide cases of language planning nowadays turns around the process of globalization and the English language. As Wright (2007) upholds, some new linguistic laws have been in favour of English on the one hand, and on the other hand, some others have been established to protect either another non- indigenous language such as French, or to maintain the functions of an existing national language.

In the present day, the English language is continuously proclaimed as a new official language in a lot of countries such as Gabon, Burundi...This choice is probably motivated by reasons of economic and political communication nature to facilitate exchanges and integration in the global market. Nonetheless, this choice is made at the expense of minority languages that may find themselves shadowed by the global force of English. Certainly, people always tend to learn languages that represent more benefits for them and are likely to allocate more and valuable domains to the prestigious language. Therefore, these social tendencies should be regulated by conciliatory effective language planning to protect minority languages, more importantly through raising positive attitudes towards them and encouraging their use in more domains.

### **1.2.9 Conclusion**

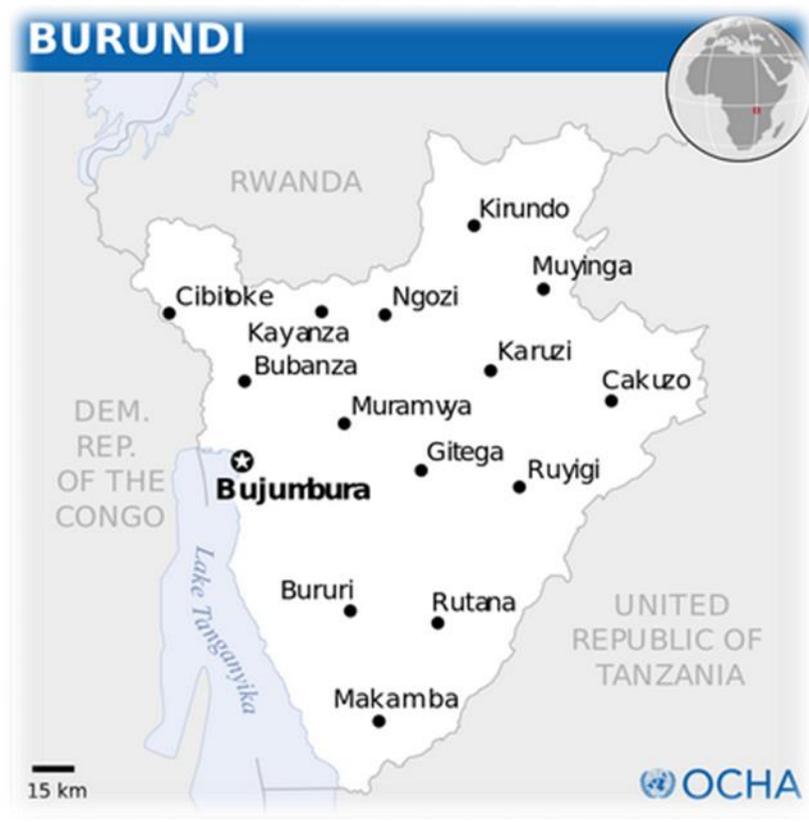
This chapter has provided an overview of different resulting phenomena from co-existing languages. Obviously, language is not only an ordinary means of conveying meaning, but also a strategy of defining one's identity and establishing the desired nature of relationship with others. Clearly, language varieties in a given community are associated with different values and attitudes that largely motivate the choice of one code over another. Thus, people always tend to use prestigious languages in status-raising tasks while the less valued ones are widely restricted to home and informal functions. It is noticeable that values and language attitudes are very important in explaining the diverse patterns of language use in multilingual settings, though they are still problematic in research for they entail inaccessible psychological aspects.

## 1.3 Burundi Multilingualism

### 1.3.1 Introduction

Though almost all Burundians share and speak the same mother tongue, Burundi is no exception when it comes to multilingualism and its complexity. From one language, many other languages have been established in Burundi throughout time. This section introduces Burundi and its linguistic evolution from the pre-colonial period until today. Moreover, a brief description of the four languages spoken in Burundi is offered together with the gap existing between linguistic laws and the real sociolinguistic situation.

### 1.3.2 Burundi: Geographical location and people



Source: Burundi-Familypedia, [www.familypedia.com](http://www.familypedia.com)

Burundi is a small landlocked country located in Central Eastern Africa within the region of Great lakes. It has an area of 27 834 square kilometres (around 10,745 miles) with 3000 square kilometres occupied by the Lake Tanganyika. The Republic of Burundi is limited in the North by the Republic of Rwanda, in the West

by the United Republic of Tanzania, in the East by the Democratic Republic of Congo and in the south by the Lake Tanganyika.

Almost 99% of the population are Burundians. Among the immigrants, can be cited Congolese, Rwandans, Tanzanians, Arabs (Omanis,..) Pakistanis, etc. The Burundian population comprises 3 ethnic groups, Hutu, Tutsi and Twa. However, they speak the same language and share too many cultural elements to be classified different groups. While educated people and merchants are in great numbers in urban cities, nearly 90% of the inhabitants are farmers and live in rural areas.

### **1.3.3 From monolingualism to multilingualism**

From one language, Kirundi, multilingualism has gradually taken place in Burundi throughout time, following different political and socio-economic events, specifically colonization which is taken in the succeeding lines as the time reference to understand the different steps of Burundi linguistic evolution.

#### **1.3.3.1 Before Colonization**

Situated in a continent where multilingualism was and is still a striking feature of daily conversations, Burundi (as well as Rwanda) displayed an exceptional case of monolingualism before colonization. Indeed, Burundians were unified under one culture, one faith and one language.

#### **1.3.3.2 During Colonization**

Burundi was first colonized by Germany after a seven-year war of resistance from 1896. However, in 1903, King Mwezi Gisabo accepted to sign a treaty with Germans to stop the war as the loss in human resources was getting higher for it was a war of arrows against guns. Therefore, Germany took over the country and annexed it to Rwanda, the neighbouring Kingdom, to form one colony, Rwanda-Urundi. During the same period, Germany was already settled in Tanzania. In the German East Africa (Deutsche Ost-Afrika), Swahili was the privileged language of Administration and Education.

Following the defeat of Germany in the First World War, its colonies were divided between Belgium and Britain. In 1916, Rwanda-Urundi was granted to Belgium by the League of Nations (present European Union). Belgium was the first to introduce the French language in Burundi through administration and Education.

Nevertheless, while France was conducting a linguistic assimilation in its colonies, Belgium preferred to teach the language to a few selected people who were supposed to play the role of intermediaries between the colonizers and the indigenous population. According to Belgium, a colonized man with the mastery of the French language becomes an arrogant man and an obstacle to the achievement of civilisation as expressed in Manessy (1994, p. 45):

A black who knows French becomes easily uprooted. He thinks he is the equal of the white and even superior to the white. These Europeanized almost inevitably become obstacles to the progress of civilization.<sup>3</sup>(My translation)

Furthermore, education, the pillar of language teaching and learning, was not among the primary objectives of Belgium who preferred rather, to abandon it in the hands of missionaries. Still, education was neither the former concern of the latter whose main goal was to evangelize as quickly as possible. Therefore, as Kirundi was spoken by the whole population, it became the preferred language of evangelisation instead of French. Moreover, education was secondary to evangelisation and only very few indigenous people were accepted in schools since the selection was very tight (Gahama, 1983). Consequently, the French language did not spread in the country at the same rate as in French colonies and, till now, it is the language of the minority, the elites.

In sum, during colonization, in addition to Kirundi, two other languages were introduced, Swahili which remained mostly in cities, and French which gained the heart of the elites.

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<sup>3</sup>Original French statement: " Un noir qui connaît le français devient facilement un déraciné. Il se croit l'égal du Blanc et même supérieur au blanc. Ces Européanisés deviennent presque fatalement des obstacles aux progrès de la civilisation."

### 1.3.3.3 After Colonization

After independence in 1962, Kirundi was promoted to the status of an official language in parallel to French as stated in the Constitution of 16<sup>th</sup> October, 1962. Within an overall aim to revitalize Kirundi, and to get rid of any colonial acculturation aspects, principally in the educational system, French was withdrawn from the primary school and replaced by Kirundi following the law of 1973. In reference to the 20<sup>th</sup> November, 1981 Constitution, the Kirundization process started in the primary school was then followed by the elevation of Kirundi to the status of both national and first official language as stated in the article 7: “The national language is Kirundi. The official languages are Kirundi and other languages determined by the Law.”<sup>4</sup>

However, in 1992, French was reintroduced in primary school from the 1<sup>st</sup> grade, a decision which was taken by the Government as an answer to the complaints of parents about the low level of competence in French noticed among their children, due undoubtedly to the absence of the French language in the primary school. (Mazunya, & Habonimana, 2010). From 1981 up to 2006, the legal linguistic situation remained unchanged as it can be noticed in the article 5 of the new Constitution of the 28<sup>th</sup> February, 2005:

The national language is Kirundi. The official languages are Kirundi and other languages determined by the Law. All legislative documents must have their versions in Kirundi. (Article 5)<sup>5</sup>

Though the linguistic situation was generally stable, the integration of Burundi in the East African Community in 2007 has been followed by many linguistic changes.

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<sup>4</sup> The original French statement: “ La langue nationale est le kirundi. Les langues officielles sont le kirundi et les autres langues déterminées par la loi.”

<sup>5</sup> The original French statement: “ La langue nationale est le kirundi. Les langues officielles sont le kirundi et les autres langues déterminées par la loi. Tous les textes législatifs doivent avoir leur version originale en Kirundi. “

#### 1.3.3.4 The East African Community and the linguistic change in Burundi

The East African Community (E.A.C) is a regional inter-governmental organization involving the republics of Kenya, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania, the Republic of Burundi and Rwanda. With a principal aim of establishing a strong economic, political and social interstate co-operation, the community defines its mission as follows:

To widen and deepen economic, political, social, and cultural integration in order to improve the quality of life of its people through increased competitiveness, value added production, trade and investments (E.A.C. Treaty, 2001).

Furthermore, the article 137 of the treaty clearly states that the official language of the community shall be English and allocates Kiswahili the role of the community lingua franca.

Understandably, it was essential for Burundi to review its linguistic situation in order to contribute to the building of the community and to benefit from it as all the other members are English speaking countries. Therefore, on January 9<sup>th</sup> 2007, a new linguistic law introducing English and Kiswahili in the primary school level was promulgated. However, this law has been greatly criticized by educationalists for its apparent negative effects on the cognitive development of a child who has to learn four languages at the same time (Kirundi, French, English and Kiswahili), on his/her linguistic competence achievement and school efficiency.

Furthermore, the English language has been unanimously adopted by the parliament in 2014 (August) as an official language along with Kirundi and French. It is important to mention that since the integration of Burundi in EAC, the use of English and interest in the language among Burundians, young and adults, keep increasing. In addition to a growing number of English language centres, the government has launched English learning programs for public servants. However, as the aim of Burundi is to establish a “convivial multilingualism” (Politique

Linguistique du Burundi, Projet 2013), the reason why the government has also initiated French and Kirundi learning programs for Burundian repatriates from Tanzania, for both army officers and students.

Obviously, from the pre-colonial period up to now, Burundi has shifted from a monolingual situation to a multilingualism one, where four languages (Kirundi, French, English and Swahili) coexist mostly in urban cities, in particular in Bujumbura, the capital city.

### **1.3.4 The Linguistic repertoire of Burundi**

In Burundi, four major language are spoken, namely, Kirundi, French, Swahili and English.

