



A STUDY OF PHONOLOGICAL PROCESSES IN DHOLUO AND SUBA LANGUAGES

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ABSTRACT

The study dealt with the analysis of morphophonemic processes in Dholuo and Suba languages of Rusinga Island, Homa Bay County –Kenya. The study was guided by three objectives, namely: to analyze Dholuo and Suba phonology, to contrastively analyze verbs of Dholuo and Suba languages and to examine the lexical structures of Dholuo and Suba languages. The study employed independent parallel theory. This theory clarifies the fact that all languages share some common and obvious similarities as a result of sharing one common origin. The study employed both purposive and random sampling techniques in sample selection. Interviews and observation schedules were used as instruments of data collection. Only qualitative data was collected and thematic analysis used. It is notable from the findings that there is no phonological relationship between the Dholuo and Suba words for personal pronouns. It is notable that the Dholuo word ‘kanye’ for relative pronoun ‘where’ is disyllabic with CVCV structure. This contrasts with the Suba language word ‘ayi’ for the relative pronoun ‘where’ which has the syllable structure VCV. The Dholuo and Suba verbs are nowhere close to each other. They are not related phonetically, phonologically and morphologically. For example, the verb ‘drink’ has totally different forms in Dholuo “metho” and Suba “okunywa” languages. It is evident that all Dholuo verbs begin with consonants and end mostly with vowels while the Suba language words for the English infinitive ‘to’ start and end with vowels. It is for the above reason that we have the Dholuo word for ‘to bite’ as ‘kayo’ and ‘okulumia’ for Suba language for the verb “bite”. The Suba words resemble the words in most Bantu languages and more specifically Luhya. This study will go a long way in helping linguistis to reconsider studying Suba language as purely Bantu and closely linked to Luluhyia language. Furthermore, the findings of this study may be used to boost the effort of preservation of Suba language as an endangered one. It was notable that Dholuo language has not infiltrated into Suba language vocabulary apart from affecting it from the perspective of language shift where Suba language speakers prefer speaking Dholuo to promote their business in Homa Bay County which is predominantly Luo in settlement.

KEYWORDS

Morphophonemic, lexical, phonological, language change, language interaction.



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Background to the Study

Niger Congo-Atlantic Congo-Benue Congo-Bantoid-Bantu-North East Bantu-Great lakes Bantu-East Nyanza-Nyanza Mara-North Mara-Suba. On the other hand Dholuo language belongs to the Nilo Saharan language family as follows: Nilo Sahara-Eastern Sudanic-Nilotic-Western-Luo. AbaSuba and Luos are therefore speakers of two different languages that have been in contact for a long period of time. Language interaction and language change is therefore a possible thing to happen. As postulated by Dweik and Qawar (2015) that one's language choice is determined by ones attitude, it reveals that language maintenance is a reality. In their research on the Arab Canadians living in Quebec used Arabic language in mosques, homes, and the media. The very Arabic speakers used French language and English language for their official duties and educational instructions the learning institutions. At the same time they used a mixture of Arabic, French and English in their neighborhood, with friends and the media. This is evidence that multiple use of minority language by choice by its users full of positive attitude evades language change.

However, Arfi (2008) contrasts this idea and asserts that immigrants concentration using the same language is not a guarantee indication of language maintenance and that it still can lead to language change. Some of the reasons that he observes that cause language change in immigrants until they go for the dominant language is the aspect of the elites in the society. This is justified in the research of the Algerians in France. The educated Nigerians who stayed in France opted to use French language at the Algerian minority language that they spoke in Algeria before moving to France. The first and the second generation failed to transmit their minority language and instead transmitted French which seemed prestigious to them as elites.

The Luos who speak Dholuo language and AbaSuba who speak Suba language have lived together in South Nyanza in Western Kenya for a very long time. The Luos consisting of: JokaJok, JokOwiny, JokOmolo and Luo-AbaSuba of South Nyanza in their order of arrival. They all settled in South Nyanza.

Diffussionism of Dholuo and Suba languages took place due to language interaction as a result of intermarriage, trade, diplomacy and politics. According to Ayot (1979), AbaSuba settled in South Nyanza in Rusinga and Mfangano Islands. These Subas also stretched to Gembe, Kaksingri and Gwasi Islands. They were later referred to as Luo –AbaSuba after they acquired some Luo customs and practices. Ayot further postulates that in 1940, Suba language became Dholuo practically when the European power of 1903 made Dholuo a priority language of the area, this accelerated language interaction and change.

