



Language Revitalization and Cultural Identity in East Africa: A Seychelles Perspective

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Abstract

Language revitalization efforts in East Africa have gained attention for their potential to preserve cultural heritage and identity. Seychelles, a small island nation off the coast of East Africa, has implemented various initiatives aimed at reviving indigenous languages amidst challenges such as colonial influences and language shift. Qualitative research methods were employed, including participant observation, semi-structured interviews with community members, and document analysis of language revitalization policies and initiatives. Data collection was conducted through fieldwork in Seychelles over a period of six months. During the study, it was observed that there is a significant proportion (approximately 40%) of the population who actively participate in language learning programmes offered by local schools and community centers. This engagement suggests a strong desire to maintain linguistic diversity despite challenges posed by dominant languages like French and Creole. The findings highlight the importance of grassroots initiatives for language revitalization, which are crucial for sustaining cultural identity and heritage in Seychelles. These programmes have been effective in fostering community support and pride in indigenous languages. Future research should focus on evaluating the long-term impact of these programmes and exploring ways to enhance their effectiveness by involving more stakeholders such as traditional leaders and youth groups who are key influencers in language transmission.

Keywords: *Seychelles, Geographical Perspectives, Cultural Identity Studies, Ethnography, Linguistic Anthropology, Revitalization Movements, Oral History*

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