#### **1.3.4.1 Kirundi**

Kirundi is the mother tongue for almost all Burundians, both educated and illiterate, except in urban cities where can be found a very small number of people who have acquired French or Swahili as their mother tongue, generally as a result of linguistic influence from the surrounding environment. Besides, being the symbol of cultural unity in Burundi, Kirundi fulfils the role of national language. Hence, it is used at home, in everyday social conversations, shopping, ceremonies, and churches, to mention a few. Kirundi is also used in the administration, legal texts, official ceremonies, in media as well as in education where it serves as the language of instruction for the four first grades of primary school. From the 5<sup>th</sup> grade primary school until the end of secondary school, Kirundi is taught as a subject. At the university level, Kirundi exists as a major at the University of Burundi and at ENS (Ecole Normale Supérieure, Teachers' College).

The use of Kirundi in urban cities, chiefly among educated people, is characterized by a frequent one word code-switching (code mixing) or tag code-switching, largely towards French and sometimes towards Swahili (practice of young people). These are illustrative statements of the educated prevailing linguistic practices of Kirundi:

-Hewe! Nca nda réalisa sha ko yagiye ! (Kirundi + French +Kirundi)

- Twagiye, c'est bon? (Kirundi +French)
- Bite, Ni poa? (Kirundi+swahili)

Kirundi is only spoken in Burundi, but shares a high degree of mutual intelligibility with Kinyarwanda, the national language of Rwanda. In addition, it shares mutual intelligibility to some extent with dialects of neighbouring areas in Congo (RDC) and Tanzania (*kiha* dialect, for instance). Furthermore, as it belongs to the Bantu language family, Kirundi is lexically intelligible, but to a very little extent, with many other dialects of the Eastern and Southern Africa such as Luganda from Uganda, Zambian dialects...

#### 1.3.4.2 French

Introduced in 1916 by Belgian colonizers, French is not widely spread across the country because it is only spoken by a minority representing the elites of the country. Therefore, the language is more used in urban cities where the majority of inhabitants are public servants. In contrast, it is less present in rural areas where most of the people are illiterate farmers.

Although spoken by less than 15% of Burundians and despite its unclear legal status within legal texts from 1981 until recently, French dominates in Education, in governmental institutions, public administration and international communication. Besides, it is largely used in the media. However, apart from instances of single-word code-switching or tag code-switching, French is rarely used at home except for the few cases mentioned earlier, where the language is acquired as the mother tongue.

It is also important to remark that French has greatly influenced Kirundi, a domination that can be reflected in French cultural borrowings used regularly in Kirundi. A few examples are provided below: ipataro (pantalon), ijipo (jupe), ubuyi (bouillie), ishu (choux), uburoso (brosse), ikarato (carton), ivyeri (bière).

However, the borrowing process is unidirectional, i.e., it is very rare to find Kirundi words in French, except for cultural words such as Umushingantahe,

Umuganuro, music instruments (Ikembe, for instance) that cannot find their equivalent in French (Frey,1995). This one-way influence is one aspect of French dominance over Kirundi as it will be clearly explained afterwards.

### 1.3.4.3 Swahili

In Burundi, Swahili is historically known as the preferred language of the colonizer and the language of trade. It has remained functional along the borders of the Lake Tanganyika and in some other urban cities. In Bujumbura, Swahili is predominantly localized in certain districts such as Buyenzi, Kamenge, Bwiza, etc., where even native speakers can be found. These areas are inhabited by Congolese and Tanzanian immigrants who may have contributed largely to this present sociolinguistic situation. Additionally, Swahili is mostly identified with Muslims, but all Muslims are not speakers of Swahili, neither the other way around.

Swahili is therefore used in mosques, at home (Buyenzi, Bwiza...), for business transactions, etc... Although until recently Swahili was not mentioned in any legal paper, it has always been broadcasted on the National TV and Radio. Besides, it is used in some public hospitals situated in the areas mentioned above, Prince Regent Charles Hospital for instance. Among the overall changes taking place in Burundi to conform to the East African Community requirements, Swahili has now been taught from 1<sup>st</sup> grade primary school since 2007.

From the long cohabitation of Kirundi and Swahili, Kirundi has adopted some Swahili words in the language such as isahani (Sahani from Arabic Şahn = Dish), ikaramu (karamu, from Arabic qalam = pen), isiniya (siniya= big rounded plate), ishati (shati= shirt), isabuni( sabuni= soap).

Though, Swahili is spoken in Burundi, it still has a very limited number of speakers. Nonetheless, it is gaining much more prestige as the language of regional integration in the East African Community nowadays.

#### 1.3.4.4 English

Until recently, the English language has existed in Burundi, principally in the educational system, as a taught subject from the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade (8<sup>th</sup> Form) secondary school and in some departments at university level. Moreover, English is taught as a major at the University of Burundi and at ENS (Ecole Normale Supérieure).

Lately, the status of English in Burundi has been growing constantly as a result of both the overall globalization process and the integration of Burundi in the East African Community where English is the official language of work. Therefore, English has been introduced in the primary school, but also upheld official language. Besides, there are new schools and universities where English serves as a medium of instruction, such as Hope University, King's School, Burundi English School, etc.

Although, new English language centres keep opening doors and receiving learners, speakers of English are still few in Burundi, and the language is more concentrated in business, media, technology, fashion and music at the expense of other domains. However, the future may be holding a different story for many Burundians; both adults and youngsters are now eager to learn and speak English.

#### 1.3.5 The paradox of Burundi Sociolinguistic Situation

Though Kirundi has been stated as the first official language in Burundi since 1981, the situation on the ground is far different from the one indicated in legal texts. French is actually the most dominant language in governmental institutions at the expense of Kirundi. According to the governmental project on the Linguistic Policy in Burundi (2013), French is the major language in public administration, in ministries, in political life, in the army and in education. Political parties' programs and legal texts, for instance, are first written in French and translated into Kirundi later. In addition, in the National parliament and Senate, although it is clearly mentioned in the constitution that all decreed texts or laws must be in Kirundi, the real situation is different. French and Kirundi are both used

interchangeably without any strict regulation. In governmental ministries, meetings are led in French, likewise correspondences are written in French except when the message is addressed to an illiterate citizen. Furthermore, most of the documents are written in French. A similar situation is observed in the National army (or Police) where administrative papers, official correspondences as well as training textbooks are written in French and are orally translated into Kirundi to the privates.

The educational system also displays well the inequalities existing between the real status of Kirundi and French. As revealed formerly, until the 4<sup>th</sup> grade of primary school, Kirundi is both the language of instruction and taught as a subject while French is only learnt as a subject. However, from the 5<sup>th</sup> grade of primary school, the situation changes. Kirundi is completely replaced by French. Whereas French continues to be learnt as a subject and serves as the language of instruction, Kirundi is reduced to the status of a subject. Yet, it is important to point out that in the private sector, most primary schools are completely taught in French at all levels and Kirundi is just a subject. In secondary school, French continues to dominate both as the language of instruction and as a subject, while Kirundi remains a subject with a reduced number of sessions per week compared to French and English (2 sessions of Kirundi out of 5 or 6 sessions of French and 3 or 4 of English per week). At the university level, the language of instruction remains the French language and Kirundi exists only as a major in the Faculty of letters and Human Sciences at the University of Burundi and at ENS (Ecole Normale Supérieure)

Visibly, although Kirundi enjoys its national status at a large extent, it is far from enjoying its official status for French has taken the major piece of the cake. Consequently, though not very marked, one can view the relationship between Kirundi and French as close to a particular case of extended diglossia. Indeed, from his study of 130 bilingual young Burundians (Bujumbura) language attitudes and ideologies, Ntahnkiriye (2008) discovered that French is viewed as an elaborated language, the suitable language for institutions, science and technology, while Kirundi was more identified with rural areas as the language of old people, as an easy language to learn (i.e. not complex or elaborated). These attitudes are typical

of a diglossic situation where one variety is considered as prestigious and used in formal domains while the other variety is seen as primary fitting ordinary social domains.

The power of French over Kirundi is also noticeable in code-switching practices. As mentioned earlier, code-switching towards French is characteristic of Kirundi language use among educated people, and concerns mainly single words or expressions inserted in Kirundi sentences. According to Ntahonkiriye (1999), Kirundi-French code-switching reflects the inequality between French and Kirundi. While Kirundi elements are modified to adapt to the inserted French element, the French element remains intact. Here is one example from his research conducted on 9 Burundian doctorates in Canada:

Exemple 3 : (Speech<sup>6</sup> N° 117):

« Nta ma- AUTORISATIONS barinda Kurondera »

(Pas d'autorisations qu'ils doivent chercher (au préalable))

Ntahonkiriye (1999, p.99)

Firstly, Ntahonkiriye draws attention to the fact that Kirundi provides simple elements such as determinants that constitute the frame for French elements (Cf. Myers Scoton's Matrix Frame Theory). Secondly, the French element in this example can stand alone and keep its semantic aspects while the remaining Kirundi elements will lose its meaning. This is to say that the French language provides the most significant part of the sentence. Thirdly, the succession of two vowels has violated the law of succession in Kirundi. Normally, that part of the sentence would have been pronounced [motorizajõ], pronunciation which would have altered the French element.

In sum, French predominates in formal domains, while Kirundi is the language mostly used for everyday social interactions. However, French and

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<sup>6</sup> Tour de parole n° 117

Kirundi are only conflicting in some contexts given the fact that more than 90% of Burundians are illiterate and only speak Kirundi, the mother tongue.

Following colonialism and different Government linguistic reforms, Burundi has evolved into a multilingual situation where history has seemingly shaped the position of languages regardless their legal status. Indeed, despite the official status, Kirundi is overshadowed by French in many important domains. Furthermore, the introduction of English in Burundi could cause a conflicting linguistic situation, knowing the importance it holds worldwide and regionally.

#### **1.4 Conclusion**

The first section has clearly demonstrated some evolution aspects of languages in contact. The inequity between languages in contact has been shown: how it can be a factor to language shift or minority language death. Therefore, following the Burundian sociolinguistic background elaborated in the second section, one can wonder what the future of these 3 official languages will be. These obviously do not have the same values and their domains of use are not clearly set apart. Is English going to replace French as in the neighbouring Rwanda or will this desired multilingualism result in a diglossic situation? What will be the fate of Kirundi between these two competing powerful languages? Only time will tell. However, in the meantime, the third chapter of this work will shed some light on this question.

## **CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY, DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION**

### **2.1 Introduction**

The purpose of the current study is to elicit the use of English, speakers' attitudes towards this language and its impact over Kirundi and French. While the first part of this work has presented a theoretical background and the sociolinguistic context of the research, the present section offers an account of the methodology used to conduct the investigation. Therefore, on the one hand, a full explanation of the research instruments is provided followed, on the other hand, by a brief description of the sample population, the methods of sampling, data collection procedures, data analysis and finally the discussion of results.

### **2.2 Sample population and sampling procedure**

Age is a crucial social factor in studying phenomena of language shift and language maintenance. Young people are almost always the first to adopt new vocabulary, new languages or language varieties, the reason why young Burundian students were chosen as informants for this case study.

The sample population comprises two groups of students. The first group consists of 3<sup>rd</sup> year Economics students at the University of Burundi, Burundi public university. Among them, 15 students were randomly selected to participate in the study. The second group involves 15 students from 3<sup>rd</sup> year Hospitality and Tourism at Hope University. The 3<sup>rd</sup> year choice was influenced by the availability of two friends, each in one group, who have accepted to conduct observation of their classmates' language use.