Ogot (1961) also asserts that AbaSuba consists of Abakunta from Uganda, Rieny from Tanzania and Bantu from Central Kenya. This Abakunta spoke Luganda and Lusoga which the Rieny from South Uganda also spoke before they went to Tanzania. According to census of Kenya 2009, there are 4.2 million Luo native speakers and 140,000 Suba speakers. Language interaction and language change has taken root even though Suba language belongs to the family of Niger Congo as illustrated below:

Statement of the Problem

Due to language interaction between Dholuo and Suba languages, Suba language has been dominated by Dholuo and as postulated by UNESCO (2016), Suba is one of the endangered languages. Most AbaSuba, especially the young generation, do not speak or understand Suba but Dholuo. They further explain that an endangered language is one that is only used by the few old generation, that is, grandparents. The parents' generation may understand it but may not speak and the children no longer

learn it as first language. It is indeed a great worry because the Suba language may move to the next level of critically endangered then extinction stage. This is contrary to our expectation that these two languages should coexist by being linguistically ambidextrous like other languages do interact and exist without the other being endangered.

In the real sense on the ground, there is danger of the Suba language existing because language shift from Suba to Dholuo has taken place. There are however no structures done to save the situation. This is something that has had complain signored. There was need for the current study to be conducted in order to save the Suba language. The study looked at the morphophonemic processes in language interaction and change due to language shift and the understanding will help reinforce the Suba language use for its existence in the Dholuo dominated society.

Literature Review

Ochieng et al (2013) observes that when a language is systematically described, it gets proper empowerment to be used in the public domain, its utility value is enhanced and it is also preserved for future use in the next generation. Dholuo is a language of the Acholi, a group belonging to the Nilo and Saharan language family. It is spoken by about 4,044,000 people in Kenya and 4,184,000 in both Kenya and Tanzania according to census (2009). It is a local language and it has no official status attached to it. Dholuo is used daily by its interlocutors to pass on culture, traditions and religious practices. The language is taught in lower primary schools as per the education requirement and policy of mother tongue but English is the language of instruction.

Suba language is spoken by AbaSuba people found in Kenya and Uganda. The Suba language under this study will concentrate in Rusinga Island due to its homogenous nature consisting of the indigenous Suba language speakers. It is also used in the media by radio stations such as: Voice of Kenya, Kenya Broadcasting Cooperation (KBC), Lake Victoria, Ramogi, Lolwe and Sunset. Of the two Dholuo language dialects as categorized by Sande(2016) as Trans YalaDholuo and South Nyanza Dholuo, there is no standard one but the South Nyanza dialect is used in the media for broadcasting purposes.

Dholuo language is viewed as a language with a very complex morphology from its derivational nature. It deals with verb extensions that are applicative and locative, reflexive, reciprocal and stative. All these have a great impact on morphosyntax and semantics of Dholuo verbs as Sande (2016) postulates. It has no consonant clusters but the only time consonant clusters are used is when used across syllable boundaries. It has a V and CV combinations and SVO sentence structure. Dholuo has 5 vowel phonemes that help in the differentiation of word meaning. The vowels are further distinguished by Advanced Tongue Root (ATR). When the root of the tongue is brought forward, the vowel produced is of a breathy quality. The + ATR is used to refer to tense vowels and – ATR refers to the lax vowels. It is a tonal language with four tones: high, low, falling and rising. The Suba language has 11 consonants and 7 vowels. Consonants occur at the start of the syllables. The language has a V or CV structure as in: i-nze (I) first person pronoun, ka-na-fu (laziness). Prefixing is used to mark the gender and number which determines singular and plural. The Suba language has 10 noun classes which has both singular and plural nouns. Like English and Bantu languages, Suba language has SVO word order. The adjectives and number roots have to agree in their noun classes and the number with the nouns they act on. The similarity in the nominal and pronominal prefixes determines the noun class. This language uses a less extensive prefixing system to change the meaning and plurality of words. The meaning of the root noun is also known to fluctuate depending on their prefixes used, mostly in pronouns.

Both Dholuo and Suba languages have common combinations of V and CV. This similarity makes it easy for the language change to take place. They also share the same sentence structures that make it comfortable for the interlocutors to shift their language easily. Prefixing is also another factor shared between these two languages that creates a soft landing for the language change and shift. Suba, also known as Olusuba, is a Bantu language spoken by the Abasuba people of Kenya. The language features an extensive noun-classification system using prefixes that address gender and number. A revival of the Suba language and its culture has influenced the increasing number of native speakers each year (Obiero, 2008).

