

**THE PHONETIC DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SAMIA LANGUAGES:
LUYA AND LUGWE**

BY

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**A RESEARCH REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF SCIENCE AND
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DECLARATION

I, Opambo Emmanuel Wafula, Registration Number BU/UP/2023/1556, hereby declare that this research report entitled "The Phonetic Differences Between Samia Languages: Luya and Lugwe" is my original work. It has never been submitted to any university or institution of higher learning for the award of any academic qualification. All sources of information used in this study have been duly acknowledged and cited in accordance with the APA 7th edition referencing style.

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APPROVAL

This research report entitled "The Phonetic Differences Between Samia Languages: Luya and Lugwe" has been prepared under my supervision and is submitted with my approval for examination by Busitema University.

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Signature: 

Date: 

DEDICATION.

I dedicate this research report to my beloved parents for their unwavering love, sacrifices, encouragement, and prayers throughout my academic journey. Their commitment to my education has been my greatest source of inspiration and determination.

I also dedicate this work to my brothers, sisters, relatives, and friends whose moral, spiritual, and financial support enabled me to pursue my studies successfully.

Finally, I dedicate this report to the Samia community, whose rich linguistic and cultural heritage inspired this study. It is my hope that this work contributes, however modestly, to the preservation and appreciation of the Luya and Lugwe languages for future generations.

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SUMMARY

This study examined the phonetic differences between the Samia languages of Luya and Lugwe spoken within the Uganda–Kenya border region. The study was motivated by the limited documentation comparing the phonetic characteristics of these closely related languages despite their importance in preserving the linguistic and cultural heritage of the Samia people.

The study sought to identify the consonant and vowel inventories of Luya and Lugwe, examine the phonological processes operating in the two languages, establish the influence of language contact on their phonetic systems, compare their phonetic similarities and differences, and determine how the findings could contribute to language preservation and documentation.

A qualitative descriptive and comparative research design was employed. The study was conducted in Lumino Town Council, Busia District, Eastern Uganda. Thirty-four respondents comprising native speakers and key informants participated in the study. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, standardized word lists, and naturalistic observation. The collected data were transcribed using the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) before being analyzed through thematic and comparative analysis.

The findings revealed that Luya and Lugwe share numerous phonetic features inherited from their common Bantu ancestry, including prenasalized consonants, five principal vowel qualities, and similar syllable structures. However, significant differences were observed in consonant realization, vowel length, tonal movement, pronunciation of selected lexical items, and the influence of neighboring languages. The study further established that prolonged contact with Lusoga, Luganda, Kiswahili, and English has contributed to noticeable phonetic variation, particularly among younger speakers.

The study concludes that although Luya and Lugwe remain closely related languages, each has developed distinctive phonetic characteristics resulting from geographical separation, language contact, and social interaction. It recommends increased documentation of indigenous languages, incorporation of local language studies into educational programmes, and community initiatives aimed at preserving the linguistic heritage of the Samia people.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Language is one of the most important characteristics that distinguish human beings from other living organisms. It is through language that people express their thoughts, feelings, beliefs, knowledge, culture, and identity. Every community in the world possesses a language or group of languages that reflects its history, traditions, and way of life. Language therefore serves not only as a means of communication but also as a storehouse of cultural heritage passed from one generation to another.

Linguists have long recognized that languages are constantly changing due to social interaction, geographical separation, migration, technological advancement, and contact with other languages. These changes may occur in pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, or meaning. Among these aspects, pronunciation has attracted considerable scholarly attention because it forms the foundation of spoken communication. Differences in pronunciation often distinguish one language or dialect from another even where speakers share similar vocabulary and grammatical structures.

The scientific study of speech sounds is known as phonetics. According to Ladefoged and Johnson (2015), phonetics is the branch of linguistics concerned with the production, transmission, and perception of speech sounds. It examines how sounds are articulated by the speech organs, how they travel through the air, and how listeners perceive them. Phonetics therefore provides objective methods for describing and comparing languages.

Closely related to phonetics is phonology, which studies how speech sounds function within particular languages. While phonetics focuses on the physical properties of sounds, phonology investigates the patterns and rules governing their organization. For instance, the sounds /p/, /b/, /m/, and /t/ may exist in many languages, but each language organizes and uses them differently. Understanding both phonetics and phonology enables researchers to explain why languages that originate from the same family may grad

, a Luya speaker may pronounce certain vowel sequences with clearer vowel distinction, whereas a Lugwe speaker may employ glide insertion to ease pronunciation. Likewise, tonal movement maually develop different pronunciation patterns.

The present study focuses on two closely related Samia languages: Luya and Lugwe. These languages belong to the Bantu language family and are spoken mainly in communities found along the Uganda–Kenya border. Although they share a common historical origin and many

lexical similarities, speakers often notice differences in pronunciation, tone, vowel realization, consonant articulation, and speech rhythm. Such differences have practical implications for communication, language teaching, literacy development, and cultural preservation.

For example, during informal conversations they differ between the two languages, causing identical lexical items to sound different despite carrying the same meaning. These subtle phonetic differences are important because they help linguists understand the historical development of the languages and the influence of neighboring speech communities.