These two groups were chosen for their differences in terms of education system, mentality and degree of exposure to English. In contrast to the University of Burundi (UB), Hope University is a private university where both English and French are languages of instruction. Besides, the students are usually from the capital city or other urban centres and the university also hosts a number of international students from Kenya, Rwanda, Congo, Zambia, etc. This situation

implies a different environment from the one of UB where the language of instruction is only French and where the majority of students come from the countryside. Understandably, though all the participants share the status of students and are almost of the same age, they diverge in different ways that could enrich and balance the research data.

### **2.3 Research Instruments**

The data were collected by means of a questionnaire and peer-participant observation.

#### **2.3.1 Questionnaire**

Although a questionnaire cannot tell us about the context and meaning behind a response, it is practical both in data collection and analysis. Besides, even if the researcher is not the one to collect data, a questionnaire can be easily handled by anyone and with limited affect to data validity and reliability. This is the most important reason that has influenced the choice of a questionnaire as a means of data collection in this work, because the researcher could not be on the field study to collect the data by herself. In fact, the questionnaire was designed to allow quantitative and qualitative data, therefore it was a mixed questionnaire with close and open-ended questions:

- Close-ended questions: this type of questions is very useful to discover the participants' spontaneous answers. Besides, they are controllable, easy to analyse and allow quantitative data. The informants were asked to choose the appropriate answer without giving any explanation of the choice. Obviously, close-ended questions are very limited as they cannot show the thinking process of the informants; in addition, they cannot reveal the informants' understanding of the questions. Therefore, this type of questions was balanced by open-ended questions.
- Open-ended questions: Although this question structure gives the respondents more freedom and consequently increases the risk of irrelevant details or answers for the researcher, open-ended questions are very

important as they engage the informants in reflection before formulating the answer. Thus, the researcher can get inside the informant's mind and get rich data. Nevertheless, missing or incomplete answers are characteristic disadvantages of open-ended questions because they are time-consuming and require more effort from the respondents.

The questionnaire was primarily designed in English and then translated into French in order to give the informants the choice to answer in the language they feel at ease with. Then, the questionnaire was handed to 4 friends to check any bias. The feedback was rather satisfying though some sentence structures were revised for they were declared confusing.

Actually, the final questionnaire comprises 3 parts:

- ✓ Personal information: The goal of this part is to establish the background information of the subjects such age, gender, place of residence and the degree of fluency in the languages concerned by the study: Kirundi, French and English, Burundi official languages.
- ✓ Language attitudes: This part is set to discover the language attitudes prevailing among Burundian youth towards English and its use in particular. It consists of four questions: A, B, C, D.

Question A: It focuses on the informants' language preferences for different domains, namely family, market, Government, mass media, social media, etc. (see appendix). In fact, both formal and informal domains are included to help the researcher see exactly the perceived status of each language.

Question B: it focuses on social values attributed to each language. Informants were asked to match each qualifier with the language it describes more than the other.

Question C: This question is an extension of the preceding one. It aims at investigating which language the informant would be prouder to speak. Indeed, prestige is very important in the process of language choice, maintenance and shift. Furthermore, the informants are given the possibility to justify their choices.

Question D: Attitudes towards the English language are very important in this research; this question is dedicated to discover how informants perceive the use of English. This question serves a double purpose because the answers of the informants to the question may reveal the reasons underlying the use of English, noticed during the observation.

✓ Language choice and reasons: this 3<sup>rd</sup> part of the questionnaire deals with informant's language choices and their reasons. This part is very important for it shows what advantages or rewards the informants attach to the use of each language, what they expect from the use of one language or another. This part comprises 3 questions:

- Question A: From social data observation, it was noticed that there are many expressions that some prefer to use in English, others in French, in Kirundi or a mixture of two or three languages. Therefore, one of them, 'Happy Birthday' is then presented here in different sentence patterns (as noticed in the social media). The informants were asked to choose from the list, one sentence pattern that they would prefer to use and justify their answer. This question is one way to understand the informants' language use and their motivations.
- Question B: This question is asked with an overall aim to discover which language is generally viewed as more important than the other ones. In fact this question aims to reveal the emotions and benefits

that could help the chosen language to be maintained or reinforced at the expense of the other ones.

- Question C: This question is formulated to check out language preferences, but mainly, the major benefits attached to the presented languages. This question is important to this work since it reveals the purposes for which the informants need these languages. Additionally, the education domain was chosen because of its importance to the informants regarding their future and development. Besides, the school is usually the first place where linguistic reforms are implemented successfully.

### **2.3.2 Participant Observation**

What people report to be the truth, through questionnaires and interviews, does not often represent the real situation. However, participant observation is one of the best ways to collect accurate data because it allows the researcher to learn about the behaviours of the people under study in their natural setting through observing and participating in their activities. Indeed, the goal of using participant observation in this study is to understand the real linguistic behaviour of Burundian students in their natural settings. The objective was to discover how and why the sample population use the 3 languages under study in their daily life at university and with their friends, inside and outside the university settings. These domains were chosen because they were the only ones observers could access naturally and regularly. It is important to declare that the observation in each group of informants was carried out by two friends (one for each group) who happen to study with the observed groups.

However, participant observation is hard to conduct. Besides being time-consuming, the quality of the data depends also on the abilities of the observer for he/she has to rely on his/her memory, personal skill to pin down useful information and write down quickly. Hence, in order to prevent eventual bias, a checklist was designed to help the observers. The checklist was established on the basis of a pre-

observation of the sample population language use on social media (Facebook and WhatsApp) from which different patterns were drawn to serve as directors in the participant observation. For instance, it was noticed that their linguistic behaviour is characterized by code-switching from Kirundi towards French or English.

Therefore, the checklist comprised a list of numbered possible language use patterns (see Appendix 2) on the one hand, and different interlocutors and topics in a form of a table on the other. The observer had to report the documented data by matching a number of language use patterns to its corresponding situation. Besides, the observer had to illustrate the situation by examples. Here is an example of a short part of the checklist:

Table 2.1 Example of the observation frame

CONVERSATIONAL CONTEXTS			Language use pattern(s)	Examples
WITH TEACHERS	Inside the classroom	Asking for extra lesson explanation		
		When justifying absences		
	Outside the classroom	When greeting		
		When discussing grades		

As can be seen from the table, interlocutors and topics were selected following the formal vs. informal dichotomy in order to get a rich description of the facts that can allow comparison. While the classroom setting may influence the interlocutor's speech as a formal setting, speaking to the teacher outside the classroom might be different because of the change in the setting. Similarly, grades and lessons are topics that relate more to formality than greeting the teacher or explaining to him the reasons of your absences.

In the end, as the focus of the observation was more particularly oriented towards English language use, the observer had to notice whether English is used in forms of full conversations or single words and expressions (as noticed in social media documented data) and to report a list of examples in order that it might help

to understand some of reasons behind the use of English. Indeed, recordings would have been far better, but the observers could not deal with it.

## **2.4 Data collection**

As previously mentioned, the data were collected by means of a questionnaire and participant observation. The observation was carried out by participant observers. One handled the case of the University of Burundi, and the other one, Hope University. They were asked a few questions about the situation one month ago, and were asked to observe how their classmates behave linguistically. Then, they were given a checklist to report what they observed and to confirm the data through a week-time observation.

The same people who carried observation are the ones who distributed the questionnaires. The questionnaires, both in French and English versions, were sent to them through WhatsApp. They printed the questionnaire and made copies for the informants. However, as they are not used to conducting such type of research, things were clearly explained, i.e., the questions and procedures to be followed in handing the questionnaires. Only one informant from Hope University chose to answer the English questionnaire.

After, both observation checklists and informants copies were sent back via WhatsApp. However, only 11 out of 15 informants from Hope University returned the questionnaires. Besides, following the current Burundi political crisis, the internet connection was extremely weak, and later, some social media such as *WhatsApp* were suspended for a while. Therefore, it took two weeks to the data collectors to send back the questionnaires.

## **2.5 Data Analysis and Discussion**

### **2.5.1 Questionnaire**

#### **2.5.1.1 Participants profiles**

As mentioned earlier, 30 informants divided into 2 groups of 15 Burundian students were selected to be the sample of the present study. The 26 informants who returned their questionnaires have a mean age of 24, 5.

Table 2.2 Age of participants.

Universities	Mean Age
University of Burundi	24
Hope University	25
Total	24,5

14 of them were boys and the 12 others were girls:

Table 2.3 Gender of participants

Universities	Gender	
University of Burundi	9 males	6 females
Hope University	5males	6females
Total	53,84%	46,15%

As mentioned in the table above, 46, 15% females out of 53, 84% participated in answering the questionnaire.

Besides, the results revealed that all participants are speakers of French and English in addition to Kirundi.

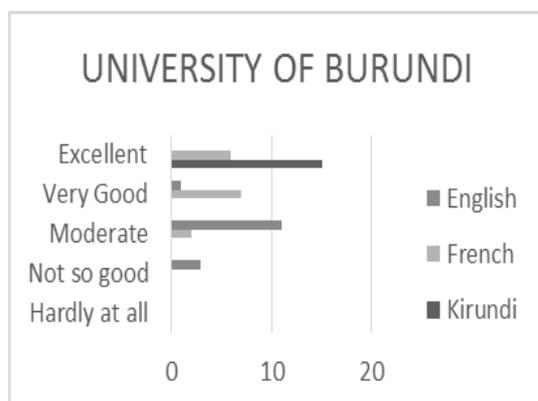


Figure 2.1 Language Fluency Level

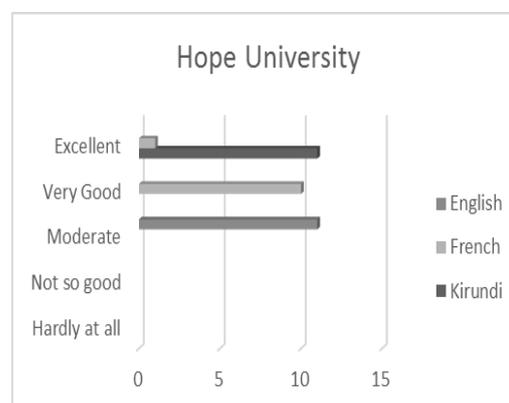


Figure 2.2 Language Fluency Level

Everybody (100%) claims a native-like degree of fluency in Kirundi, a fact from which it was subsumed that Kirundi is the mother tongue of all the participants. While informants declare to have a very good or native-like mastery of the French language, 22 participants (84, 6 %) claim a moderate level in English.