Suba is an African language spoken by the Sub-Saharan people on the eastern shores of Lake Victoria. Trade dependence was established in the mid-19th century between the Abasuba people and the Luo, a larger neighboring clan. After a period of interaction, both clans became accustomed to each other's traditions and practices. Eventually, through factors such as intermarriage, education, and religion, both clans would combine and become known as the Luo-Suba. With Luo being the larger population, the alliance would decrease the demand for people to speak Suba, and in consequence, decreasing the number of native Suban speakers. Most Suban speakers became bilingual in both Suba and Luo. In the mid-1990s, a revival of the Suba language occurred after the government of Kenya initiated the Suba language project, where Suba was introduced as a subject in Kenyan primary schools. In addition, many written examples of the Suban language have been studied through ancient Suban religious texts. These texts depict a detailed polytheistic religion that describes spirits of ancient ancestors as protectors of family and land. Presently, Christianity is the major religion practiced by the Suban people, where in 2010; the New Testament was translated into Suba(Ochieng, 2014).

Suba, being a Bantu language, consists of a Bantu phonology typical of other Bantu languages. In general, Suba consists of 11 consonants and 7 vowels. Constants only occur at the beginning of syllables, creating a syllable structure of V or CV. Syllables can begin with vowels but always need to end in them.

Methodology

The study employed independent parallel theory. This theory clarifies the fact that all languages share some common and obvious similarities as a result of sharing one common origin. The study employed both purposive and random sampling techniques in sample selection. Interviews and observation schedules were used as instruments of data collection. The study assessed both Dholuo and Sub speakers, the young, middle and old generation. Business persons at market places were interacted with as it was one of the areas where language interaction is mostly used bearing in mind that fishing business is the core economic backbone of the people in this Island. The study assessed both Dholuo and Sub speakers, the young, middle and old generation. Business persons at market places were interacted with as it was one of the areas where language interaction is mostly used bearing in mind that fishing business is the core economic backbone of the people in this Island.

Findings

The study dealt with the Phonological processes in Dholuo and Suba languages as shown in table 1.

Table 1.1 Phonological Processes In Dholuo and Suba Languages

No	<u>English</u>	dholuo	phonetic	Suba	Phonetic
1	<u>I</u>	an	/an/	inze	[ɪdze]
2	<u>he</u>	en	/en/	iye	[Ijie]
3	<u>we</u>	wan	[wa:n]	ifwe	[Ifue]
4	<u>you</u> (plural)	un	[u:n]	inywe	[ɪnue]
5	<u>they</u>	gin	[gIn]	waria	[waria]
6	<u>this</u>	ma	[ma]	kino	[kino]
7	<u>that</u>	macha	[matʃa]	oria	[o:ria]
8	<u>here</u>	ka	[ka]	ano	[ano]
9	<u>there</u>	kacha	[katʃa]	aria	[a:ria]
10	<u>who</u>	ng'a	[ŋa]	anu	[anu]
11	<u>what</u>	ang'o	[aŋo]	niki	[niki]
12	<u>where</u>	kanye	[kane]	ayii	[aji:]
13	<u>when</u>	karang'o	[karango]	rii	[ri:]
14	<u>how</u>	nang'o	[naŋo]	otie	[otie]
15	<u>not</u>	ok, 'ki''	[ok, ki]	nganitio	[Ganitio]
16	<u>all</u>	te, duto	[te, duto]	zioona	[zio:na]
17	<u>many</u>	mange'ny	[manjeŋ}	nyingi	[niGi]
18	<u>some</u>	moko	[moko]	wandi	[wadi]
19	<u>few</u>	'ma'tin	[ma:tin]	awatoono	[awato:no]
20	<u>other</u>	machielo	[matʃielo]	awandi	[awaŋi]
21	<u>one</u>	achiel	[atʃiel]	endala	[edala]
22	<u>two</u>	ariyo	[arijo]	kawiri	[kawiri]
23	<u>three</u>	adek	[adeki]	isatu	[isatu]
24	<u>four</u>	ang'wen	[aŋwen]	kane	[kane]
25	<u>five</u>	abich	[abitʃi]	katanu	[katanu]
26	<u>big</u>	duong	[duon]	owunene	[ɔwunane]
27	<u>long</u>	bor	[bor]	endire	[edire]

28	<u>wide</u>	lach	[latʃ]	owiyagu	[ɔwijagu]
29	heavy	pek	[pek]	ekizito	[ekizito]

Source: Field Data (2023)

Table 4.1 indicates that the Dholuo and Suba phonology related and different in almost the same measure. The sounds found in Dholuo are also found in Suba language. The vowel and consonant sounds in the two languages are almost similar. In as much as there is a semantic difference between Dholuo and Suba words generated from the Swedish list, the phonetic and phonemic features of the sounds captured in the words are similar. The English singular 1st person pronoun ‘I’ has different words in Dholuo and Suba as shown below.

