

# **Language Preservation, Evolution, and Loss The Case of the Shona Language Spoken in Kenya**

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## **Abstract**

The discussion on whether endangered languages should be preserved or not is still a contested one. Language nationalists have likened people losing their language to a people that have become unclothed, as they would have lost their culture, ubuntu, and identity. However, another group argues that language loss is not as catastrophic as linguistic nationalists would like people to believe; just like culture, it should be allowed to evolve naturally. The paper revisits the debate, focusing on the Shona-speaking people who arrived in Kenya in 1960. The paper uses secondary data to explore the sociolinguistic complexities of this Kenyan Shona language. Arguing within Pierre Bourdieu's concept of linguistic capital, the paper contends that whilst there is no problem with documenting the language, attempting to preserve and maintain it is retrogressive and may result in disrupting the way of living of a people.