2.5.1.2 Language Attitudes

- Domains and linguistic preferences

While Kirundi was found to be preferred in domains where solidarity is salient, French and English are rather appreciated in raising-status domains as illustrated below:

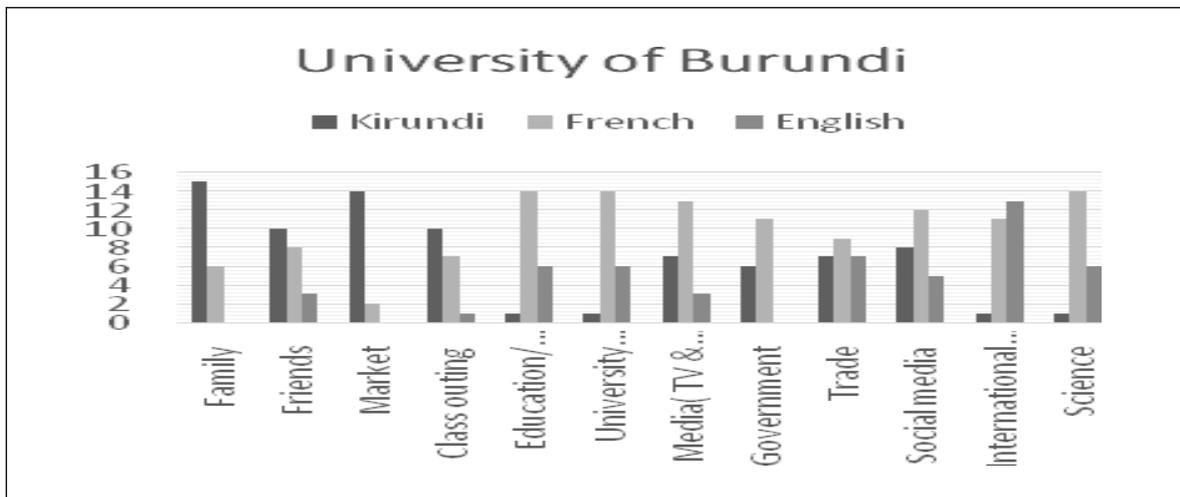


Figure2.3 Domains and linguistic preferences.

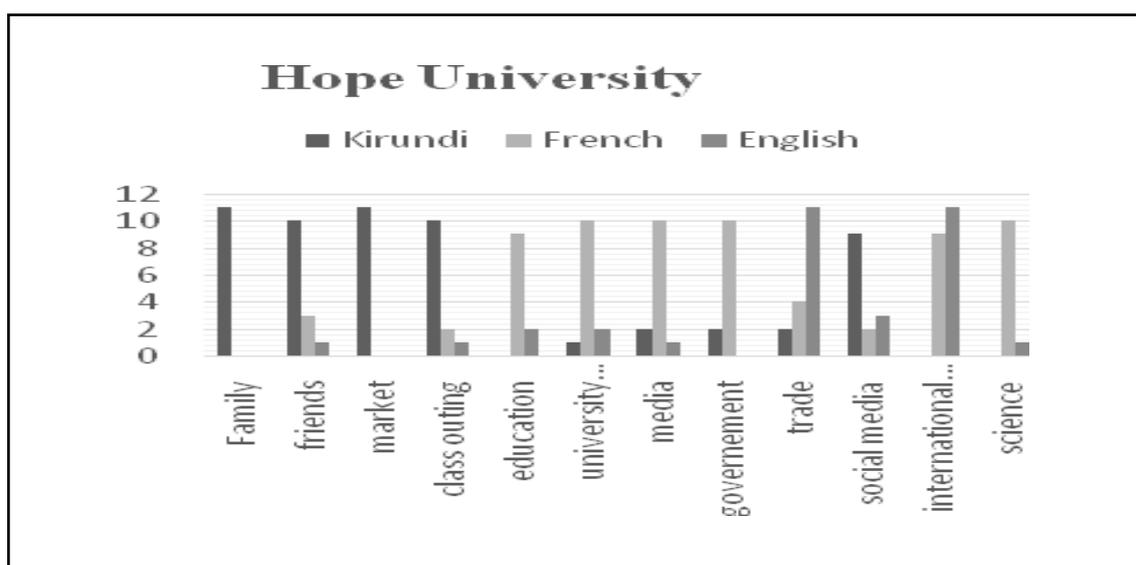


Figure 2.4.Domains and linguistic preferences

Visibly, at the state-owned University, Kirundi is preferred in family by 100% of the informants, by 93% at the market, by 66.6% with friends and during class outings of the participants, while only 6, 66% of the students selected it for Education and University administration and with 0% for science. Similarly, the informants from Hope University share the same preferences. While all students prefer to use Kirundi in family and at the market, no one selected Kirundi in Education (0%) or science (0%). In contrast to Kirundi, French was broadly indicated for education, university administration and science by 93, 3% of students from the University of Burundi. Moreover, at Hope University, French was chosen mainly in media, government, university administration and education, respectively by 10 informants out 11 (90, 9%) and 9 informants out of 11 (81, 8%). Still at Hope University, English was surprisingly less mentioned in education in favour of French though the informants have both English and French as the languages of instruction. This preference was explained in reference to their low competence in English which is not at all practical in learning compared to French which has been their language of instruction from primary school level. Then, the results show that English is rather appreciated in international communication and trade by, respectively, 86, 6% and 46, 6 % of students at the University of Burundi, and by all the students (100%) at Hope University. Finally, though according to findings, the languages are compartmentalized in terms of domains, there is no absolute line since English as well as French, for instance, can be noticed from the graph to be preferred among friends by 53, 3% of the informers from the University of Burundi and 27% from Hope University. Likewise, Kirundi is not restricted to family or market but was also selected in government, media, etc.

- **Languages and social attributes.**

In each speech community, languages and language varieties are attributed social values, depending on their functions, domain of use and speakers. In Burundi, foreign languages, French and English, are highly valued at the expense of the local language, Kirundi, as revealed by the following findings:

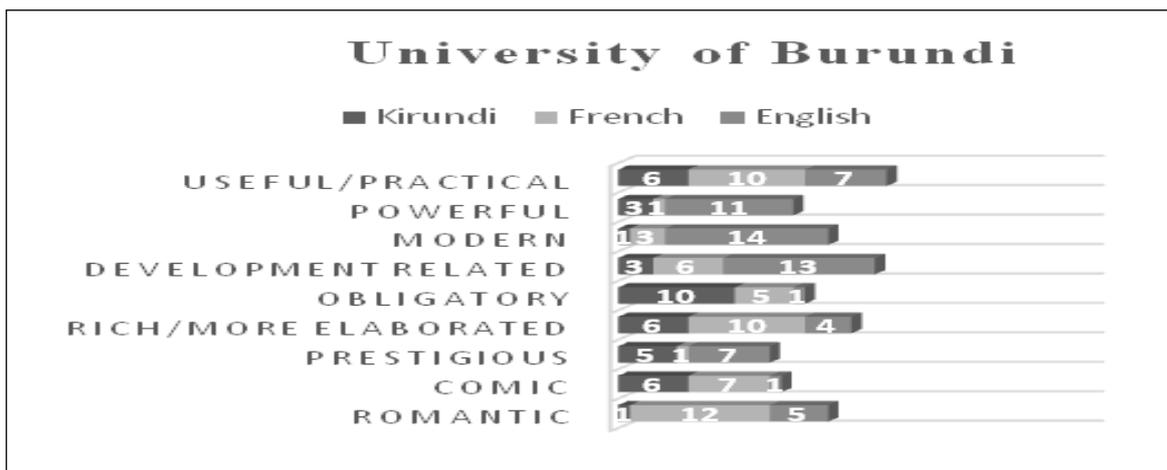


Figure2.5 Social Values

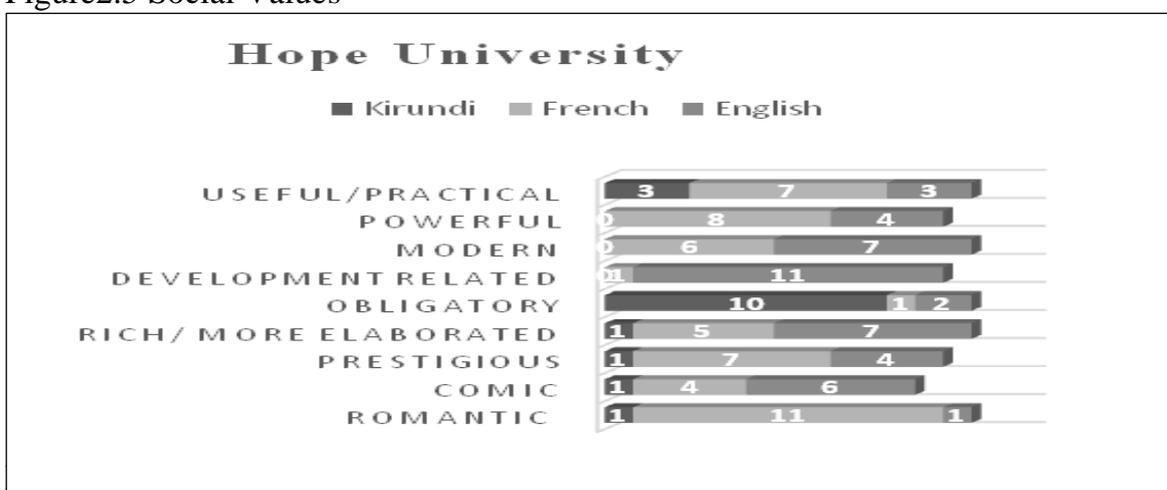


Figure2.6 Social values

At the University of Burundi, English is the most appreciated language with 40% of choices against 34% of French and 26% of Kirundi. English is specifically described as modern by 93, 3% of the informants, development related by 86, 6%, powerful (73, 3%) and prestigious (46, 6). On the other hand, French is defined as romantic by 80% of the participants, more elaborated and practical by 66, 6% as well as comic by 46, 6% of informers. Furthermore, 66, 6% of them identify Kirundi as obligatory in addition to being practical (40%), comic (40%) and more elaborated (40%). However, at Hope University, French is the most appreciated language. It comes first with 45% of choices and is identified as the most romantic language by 100% of the informants, more prestigious (63, 6%), powerful (72, 2%) and, again practical (63.6%). In the second place comes English which is mentioned as related to development by all the students (100%). It is also described as more

elaborated than French by 7 students out of 11 (63.6%) against 5 students for French, undoubtedly because of the students' low linguistic competence in the language and perhaps because it is one of the languages of instruction. Finally, Kirundi comes in the third position (15%) and is less appreciated than it is among students from the University of Burundi. Still, from both groups, Kirundi was widely selected as obligatory, respectively by 77% and 63%, maybe because more than 89% of the population speak Kirundi only

- **Pride in speaking Kirundi, French or English**

According to the findings, most Burundian students evoked their pride in speaking Kirundi and the arguments are rather emotional than materialistic compared to English for instance. The table below illustrates the statistics:

Table 2. 4. Pride in speaking Kirundi, French and English

	University of Burundi		Hope University	
	Absolute frequency of choices	Relative frequency of choices	Absolute frequency of choices	Relative frequency of choices
Kirundi	10	43%	6	40%
French	5	22%	6	40%
English	8	35%	3	20%

At the University of Burundi, the informants feel more proud of speaking Kirundi, their mother tongue, with 43% of choices against 22% of French and 35% of English. However, informants from Hope University show the same level of pride in speaking Kirundi and French with 40% of choices. According to both groups of informants, they are proud of their identity and culture, therefore, speaking Kirundi is very important for it is their mother tongue first, but also because of its role in local communication with parents, friends and neighbours.

Observably, informants from Hope University are prouder of speaking French than English (40% against 20%) while informants from the University of Burundi feel rather proud of speaking English than French (35% against 22%). This nuance between French and English among the two groups may be explained by the fact that Hope University students do not feel English as more prestigious than French because they are in constant contact with the language in contrast with Burundi university students. According to the results, the choice of French on both sides is principally defined by the fact that French has many speakers on the ground and has been their language of instruction from childhood. Besides, Hope University informants highlighted that French is the language of educated people and for that reason, it is prestigious in Burundi. Although Burundi University informants revealed to appreciate English more than French, the reasons attached to the choice of English are the same for both groups. English is claimed to be an international language, used in different domains, particularly business and trade.