English	Dholuo	Suba
I	an [an]	inze[ɪdze]

Looking at the above, it is easy to tell that there is no relationship between Dholuo and Suba languages in terms of words for the 1st person pronoun ‘i’. from the above forms, it is evident that the similarity between Dholuo and Suba forms of the 1st person pronoun ‘I’ lies in their initial sound which is a vowel hence ‘a’ and ‘I’ respectively. It is further revealed that the third person pronoun ‘he’ has totally different forms in Dholuo and Suba, hence we have:

English	Dholuo	Suba
He	en [en]	iye[Ijie]

The above illustration shows that the glaring similarity between the Dholuo and Suba words for the third person singular pronoun ‘he’ is that they both start with vowels, thus ‘e’ and ‘i’ respectively. Apart from this orthographic and phonological similarity, the two forms are totally different to a listener.

It is further noted that the difference between Dholuo and Suba languages is manifested in their words for the 1st person plural ‘we’ as shown below.

English	Dholuo	Suba
We	wan [wa:n]	ifwe [Ifue]

The Dholuo word for the 1st person plural begins with a consonant, ‘wan’, while the Suba form starts with a vowel, ‘ifwe’. The Dholuo and Suba words for the 1st person plural ‘we’ are quite different.

Furthermore, the second person plural ‘you’ has words beginning with vowels in both Dholuo and Suba as shown below.

English	Dholuo	Suba
You (plural)	un [u:n]	inywe [ɪnue]

The difference between Dholuo and Suba words for the pronouns is further shown in their forms for the third person plural ‘they’ as shown below.

English	Dholuo	Suba
They	gin [gIn]	waria [waria]

The only similarity between the Dholuo word ‘gin’ for 3rd person plural ‘they’ and the Suba counterpart ‘waria’ is that they both start with consonants.

From the foregoing presentation, it is notable that there is no phonological relationship between the Dholuo and Suba words for personal pronouns. The study further looked at the demonstrative pronouns in the two languages to establish any similarities or differences that would be phonologically significant. The study looked at the Dholuo and Suba words for the singular demonstrative pronoun ‘this’. Data on this aspect is extracted from table 4.1 and presented below.

English	Dholuo	Suba
This	ma [ma]	kino [kino]

From the above presentation, both Dholuo and Suba words ‘ma’ and ‘kino’ respectively begin with a consonant. The Dholuo singular demonstrative pronoun ‘ma’ starts with a bilabial nasal sound [m] while the Suba one ‘kino’ begins with a voiceless velar sound [k]. Furthermore, the Dholuo singular demonstrative pronoun ‘ma’ is a one syllable word whereas the Suba form ‘kino’ is a two syllable word with the second syllable starting with a nasal sound [n]. The Dholuo and Suba words for the demonstrative pronoun ‘that’ are presented below.

English	Dholuo	Suba
That	macha[matsa]	oria[o:ria]

The Dholuo word ‘macha’ for the demonstrative pronoun ‘that’ starts with a bilabial nasal [m] and ends with a vowel [a]. Contrastively, the Suba word ‘oria’ for the demonstrative pronoun ‘that’ starts and ends with vowels [o:] and [a] respectively. Both words have two syllables each. Furthermore, the study looked at the Dholuo and Suba demonstrative pronoun words for ‘here’. Data on this is presented below.

English	Dholuo	Suba
Here	ka [ka]	ano [ano]

The Dholuo word ‘ka’ for the demonstrative pronoun ‘here’ is a monosyllable word starting with a consonant and ending with a vowel. This contrasts with the Suba word ‘ano’ which starts and ends with vowels. The demonstrative pronoun ‘there’ has contrastive forms in Dholuo and Suba as shown below.

English	Dholuo	Suba
There	kacha[katʃa]	aria [a:ria]

The Dholuo word ‘kacha’ for demonstrative pronoun ‘there’ is disyllabic starting with consonant and ending with a vowel. However, the Suba word ‘aria’ starts with a vowel and ends with a vowel.

