

LANGUAGE PLANNING IN PRE-COLONIAL KENYA

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ABSTRACT

Language planning has been looked at historically as a language problem phenomenon that arose when Third World countries began to gain independence from their European colonial masters. This paper argues that this kind of observation is faulty for Kenya, like many other Third World Countries, for she had language problems even before the advent of European colonial masters and so continuously planned her languages over history. This paper uses the social psychological theory by Lambert and Gardner to discuss what it perceives to be language planning in pre-colonial Kenya by outlining the linguistic roles that were assigned the languages in use in the country then in education, religious, political and even in social domains. In all the known historical epochs of the geo-political entity that is now called Kenya there appeared some kind of language planning – hence the conclusion that there was language planning in pre-colonial Kenya.

KEYWORDS: Language Planning, Pre-Colonial Kenya, Arabs, Portuguese, (Ki) Swahili