- **English speakers and social perceptions**

As it may be noticed from the figure below, English is identified with socio-economic well-being qualifications:

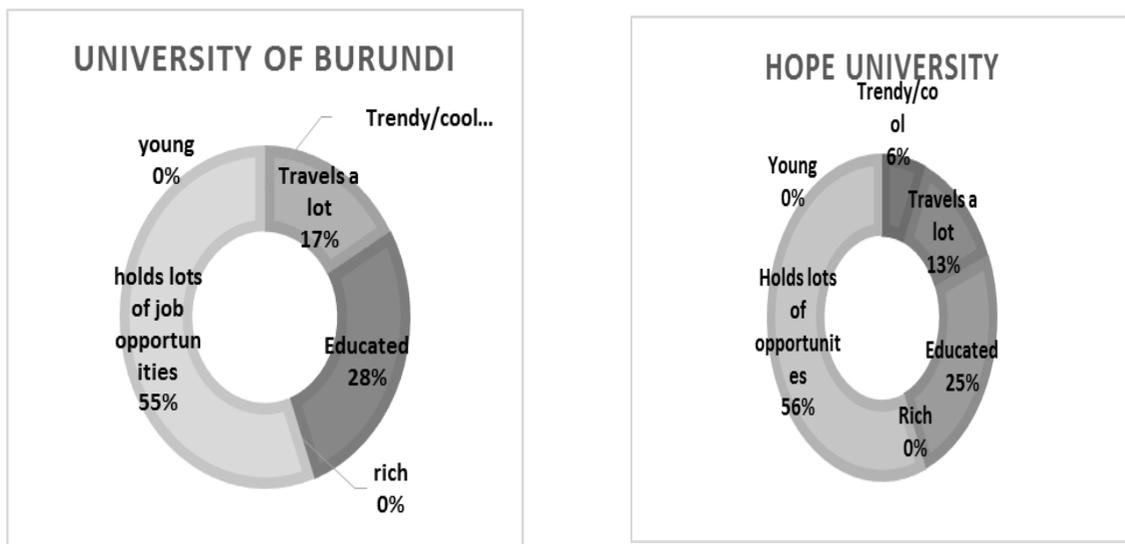


Figure 2.7 English speakers and social perceptions Figure 2.8. English speakers and social perceptions

All the two groups of informants view principally an English speaker as holding lots of job opportunities with 55% of choices at the University of Burundi and 56% at Hope University. Besides, he/she is perceived as an educated person who travels a lot. Indeed, these results confirm previously discussed statements that English is the language of development, a worldwide language, extensively used in airports.

### **2.5.1.3. Language choice and motivations**

- **Preferred language patterns**

In a given context, bilinguals always tend to choose one language over another, regarding the degree of self-satisfaction they can get from its use. According to the findings, Burundian students see more benefits or rewards in expressing their happy birthday wishes in foreign languages or a mixture of Kirundi and English.

At the University of Burundi, although the use of Kirundi alone is less preferred with only 13% of choices, the pattern English + Kirundi was chosen at the rate of 31%. According to the reasons provided, Kirundi is declared to be their beloved mother tongue and English their preferred foreign language. Then a mixture of the two languages sounds ‘cool’ and is more practical to use among friends, “even with those who do not master well the English language”, said one. The second prevailing choice (25%), as shown in the figure below, was the use of the English pattern ‘Happy birthday, blessings’. The choice of this pattern was explained by statements like “I am passionate with the English language, English is cool”. One informant even claims that English as well as French sound polite. The use of the French pattern ‘Joyeux anniversaire, soyez benis’ comes in the third position with 19%. The informants explain that the use of French is polite, particularly among educated people who already speak the language.

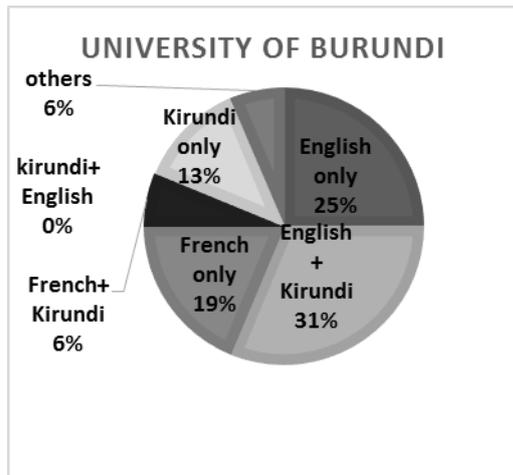


Figure 2.9. Preferred language patterns

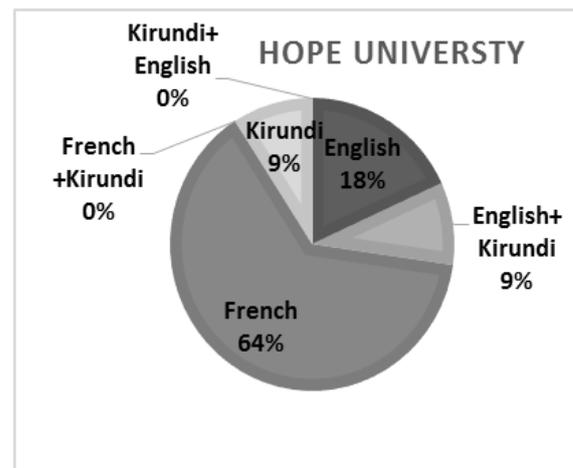


Figure 2.10. Preferred language patterns

Noticeably, in contrast to Burundi University informants who like the use of English language patterns, Hope University informants find satisfaction in the use of French. The French expression ‘Joyeux anniversaire, soyez benis’ comes first with 64%. Indeed, the informants from Hope University claim that this expression is widely used among civilized young people and is practical given the fact that Burundi is a French speaking country. Besides, one informant goes further to declare that celebrating one’s birthday is a very important event and a special language such as French should be used in such circumstances. In addition, as in the first group, Kirundi is also absent here, with only one informant who claimed to like the expression in Kirundi because it is ‘moving’. Though this question was only about ‘Happy Birthday’ wishes, the answers displayed similarities between students’ attitudes towards the concerned languages and their use. For instance, the difference in attitudes noticed between the two groups towards French and English is repeated here. Informants from the University of Burundi prefer English expressions or a mixture of Kirundi and English, while Hope university informants prefer to use French. However, Kirundi is less used in both groups as if it was not appropriate or practical in such a context.

- **If you had to speak only one language, which one would you choose?**

The answers to this question were expected to highlight the language attached with more importance and loyalty, the one which may survive no matter the situation. The answers provided seem to be shared between English and Kirundi

Table 2.5. Loyalty towards Kirundi, French and English

Languages	University of Burundi		Hope University	
	frequency of choices			
	Absolute	Relative	Absolute	Relative
<b>Kirundi</b>	6	40%	3	27%
<b>French</b>	2	13%	2	18%
<b>English</b>	7	47%	6	55%

While English comes in the first position with 47% of mention at the University of Burundi, Kirundi follows as the compulsory language to know with 40% of choices, whereas French comes in the last position with only 13%. Similarly, at Hope University, English was largely selected with 55% of choices, followed by Kirundi with 27% and finally French with 18%. In both groups, English is justified to confer the ability to face and succeed in today's world for its worldwide use and it allows economic development regarding the different job opportunities related to it. Additionally, it was repeatedly mentioned as the language of success and integration in the East African Region.

While it is apparent that the English language is more related to socio-economic aspects, Kirundi is once more defended as the symbol of Burundian identity which they are proud of and as the needed language in Burundi, for the majority of the population only speaks Kirundi. The few choices towards French (13% & 18%) were supported by its role as an international language and its existing competence among Burundians, a detail which confers French the easiness of usage or practicality compared to English which is not much known in Burundi. It is worth to notice that Hope university informants did not show a large degree of

loyalty towards Kirundi, only 28% against 55% for English in contrast to the University of Burundi where Kirundi comes with 40% against 45% of English. This difference of attitudes towards Kirundi between the two groups may be explained by the fact that Hope University students have grown up in an educated environment where the need of Kirundi is not sensitive as in the country side where inhabitants are mostly monolinguals.

- **Preferred language of instruction**

If you had means and required linguistic competence, which language would you like to study in? The answers to this question were almost exclusively in favour of English.

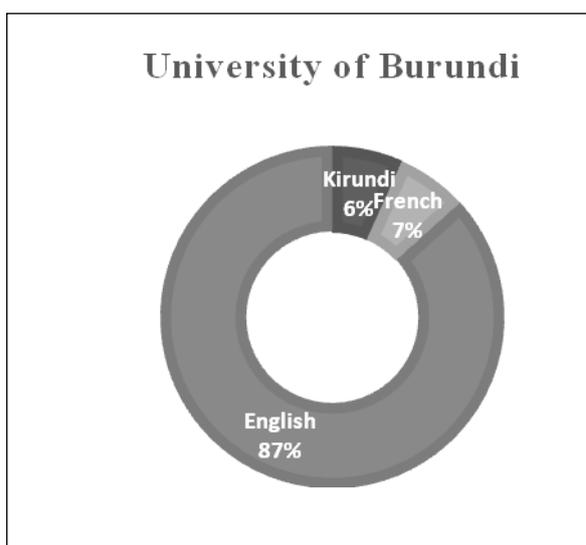


Fig. 2.11 Preferred language of instruction

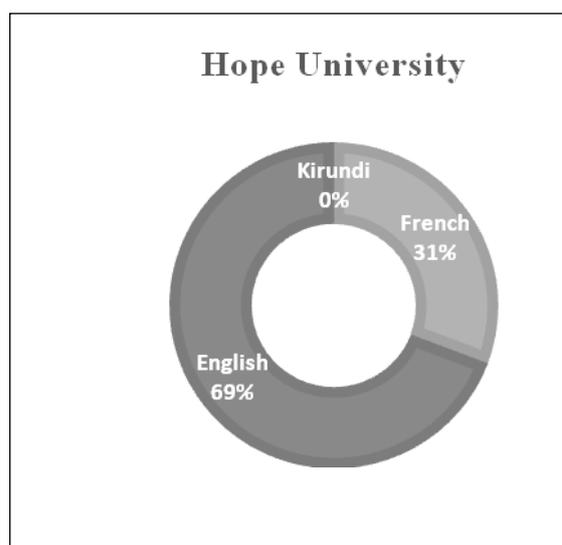


Fig. 2.12 Preferred language of instruction

Perceptibly, English was chosen as the appropriate language of instruction in both groups, respectively 87% of choices against 6% of Kirundi and 7% of French at the University of Burundi, and 69% against 0% of Kirundi and 31% of French. Indeed, besides being an international language, English is claimed to facilitate learning since many articles and scientific research are published in English nowadays. Additionally, studying in English is viewed as the best way to face the modern world and as a gate to job opportunities, particularly within the East African Community. Furthermore, English is assumed to be associated with economic

development. The informants made a comparison between African French speaking countries and English speaking countries by stressing the fact that the later are more developed than the former. These justifications subsume that informants perceive the English language or the English system of education as the key of development for the country and for themselves.