The study further looked at the relative pronouns in Dholuo and Suba languages. The first pronoun was ‘who’ whose forms in the two languages are presented below.

English	Dholuo	Suba
Who	ng'a[ŋa]	anu [anu]

The above presentation shows that the Dholuo word ‘ng'a’ for the relative pronoun ‘who’ is monosyllabic. This and other foregoing examples show that Dholuo language has CV, CVC and CVCV syllable structures. The Suba language word for the relative pronoun ‘who’ is ‘anu’. This word starts and ends with a vowel. The second relative pronoun looked at was ‘what’ which have the following forms in Dholuo and Suba languages.

English	Dholuo	Suba
What	ang'o[aŋo]	niki [niki]

From the above presentation, it is evident that the Dholuo word “ang'o” representing the relative pronoun ‘what’ is an example of the existence of the syllable structure VCV in that language several previous cases presented for the Suba language. However, the Suba language word ‘niki’ for the relative pronoun ‘what’ is disyllabic taking the syllable structure of CVCV which is common among the Bantu languages.

In addition, the study also looked at the Dholuo and Suba language words for the relative pronoun ‘where’. Responses to this aspect are presented below.

English	Dholuo	Suba
Where	kanye[kane]	ayi[aji:]

From above presentation, it is notable that the Dholuo word ‘kanye’ for relative pronoun ‘where’ is disyllabic with CVCV structure. This contrasts with the Suba language word ‘ayi’ for the relative pronoun ‘where’ which has the syllable structure VCV. Contrasting the Dholuo and Suba language words for the relative pronoun ‘when’, one encounters the following:

English	Dholuo	Suba
Where	karang'o [karaŋo]	rii [ri:]

The above data shows that the Dholuo word ‘karang'o’ for the relative pronoun ‘where’ has three syllables with the structure of CVCVCV. The word starts with a consonant and ends with a vowel. However, the Suba language counterpart for ‘where’, which is ‘rii’ is a monosyllabic word starting with a consonant and ending with a long vowel. The Dholuo and Suba language words for ‘how’ was also looked into as shown below.

English	Dholuo	Suba
How	nang'o [naŋo]	otie [otie]

The Dholuo word ‘nang'o’ for ‘how’ has two syllables with the structure CVCV strengthening our allusion about the Dholuo syllable structures. The Suba language word for ‘how’ is ‘otie’ which starts and ends with a vowel. The English negation word ‘not’ has different forms in Dholuo and Suba languages as shown below.

English	Dholuo	Suba
Not	ok, ki [ok, ki]	nganitio [Ganitio]

There are two forms in Dholuo ‘ok’ and ‘ki’ for the English negation word ‘not’. The two forms are monosyllabic with each beginning with a consonant and ending with a vowel, thus CV structure depicted. In contrast, the Suba language word for the negation word ‘not’ is ‘nganitio’ which starts with a consonant and ends with a vowel. It is three syllable word.

Additionally, the study looked at the determiners in the Dholuo and Suba languages. The first determiner is the indefinite pronoun all. The Dholuo and Suba language words for ‘all’ are presented below.

English	Dholuo	Suba
All	te, duto [te, duto]	zioona [zio:na]

From the above data, Dholuo language has two forms for all. These are ‘te’ and ‘duto’. The first form ‘te’ is a monosyllabic word taking the structure of CV. However, the second form ‘duto’ is a disyllabic word taking the structure of CVCV, beginning with a consonant and ending with a vowel. The Suba language word for ‘all’ is ‘zioona’ consisting two consonants and vowels.

The second determiner is the quantifier ‘many’. The Dholuo and Suba words for the quantifier ‘many’ are presented below.

English	Dholuo	Suba
Many	mang’eny[majenj]	nyingi [jniGi]

The Dholuo language word for ‘many’ is ‘mang’eny’. It starts with a consonant and ends with a consonant like many English words. The Suba language word for ‘many’ is ‘nyingi’ is typical of many Bantu languages including Kiswahili. Another determiner looked at was the indefinite quantifier pronoun ‘some’. Dholuo and Suba words for ‘some’ are captured below.

English	Dholuo	Suba
Some	moko [moko]	wandi[wadi]

The Dholuo word for ‘some’ is ‘moko’. This is a disyllabic word taking up the structure CVCV. It, therefore, starts with a consonant and ends with a vowel. Similarly, the Suba language word ‘wandi’ meaning ‘some’ has two syllables with CVCV structure, thus starting with a consonant and ending with a vowel.