While Kirundi, as previously mentioned, is hardly considered for education, 31% of the informants from Hope University seem to appreciate French in education against 7% for French at the University of Burundi. Moreover, two informants, from Hope University, affirm that it would be better to study in both English and French for the two languages are important in international communication. These students see the advantages in the combination of the two languages rather than separated.

In conclusion, though differences of attitudes have been observed between informants from the two universities, English is perceived as the most prestigious and important language in reference to the socio-economic opportunities associated with it. In contrast, Kirundi is the language they are more proud to speak and is seen as obligatory language since it is a requisite in family or market communication. Besides being claimed the most romantic language, French is evaluated as more practical than English, therefore it was declared preferred to be used in many contexts since it is the only foreign language spoken by many Burundians.

### **2.5.2 Participant Observation**

The present analysis aims at a qualitative analysis of Kirundi, French and English language use and the associated reasons.

➤ **Context one:**

**a) Conversations with teachers in classroom setting:**

At the University of Burundi, French is the language of instruction, thus it is the language used in the classroom between teachers and students for lectures. Nevertheless, it has been noticed that there are some English technical items that

occur from time to time since the participants are majoring in Economics. Besides, Kirundi is reported to be occasionally used for clarifications.

Table 2.6 Language use with teachers inside the classroom settings.

Conversational contexts			University of Burundi	Hope University
			Language patterns	Language patterns
WITH TEACHERS	Within the classroom	Asking for additional lesson explanations	French, French + inserted words in Kirundi, French + inserted words in English	French, English
		When justifying absences	(it is forbidden)	French, English, Kirundi-French CS (emphasis)

At Hope University, the findings show that French and English are the languages used in the classroom whether for teaching or discussing lessons with students. Similarly, less formal topics such as justifying absences are also expressed in French or English, except when the students have to recall on a solidarity strategy by using Kirundi in order to convince the teacher as in the following example:

**Example:** Bonjour! Je voudrais m'excuser pour l'absence d'hier, *nari nfiseingorane muhira familial*: ‘.....j'avais un problème familial.’

As shown in the table of findings above, French and English are the main languages used in the classroom settings in formal speech. Besides, the change in the topic is noticed to be of less influence on students' language choice since French or English remain the languages used by the students when justifying their absences to teachers. However, as noticed in the last example, such less formal topics are noticed to allow the use of Kirundi by students more than in formal topics such as asking for additional lesson explanations.

### b) Conversations with Teachers outside the classroom setting:

Although there is a change in the context, the situation remains almost the same, French and English remains the main languages of interaction between the teacher and student outside the classroom.

Table 2.7 Talking to teachers outside the classroom setting

Conversational context			University of Burundi	Hope University
			Language patterns	Language pattern
	Outside the classroom	Greeting teachers	French	French, English
		claiming for grades	French, Kirundi	French, English, Kirundi-French CS

Observably, greeting a teacher is performed as a formal speech act that requires the use of French at the University of Burundi and of both English and French at Hope University. Indeed, the student-teacher relationship is very important in Burundian educational system. Therefore, French or English are the best choices that help the student keep a certain distance from the teacher for the sake of politeness. Likewise, the findings reveal that, even outside the classroom context, school related topics are discussed in French or English, but also allow occasionally the use of Kirundi as it can be noticed in the following example:

**Example:** -Bonjour Monsieur! Je profite ko ndakubonye uyu mwanya, j'ai un cours muri yo mutampaye amanota, je ne sais pas si vous pourriez m'aider. : “ Bonjour Monsieur ! je profite de cette rencontre pour vous dire qu'il y a un cours dans lequel j'ai pas reçu ma note, je ne sais si vous pourriez m'aider.”

The student indicated first that he knew the importance of the teacher by greeting him in French to show respect. However, the student switched to Kirundi right after before introducing his request. Here, Kirundi is used as a strategy to call on solidarity in order to:

- avoid refutation of the introduced subject since grades are supposed to be dealt with within the classroom or school administration

- secure his request. Indeed, he chose to express himself in Kirundi to stimulate empathy in the teacher, then he formulated his request in French.

Thus, each language is noticed to have a particular role to play outside the classroom context. While French and English are used to maintain distance and to show respect, Kirundi is used to reduce the distance between interlocutors.

➤ **Context two:**

**a) Conversations between classmates inside the classroom setting**

Kirundi – French code-switching was observed to be the leading code of discussions among classmates.

Table 2.8 Classmates' interaction with the classroom settings

Conversational context			University of Burundi	Hope University
			Language patterns	
With classmates	Within the classroom setting	When revising for an exam	Kirundi+ French words French+ Kirundi words Kirundi+ English and French words.	Kirundi Kirundi-French CS English
		When negotiating about a new time table	Kirundi+ French words French+ Kirundi words Kirundi+ English and French words.	Kirundi or French or English Kirundi-French - English CS

According to the findings, Kirundi-French code-switching appears as a language variety code-switching itself in both groups of participants. For instance at the

University of Burundi, during an exam revision, participants switch from Kirundi to French repetitively. Here is an illustrative example:

**Example:1)** Kuri numéro 12 bakoresha modèles des comparatifs. :

‘On the (question) number 12, the comparative model is used.’

In the first example, Kirundi is the matrix language and embodies French elements. While the French element ‘modèles des comparatifs’ might be a technical word in the field, the French element ‘numéro 12’ is a bit complex to explain for there exists its well-known equivalent in Kirundi ‘nomero / nimeru cumi na zibiri’. Its occurrence may be explained by the fact that:

- The French word ‘numéro’ has its borrowed equivalent in Kirundi but whose adapted pronunciation sounds uneducated [nomero/ nimeru], therefore, to save the identity of an educated student and create the difference, the student opts for the French word ‘numéro’
- Numbers are usually used in French among educated people. Besides, as for the first element, saying numbers in Kirundi is typical to farmers who have no school level.

Understandably, code-switching is used here as a strategy to define and reinforce one’s identity. Furthermore, while English was observed to be used among Hope University classmates in the presence of foreign students, it has also been noticed that, in the absence of foreign students, English occurs as a code-switching strategy as shown in the succeeding example:

**Example:1)** Non delegué, *hospitality internship* yishire le 25 ukoreho iyo marketing touristique, tu peux même le mettre le 27 kuko muri iyo ntavyinshi bihari vyokuiga sana nka *hospitality* n’est-ce pas ? Tu peux demander aux autres ce qu’ils en pensent. : (‘No delegate, schedule *hospitality internship* on the 25<sup>th</sup> instead of touristic marketing, you can even put it on the 27<sup>th</sup> because there is not much to revise as for *hospitality*, is there?’)

In the present statement, the English element ‘Hospitality internship’ only refers to the title of a course module originally taken in English in contrast to ‘marketing

touristique’ which is taught in French. Moreover, at the University of Burundi, English also occur in the speech of classmates within the classroom though it is not their language of instruction. Here is an illustrative example:

- 2) *None tugire* espace de trois jours or not? : ‘So, shall we space out of three days or not?’

Compared to its equivalents ‘canke’ in Kirundi or ‘ou pas’ in French, the English elements ‘or not’ sounds powerful and does not let any choice to the interlocutor but taking a quick decision.

From the previous examples, the use of Kirundi is associated with participants’ awareness of the informality of the context in reference to revising with classmates, while the French language is used to maintain the educated status. In addition to being used for technical items, English plays an important role of emphasis.

#### **b) Conversations between classmates inside the classroom setting**

Commenting on an exam holds a certain degree of formality as it relates to the teacher, classroom settings or lessons. Therefore, one might assume that the appropriate language to be used would be French. However, the fact that the discussion is going on between interlocutors of the same status (classmates), there is no power relationship to be maintained between them. Then, Kirundi is the unmarked choice in this context because it reflects solidarity in this case. However, it is important to notice that although Kirundi is the principal language used in this situation, French as well as English occur from time to time, at least to express technical items.

Table 2.9 Classmates' interaction outside the classroom setting

Conversational contexts			University of Burundi	Hope University
			Language use patterns	Language use patterns
With classmates	Outside the classroom	When commenting on the last exam and its content	Kirundi Kirundi- French CS.	Kirundi Kirundi-French-English CS
		Wishing each other a nice weekend	French, English or Kirundi Kirundi- French - English CS.	French , Kirundi or English

In addition, though to wish a nice weekend to someone in Kirundi may be expressed like 'umisi wakaruhuko mwiza', French and English expressions such as 'bon weekend', 'enjoy your weekend' were observed to be mostly used among classmates except hope University participants who seem to use English more with foreign students than Burundians. However, Kirundi appears to be also used, but in the form of code-switching with English or French, probably because equivalent Kirundi expressions are not common among educated people or young people, then using it would be a marked choice whereas saying "Weekend nziza sha!" ('Nice weekend dear!') is the unmarked choice. Therefore, it is important to realize that Burundian students switch from Kirundi to English to maximize the rewards from the two or three languages in order to maintain their double identities in contrast with an illiterate Burundian.

### Context three

#### a) With friends within the University settings

Discussing the content of an exam between friends within the university setting, or talking about how the last weekend was enjoyable is done in Kirundi. Therefore, it may be assumed that friends use principally Kirundi to talk to one another other regardless of the nature of the topic under discussion.

Table 2.10 Friends' interaction within the university settings.

Conversational contexts			University of Burundi	Hope University
			Language patterns	Language pattern
With Friends	Within the university setting	When talking about the last exam and its content	Kirundi, Kirundi-French code-switching	Kirundi, Kirundi-French-English code-switching
		When narrating a weekend spent with friends.	Kirundi, Kirundi- French code- Switching	Kirundi- French code switching

Still, it is important to realize that Kirundi is rarely used alone but rather mixed with French or English since at Hope University, for instance, discussing the content of an exam done in English would require the use of English technical items. Furthermore, it has already been mentioned that Kirundi/French code-switching is rather the norm than the exception as it confers the value of a civilized young individual. Here are some illustrative examples:

- 1) En tout cas examen *yari yoroshe*: ‘undoubtedly, the exam was easy’
- 2) *Ikirori.com* : ‘party.com’
- 3) *Wangu weekend nyene yari bon, narasohotse*, j’étais avec mes amis, vraiment c’était bon!: ‘Dear, the weekend was really nice, went out with friends of mine, it was really nice.’

Certainly, each switch to French, in these examples, has its particular purpose. In the second example for instance, the use of ‘.com’ invokes, in reference to internet, an updated interlocutor, therefore, cool and civilized. In the third example, the sudden switch to French ‘j’étais avec mes amis, vraiment c’était bien’ implies that the interlocutor spent the weekend in a chic place with high class friends. Therefore, the choice of French reflects the shared value between the place, his friends and the

language used, while the use of Kirundi would have subsumed a weekend in a simple place with middle-class friends. This example reveals how French is perceived as a status-raising code as opposed to Kirundi.

### b) With friends outside the University settings

Apparently, Kirundi remains the principal code of communication among friends, whether within or outside the university environment.

Table 2.11 Friends' interaction outside the University settings

Conversational contexts		University of Burundi	Hope University
		Language patterns	
Outside the University settings	Discussing school-related subjects	Kirundi or French, kirundi-french CS	Kirundi, Kirundi-French code switching

However, from the examples provided in this context at the University of Burundi, it has been noticed that French is also used to express important university-related topics. Here is one example:

**Example:** On doit contribuer pour remplacer ces vitrines. ’’: we have to contribute to replace the glasses. ‘ ’

A complete French statement in such context where Kirundi is the unmarked choice reveals the seriousness of the problem evoked. Hence, the choice of French over Kirundi is used to signal the importance of the idea probably because French is already associated with formality in the shared background of the interlocutors. Likewise, while, English appears to be restricted to the school domain or foreigners, it is also increasingly found out of in everyday interactions among friends in a code-switching form. The observation findings display that code-switching to English can occur as

- Single word: *Pm ndaza*: “I will come this afternoon”.
- Clause or sentence: *I will let you know nitwaheza*: “I will let you know if we are done.”

According to the findings, code-switching to English intervenes to fill gaps of technology related items with no equivalent in Kirundi, as may be realized in the following example:

**Example:** *Pm ndaja kuri Wifi nshaka kw’ updatinga ama applications one by one.* : “This afternoon, I will look for Wifi, I would like to update my applications one by one.”

From the statement, items such ‘wifi’, ‘applications’ belongs to technological terminology and have not yet equivalents in Kirundi. Furthermore, the terms ‘update’ and ‘applications’, though they exist in French are usually used in English because most of the telephones available on the Burundian market are labelled in English and for the reason that all the applications have English names: Facebook, WhatsApp Messenger, etc. It is also worth noting the way that the verb ‘update’ is used in a wrong way, but it could be a strategy to facilitate its pronunciation since to utter [kwΛpdeit ama aeplikeiʃns] sounds unusual. Then, the interlocutor may have preferred to add the gerund form with an /a/ in the end to adapt the word to Kirundi pronunciation rules. However, the speaker may have also chosen the gerund form by referring to the time the updates take since the quality of Internet is usually bad.

Additionally, English is used to fulfil many other purposes. At Hope University, the observer tried to report a conversation that was going on between two friends to highlight the use of English:

A: **Man**, we urasarisha naragutigise kugira umpe **time** tuvugane vyabintu mais narakubuze,

B: Jewe ndashima nyene nuko **time** ariyo igoye nyene.

A: None biri gute **now**?

B: Ni **fresh** kweli.

A: **Wow! Good!**

B: **So**, we reka **I will call you** dupange **time** tubivugane, sivyone none?

A: **Nice!**

In this context, the word ‘man’ equals to ‘muhungu’ or ‘mugabo’ in Kirundi. However, these two Kirundi equivalents sound rude, pejorative and would have made the interlocutor sound very angry after B. But, the use of ‘man’ show exactly that A did not like what B did in a cool but also serious manner without any contempt. Another English word used in this conversation is ‘time’. This word is usually used in its Kirundi version ‘umwanya’. However, throughout this conversation, it occurred three times in both A and B speech. This frequency may indicate that the item is usually used and appreciated in their environment. Moreover, it may have been used for emphasis because finding enough time to discuss seems to be the problem between the two interlocutors. The Kirundi equivalent ‘ubu’ for the English item ‘now’ is also commonly used in Kirundi, however, the interlocutor chose to use an English word instead, to emphasize on his request. It is important to mention that there are some English words used in Kirundi that have been adopted by young people from Swahili English borrowed words such as the word ‘fresh’ used by B which means ‘fine’ and is commonly used instead of ‘ça va’ or ‘ni sawa’ (Kirundi) in order to sound trendy. In this discussion, English is also used to express exclamation (Wow), satisfaction and approval by the words ‘Good’ and ‘Nice’ commonly used in the Burundian speech either in French ( bien! très bien!) or in Kirundi ( sawa! Ni vyiza!) Besides, the word ‘so’, used in the conversation above to call attention on the following statement, is usually known in Burundi as ‘Bon, donc’ or in Kirundi as ‘none, rero’. Likewise, the clause ‘I will call you’ is commonly used in Kirundi or French. However, the interlocutor chose to express the idea in English, probably to emphasize on the promise and show he will try his best to fulfil it this time.

As revealed in the previous lines, the English items used in the conversation are already known and used either in Kirundi or French among young people to fulfil the same functions of approval, emphasis... Thus, this practice is surprising though one may recognize the fact that French items are usually chosen over Kirundi to emphasize on a point as a marker of seriousness by reference to its perceived degree of formality. But, why did the interlocutors choose to switch to English, not to French in this conversation? First, we have to go back to the beginning of the conversation. The word ‘man’ was chosen over ‘muhungu’ (Kirundi) to show disappointment but in a cool manner by avoiding to show any type of contempt and the word has been realized to have no direct equivalent in French. Then, another English word ‘time’. Hence, these English occurrences may have triggered the use of the word ‘time’ by interlocutor B though he was referring to his own time in general not the particular time introduced by A. In fact, one may assume that B might have interpreted the use of English by A as strategy to show that he is educated; then, in turn, B might have decided to claim an equal identity by switching to English using the same word ‘time’. Therefore, though A had finished his first turn by a Kirundi-French CS.: (“*mais narakubuze*”), the use of English by B seems to have convinced him that his first choice of English had been much more appreciated by his interlocutor; then, he continues to code-switch from Kirundi to English. Interlocutor B continued to reinforce his identity by a continuous switching to English. The English items used by A, such as ‘wow’, or B ‘fresh’, ‘so’ are very typical of trendy young English bilinguals in Burundi.

However, young people do not seem satisfied with the rewards gained from switching to English only. As confirmed by the two observers, they tend to mix all the languages as in the example below from the University of Burundi:

**Example: I wish you** bamaraso mwese banje **avec toutes vos familles** amahoro **from Dieu**: “I wish you, friends of mine with all your families, peace from God.”

Nowadays, the clause ‘I wish you’ is known from social media with birthdays or Christmas wishes. Its equivalent in French ‘je vous souhaite’ is also widely known and used among educated people. But the speaker chose the modern and trendy

English version. Besides, the part “*amohoro from Dieu*” is very interesting. The expression ‘Peace’ and ‘God’ are very familiar to students, again ‘amahoro y’Imana’ and ‘Paix de Dieu’ are expressions used daily in church and are known by everybody. Therefore, to account for the mixture of three languages to express a commonly known expression in either language may reveal the desire of the speaker to identify himself with the values associated with both languages like a young educated and ‘updated’ Burundian student. It is worth to point out that the utterance ‘amahoro from Dieu’ is typical of young people for adults rarely use such patterns.

In sum, the findings reveal that Kirundi occurs within informal or less formal situations and is used between interlocutors in contexts where the power relationship is not salient to reinforce solidarity. However, French was found dominant in formal situations or in ordinary non-rule-governed social contexts where it is used to emphasize the importance of an idea or as an identity marker. Likewise, English, though still limited to formal context, occurs in Burundian students’ everyday speech as a status-raising strategy just like French.

## **2.6 Discussion of Results**

The aim of this modest work was to explore how the increasing need of English in Burundi is influencing the existing sociolinguistic situation. Then, much focus was put on the use of Kirundi, French and English among Burundian students, together with the attitudes they hold towards these languages in order to be able to get a clear picture of the current situation and how it will develop in the near future with reference to existing theories of language contact.

The results show that English is found in formal domains and has gained ground in everyday speech of the youth in the form of code-switching. In Burundi, the language of instruction is French in all state-owned institutions. This is the case of the National University of Burundi, where English use is very limited in classroom settings, occurring only in terms of economic/technical items. However, there are private universities where English is one of the languages of instruction. This is the case of Hope University, where French and English seem to compete for

the same functions. While French is used by students to justify their absences to the teacher within the classroom for instance, or to greet the teacher outside the classroom, English is also used in the same settings for the same activities, the only difference being the interlocutor. Indeed, English is used with teachers whose teaching language is English, either Burundians or foreigners, and French with those who teach in French.

Besides, English was observed to be used to fill gaps of technology- related items that have no equivalents in Kirundi. Still, some were found to be going under a borrowing process because their pronunciation is being adapted to Kirundi. This is the example of the verb ‘to update’ uttered within a Kirundi sentence as **[kwΛpdeitInga amaeplikeifns]** instead of **[kwΛpdeit ama aeplikeifns]**. Above and beyond this case of technological items, English was surprisingly found to be used among all the participants in ordinary verbal interaction at university or outside and for whatever subjects (school-related or not). This reveals the English language influence on Burundian students’ daily language practices characterized by the use Kirundi or more precisely, Kirundi-French code-switching.

Nonetheless, it was noticed that English is not used in forms of full conversations, but, like French, English appears in a code-switching form within Kirundi dominant sentences and this linguistic behaviour results in such typical sentence as “.....*Amahoro from Dieu:(Peace from God). Or ...umpe time mais...: (...give me time but...)*” where the three languages are mixed in one utterance. Furthermore, as analysed before and as it can be discerned from here, the English elements (*from, time, so, good, nice, man, etc.*) are used to express concepts already known and commonly used in Kirundi or French. Observably, the results relatively verified the first hypothesis holding that English may be gaining place in institutional domains and in the daily speech of young Burundians. Though, the use of English in public institutions is still limited, the results show that it is used as a language of instruction in the private sector. Besides, it is now found in Burundian students’ daily speech where it is used, through code-switching, to express concepts commonly expressed in Kirundi or French.

Furthermore, it is not interesting to explain why English is the language of instruction at Hope University because it is, primarily, a matter of language policy; it is also not interesting to figure out why students talk to their teachers outside the classroom in English because it is an unmarked choice used to maintain the expected teacher-student relationship. However, attempt to understand why all the participants have revealed Kirundi-French-English code-switching practice among themselves may certainly be curious. Normally, Kirundi (or Kirundi-French CS) is the unmarked code used by Burundians in the contexts where English practices have been realized to occur in a mixed form with Kirundi and French. Like in many other African countries, elites usually switch from the vernacular languages to foreign languages to signal a double identity of a local but educated man in contrast with the majority of his/her fellows. Indeed, Myers-Scotton (1993a, 2006) explains that, within a given speech community, language varieties are indices of a set of social values acquired regarding its speakers and functions in the society. Therefore, people tend to express their identities by picking up a language variety which expresses the same values as the one of the speaker's wanted identity.

Certainly, switching towards French in Burundi is very common and is identified to be the practice of the educated, i.e.; the French language confers a second identity in addition to the Burundian one, because not all Burundians have been to school. Therefore, the use of English by young people may be explained as resulting from a similar socio-psychological factor. According to the findings, young Burundians are no more satisfied only with the rewards, values or identities associated with Kirundi and French in their relationships; they want another dimension or identity that they express through English use. The results show that, compared to French and Kirundi, English is regarded as the most prestigious, modern and development-related language. Besides, the participants identified a speaker of English as an educated person who holds a lot of job opportunities and travels a lot. Therefore, the use of English may be attached to the need of being perceived as young and modern with the required abilities to integrate and succeed in the modern world where English is increasingly used, specifically in the East African Community, the new target of graduated young Burundians. Hence, one

may use English to add a new socio-economic dimension to his/her identity, which places him/her in a prestigious position vis-à-vis those who speak Kirundi and French only, without mentioning those who only speak Kirundi. As supported by Myers-Scotton (2006), the values associated with one language variety is never unidimensional. Indeed, the prestige associated with English here is a result of the socio-economic factors discussed above and vice-versa. Thus, this corroborates the second hypothesis which presumes that the reasons behind the use of English in Burundi are mainly related to socio-economic aspects and prestige associated with this international language.