The study also looked at the determiner quantifier ‘few’. Data to this item is presented below.

English	Dholuo	Suba
Few	matin[ma:tin]	awatoono [awato:no]

The Dholuo word for ‘few’ is ‘matin’ and the Suba word is ‘awatoono’. The Dholuo word ‘matin’ begins and ends with a consonant whereas the Suba word ‘awatoono’ starts and ends with a vowel. It is common for Suba words to have long vowels in between consonants. The determiner ‘other’ has the following words in Dholuo and Suba languages.

English	Dholuo	Suba
Other	machielo[matsielo]	awandi[awaŋdi]

The Dholuo language word for ‘other’ is ‘machielo’. It starts with a consonant and ends with a vowel. The Suba language word ‘awandi’ for ‘other’ is almost similar to its earlier form ‘wandi’ for ‘some’ as previously presented in this section.

The study also looked at several numeral determiners. It looked at one, two, three, four and five. The determiner ‘one’ has the following forms in Dholuo and Suba languages.

English	Dholuo	Suba
One	achiel[atfiel]	endala[edala]

The numeral ‘one’ is called ‘achiel’ in Dholuo language. It starts with a vowel and ends with a consonant. The Suba language word for ‘one’ is ‘endala’. This word (endala) is used in most Luhya language dialects including Lubukusu. The numeral determiner ‘two’ has the following forms in Dholuo and Suba languages.

English	Dholuo	Suba
Two	ariyo[arijo]	kawiri [kawiri]

As shown above the Dholuo word for ‘two’ is ‘ariyo’. This word starts and ends with a vowel. The word final vowel in ‘ariyo’ palatalized. In contrast, the Suba language word for ‘two’ is ‘kawiri’ sounding similar to many Bantu languages. It starts with a consonant and ends with a vowel typical of many Bantu language words. The Dholuo and Suba language words for ‘three’ are presented below.

English	Dholuo	Suba
Three	adek[adeki]	isatu [isatu]

The Dholuo language word for ‘three’ is ‘adek’. It starts with a vowel and ends with a consonant similar to many English words such as errant, error, egg, earn, alas, ink, eat and any among others. Still, the Suba language word ‘isatu’ for three is similar to many Bantu languages such as Kiswahili and Luhya. It starts and ends with a vowel. The Dholuo and Suba language words for ‘four’ are presented below.

English	Dholuo	Suba
Four	ang'wen[anjen]	kane [kane]

The Dholuo language word for ‘four’ is ‘ang’wen’ which sounds similar the Kalenjin language word ‘ang’wan’. The Kalenjin and the Luo are both Nilotes boarder each other and this could be a case of word borrowing by either community. The Suba language word for ‘four’ is ‘kane’ which is similar to many Bantu languages. It has two syllables with CVCV structure. The following are the Dholuo and Suba language words for ‘five’.

English	Dholuo	Suba
Five	abich[abitʃ]	katanu [katanu]

The Dholuo language word for ‘five’ is ‘abich’. It starts with a vowel and ends with a consonant. The Suba word ‘katanu’, in contrast, starts with a consonant and ends with a vowel typical of most Bantu languages.

Conclusion

From the foregoing presentation, it is notable that there is no phonological relationship between the Dholuo and Suba words for personal pronouns. It is notable that the Dholuo word ‘kanye’ for relative pronoun ‘where’ is disyllabic with CVCV structure. This contrasts with the Suba language word ‘ayi’ for the relative pronoun ‘where’ which has the syllable structure VCV.

The Dholuo and Suba verbs are nowhere close to each other. They are not related phonetically, phonologically and morphologically. For example, the verb ‘drink’ has totally different forms in Dholuo “metho” and Suba “okunywa” languages. It is evident that all Dholuo verbs begin with consonants and end mostly with vowels while the Suba language words for the English infinitive ‘to’ start and end with vowels. It is for the above reason that we have the Dholuo word for ‘to bite’ as ‘kayo’ and ‘okuluma’ for Suba language for the verb “bite”. The Suba words resemble the words in most Bantu languages and more specifically Luhya.

Recommendations

The study makes the following recommendations based on the findings:

1. There is need for more research on the Suba language to be studied widely to provide literature for continuity of this endangered language in the Lake region. This will control the language shift from Suba to Dholuo which will ultimately attract more speakers in the former.
2. There seems to be a complete contrast between Suba and Dholuo languages as such more research should be done to establish the reasons for lack of word borrowing between the two languages despite the fact that the speakers coexist in Homa Bay County.

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