Talking of prestige (towards a language), it is defined as an attitude or perception that results from a multidimensional evaluation by the society or individuals of the importance of the language vis-à-vis its functions and native speakers' achievements. In the current study, the informants' attitudes were more favourable to English than to Kirundi or French in general. Therefore, the third hypothesis holding that English may be viewed as an asset compared to Kirundi and French was verified. Indeed, the informants perceive English as the language of trade and international communication. These two domains are the most crucial for a poor landlocked country such as Burundi. In the mind of Burundian students, English is the current powerful language that can help Burundi connect with the English world specifically the East African Community and allow them to reach their aspirations. According to our participants, English speaking countries are more developed than French speaking countries in Africa, and connecting with the former appear to them to be the solution to Burundi economic development problems that Kirundi or French have failed to resolve.

However, though French is not seen as a language that may help face the modern world and reach the Burundians' aspirations, it is still appreciated. It was declared to be the first romantic, comic, rich and elaborated language compared to English and Kirundi. This shows how Burundians are emotionally attached to French while English is viewed in terms of power and development. Besides, French was declared the first practical language compared to English for it was the

informants' language of instruction starting from primary school. Therefore, they have a more advanced fluency in French than in English and French still has many more speakers than English for the moment. Therefore, this claimed competence in French translates the facility to study in French. This difference between French and English may explain then why, according to the findings, the French language has been attributed many domains at the expense of English, such as education, administration, media, government. Observably, the informants of the present study may have understood the importance and need of the French language in the functioning of different domains of the country where the personnel have a limited knowledge of English. This is confirmed by the fact that they claimed they would like to study in English, not in French, if they had means and required linguistic competence. They supported their choice referring to the many advantages associated with English in the contemporary world and within the East African region, as opposed to French or Kirundi. Furthermore, they also assert that if they had to know only one language, English would be their primary choice because, compared to French, it is the powerful language that can help them survive the present world and Burundi geopolitical situation. Therefore, it seems that the lack of competence in English constitutes a handicap to the language to be established in different institutions such as education. For the former reason, though Abioye (2013) supports the fact that prestigious languages are likely to be chosen for many important domains in a given speech community, French, unlike English, may continue to be used except for crucial domains that need to be taken care of immediately such as trade and international communication as well as education where many schools have even already started to launch English programs.

This reflection shows that English may not replace French immediately, but through time, with an increasing competence in English, Burundi may pass through a period of bilingualism before a triglossic situation gradually take place between English, French and Kirundi. In fact, on the one hand, after the presupposed bilingualism period, French may start to lose ground in a number of domains because of the English language perceived importance and advantages vis-à-vis the French language. However, this does not mean necessarily a complete withdrawal

of French in its domains of use; the situation may take a similar profile as the one existing between French and Kirundi. Kirundi is the first official language, however, French dominates in institutions where Kirundi was supposed to be the major code. However, Kirundi remains present and used to a certain extent. On the other hand, English (as well as French) may remain in a diglossic relationship with Kirundi. Regarding the findings, Kirundi is perceived as the language of solidarity to use in situation where the power relationship is not important such as in families, with friends or at the market. Besides, Kirundi is seen as an obligatory language in local interactions and the majority of informants declared to be proud of speaking Kirundi because it is their mother tongue and they are proud of their cultural identity. Therefore, considering the feelings attached to Kirundi, the number of speakers, Kirundi would probably be maintained and used in a diglossic situation with English and French. Additionally, in contrast with French, Kirundi is not threatened to be replaced in formal domains by English, though it is used at a low degree, because the majority (around 90%) of the population in Burundi are monolingual illiterates.

To sum up, it was discovered that although the use of the English language is still very limited, among Burundian students, there is a specific language use tendency towards mixing Kirundi, French and English as a raising-status strategy. Besides, English is associated with socio-economic based prestige at the expense of Kirundi and French in particular. Furthermore, the fact that the prestige towards English may increasingly continue to grow among Burundian students may possibly depend on the politics of the country but also on the future of the principal English speaking countries and their achievements.

## **2.7 Conclusion**

This chapter has given account of the research methodology used to conduct the present investigation. A brief description of the participants, research instruments and collecting data procedure were offered. Furthermore, on the one hand, the collected data via the questionnaire have been analysed quantitatively and

qualitatively; on the other hand, the findings obtained through participant observation have been studied qualitatively. Lastly, the results have been discussed in the light of the literature of language contact phenomena, and in reference to the pre-determined hypotheses.

## **General Conclusion**

The power of the English language has come to be considered by many to be a threat to the world languages in constant contact with it. Therefore, the increasing status of the English language in Burundi, triggered by Burundi integration in the East African Community, has drawn our attention to investigate the vitality of Kirundi and French to resist against any overshadowing influence from English for, since recently, they have shared the same status of Burundi official languages. Thus, the objective of the present study was to explore the English language use, students' attitudes towards it and its impact on Kirundi and French.

However, the goals of the present study were not reached in one day-journey, it was a long process that started with a review of the existing literature about language contact phenomena followed by an understanding of the sociolinguistic situation in Burundi. Afterwards, the research methodology was described before the analysis and discussion of the findings.

According to the findings, the first hypothesis holding that English may be progressively gaining place in institutional domains and in the daily speech of Burundians where French or Kirundi are the principal codes, confirmed to a certain extent. Although the use of English at the state-owned university is still very limited in contrast to French which is the language of instruction, it was discovered that it daily fulfils the same teacher-student interaction purposes as French at Hope University where it is a language of instruction next to French. Above all, English has already found its place in the Burundian students' everyday Kirundi-French code-switching speech, occurring also under the form of code-switching. This three-language code-switching was affirmed to be very trendy among Burundian youth nowadays.

Besides, the second assumption which holds that the reasons behind the use of English in Burundi may be mainly related to socio-economic aspects prestige - based was also verified. While the use of Kirundi confers a native identity, using

French confers an identity of educated person. However, English was noticed to be used in a mixture of Kirundi and French to add another dimension of someone updated with socio-economic stability or lots of opportunities to achieve it. Yet, English is also used as a language of instruction or to fill the gap of technological items still unknown in Kirundi.

Finally, the third hypothesis holding that the attitudes among Burundians may be more favourable to English than to Kirundi and French was verified too. Indeed, English is viewed as a prestigious, modern, powerful and development-related language as opposed to French and Kirundi. English is viewed as the best language of instruction, over Kirundi and French that could help Burundians students acquire the ability to face the 21<sup>st</sup> century successfully, mainly the job market. However, it is important to mention that French is still viewed as more practical than English because of the lack of English command among Burundians that can help them cope with the language as easily as French.

Therefore, it was noticed that English has started to influence the habitual language use in Burundi and, furthermore, is very appreciated by Burundian students to be the gate to the longed development more than French and Kirundi could do or has failed to do. Then, the government should put in place better-planned English learning programs that could help its people achieve their aspirations. However, it is worth for Burundi Government to understand the risk of promoting such a powerful language next to French and Kirundi. If English has managed to win many speakers among Burundians, a triglossic situation could take place within which Kirundi might continue to be dominated by both foreign languages in institutions and French might get overshadowed by English progressively. Thus, the Burundi Government should carry out a careful linguistic management in order to achieve balance between the status of these three languages in law and reality, and hence, contribute to the desired revitalization of Kirundi and maintenance of French as well as the promotion of the English language in the country.

Despite the fact that the objectives of the present study were reached quite satisfactorily, it is important to mention that the research area was not directly accessible to the researcher and this affected the choice of research instruments and the size of the sample. Besides, the current political crisis in Burundi slowed the data collection process because some social media such as *WhatsApp* were suspended for a while. Moreover, because of time limitation as well, the study focused only on young Burundians. However, it would be very important if future researchers tried to investigate comparatively Kirundi, French and English language use and attitudes among Burundian elites and more significantly, among authorities and political leaders since they are well positioned to influence the future of Burundi linguistic situation.

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## APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire intends to collect different language attitudes prevailing among Burundian students. You are kindly requested to answer the following questions.

### Part I. Personal Information

- a) Age :  
 b) Gender : M  F   
 c) Languages you speak and degree of fluency?

Fluency scale Languages	Hardly at all	not so good	Moderate	Very good	Nativ e- like
Kirundi					
French					
English					
Swahili					
Others.....					

### Part II: Language attitudes

**A. Among the undermentioned Burundi official languages, which one(s) would do you prefer in the following contexts.**

Languages	Kirundi	French	English
Domains			
Family			
Friends			
Market			
Class outing			
Education/Teaching- learning			
University Administration			
Media (TV & Radio)			
Government			
Trade			
Social Media (Facebook, WhatsApp...)			
International Communication			
Science			

**B. How would you describe the following languages?**

	<b>Kirundi</b>	<b>French</b>	<b>English</b>
Romantic			
Comic			
Prestigious			
Rich / more elaborated			
Obligatory			
Development related			
Modern			
Powerful			
Useful/Practical			

**C. Which of the following languages are you more proud to speak?**

- a) Kirundi
- b) French
- c) English

**Why?**.....

**D. How do you perceive someone who speaks English?**

- Trendy/cool
- Travels a lot
- Educated
- Rich
- Holds lots of job opportunities
- Young
- Others.....

**III. Language choice and motivations**

**A. Which of the following sentence patterns would you prefer to use?**

- a) Happy birthday, blessings!
- b) Happy birthday, Uhezagirwe!
- c) Joyeux anniversaire! Soyez bénis !
- d) Joyeux anniversaire, uhezagirwe!
- e) Amavukomeza, uhezagirwe!
- f) Amavukomeza , Blessings
- g) Other, .....

Why? .....

B. If you had to speak/ know only one language, which language would you choose?

Why?.....

C. If you had means and required linguistic competence, would you like to study in Kirundi, French or English?

Why.....

**Thank you indeed!**

### **APPENDIX B: OBSERVATION FRAME**

These are possible patterns of French, English and Kirundi language use among Burundians as revealed by social media data.

1.Kirundi only
2.French only
3.English only
4.Either French or Kirundi
5.Either English or French
6.Either Kirundi or English
7.Either Kirundi, French or English
8.Kirundi with some French words or expressions inserted (within the same sentence)
9.Kirundi with some English words inserted (within the same sentence)
10.Kirundi with some French words and English Words (within the same sentence )
11.French with some English words or expressions inserted (within the same sentence)
12.French with some Kirundi words inserted (within the same sentence)
13.French with some Kirundi and English words inserted (within the same sentence)
14.English with some French words or expressions inserted
15.English with some Kirundi words or expressions inserted
16.English with some Kirundi and French words inserted (within the same sentence)

**I. Indicate the language patterns among the stated above (or others) that describe best the following communication situations?**

N.B.: Indicate only the number corresponding to the chosen language pattern.

CONVERSATIONAL CONTEXTS			Language use pattern(s)	Examples
WITH TEACHERS	Inside the classroom	Asking for extra lesson explanation		
		When justifying absences		
	Outside the classroom	When greeting (the teacher)		
		When discussing grades		
WITH CLASSMATES	Inside the classroom	When revising for an exam (with your classmates)		
		When discussing the time table		
	Outside the classroom	When commenting on exams or a particular lesson		
		Wishing each other a nice weekend		
WITH FRIENDS	At school	When talking about the last exam and its content		
		When talking about how you spend the weekend with you friends		
	Outside the university School	When talking about any school related topic		
		When talking about family/home news with your friends		

**II. Do you notice any tendency of English use among your classmates and friends?    Yes            No            If yes...**

- a. In the form of full conversations?
- b. Single words or expressions?

**Would you provide some examples?**

.....

**III. Any other observation about French, English and Kirundi usage?**

.....

**Thank you indee**