The Samia people have historically maintained close cultural, economic, and social interactions across the Uganda–Kenya border. As a result, their languages have experienced continuous contact with other languages such as Lusoga, Luganda, Kiswahili, English, and several Kenyan Luyia dialects. Language contact often results in borrowing of vocabulary, pronunciation patterns, and even grammatical structures. Consequently, the phonetic characteristics of Luya and Lugwe continue to evolve from one generation to another.

Despite the close relationship between these two languages, comparatively little scholarly attention has been devoted specifically to their phonetic differences. Most previous studies have focused on broad classifications of Bantu languages, grammatical description, or comparative vocabulary while paying limited attention to detailed pronunciation patterns. This has created a gap in linguistic documentation, particularly concerning the speech varieties spoken in Busia District.

Language documentation has become increasingly important worldwide because many indigenous languages are endangered by urbanization, globalization, and increasing preference for dominant languages. UNESCO (2021) notes that documenting indigenous languages contributes to cultural preservation, educational development, and linguistic diversity. Recording phonetic features is particularly important because pronunciation is often the first aspect of language to change when communities come into contact with speakers of other languages.

In Uganda, efforts to promote local languages through mother-tongue education have increased the need for reliable linguistic information. Accurate phonetic descriptions help teachers develop appropriate pronunciation models for learners, support curriculum developers in preparing language materials, and assist researchers interested in comparative Bantu linguistics. Furthermore, community leaders and cultural organizations require documented linguistic evidence to preserve indigenous languages for future generations.

Against this background, this study examines the phonetic differences between Luya and Lugwe by identifying their major phonetic features, comparing their sound systems, examining the influence of language contact, and exploring how these findings may contribute to language preservation. The study is expected to provide valuable information for linguists, language

teachers, curriculum developers, cultural institutions, and future researchers interested in Samia languages.

1.2 Background to the Study

The background to this study is presented from the global, African, East African, Ugandan, Busia District, and Lumino Town Council perspectives in order to demonstrate how the study fits within existing knowledge and why it is important.

1.2.1 Global Perspective

Language is universally recognized as one of humanity's greatest intellectual and cultural resources. Across the world, thousands of languages are spoken, each representing a unique way of understanding reality and transmitting knowledge from one generation to another. According to UNESCO (2023), approximately 7,000 languages are currently spoken worldwide. However, nearly half of these languages are threatened with extinction due to globalization, urbanization, migration, technological advancement, and the increasing dominance of international languages such as English, French, Spanish, and Mandarin.

As many indigenous languages decline, linguists have increasingly emphasized the importance of documenting languages before they disappear. Language documentation involves systematically recording pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, oral traditions, and cultural practices. Among these aspects, phonetics occupies a central position because speech sounds form the foundation upon which every language is built. Once pronunciation patterns disappear, important linguistic evidence concerning the history and evolution of languages is permanently lost.

Modern linguistic research has demonstrated that even languages belonging to the same family may gradually develop distinct pronunciation systems due to geographical separation, language contact, migration, and cultural interaction. Consequently, comparative phonetic studies have become increasingly important in helping scholars explain language change, historical relationships, and the processes through which new dialects emerge.

Researchers such as Ladefoged and Johnson (2015) argue that understanding speech sounds contributes not only to linguistic theory but also to language teaching, speech therapy, dictionary compilation, forensic linguistics, and artificial intelligence technologies such as speech recognition systems. Accurate phonetic description therefore has both academic and practical significance.

Technological advancement has further transformed phonetic research. Modern researchers employ digital recording equipment, acoustic analysis software, and the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) to document speech with greater precision than was previously possible. These

developments have encouraged linguists to revisit languages that were inadequately documented in earlier studies.

Despite these advances, many African indigenous languages remain poorly documented compared to European and Asian languages. Consequently, UNESCO has repeatedly encouraged governments and universities to invest in documenting local languages as part of preserving the world's cultural heritage.

The present study contributes to this international effort by documenting and comparing the phonetic characteristics of Luya and Lugwe, two closely related Samia languages whose pronunciation differences remain inadequately described.

1.2.2 African Perspective

Africa is recognized as the most linguistically diverse continent in the world. According to Ethnologue (2024), more than 2,000 languages are spoken across Africa, representing approximately one-third of the world's languages. These languages belong to several major language families including Afro-Asiatic, Nilo-Saharan, Khoisan, and Niger-Congo, the latter being the largest language family on the continent.

The Bantu languages, which form part of the Niger-Congo family, are spoken by over 300 million people across Central, Eastern, and Southern Africa. These languages share many structural characteristics, including noun class systems, agglutinative morphology, and similar syllable structures. However, centuries of migration, interaction with neighboring communities, and environmental separation have resulted in considerable phonetic variation among different Bantu languages.

Comparative studies conducted in African linguistics have shown that languages sharing common ancestry often develop unique pronunciation patterns as communities adapt to different social and geographical environments. These phonetic differences may involve vowel quality, consonant realization, tone, stress patterns, and rhythm.

Language contact has played an especially significant role in Africa because multilingualism is common in many communities. Individuals frequently speak three or more languages, leading to borrowing of sounds, vocabulary, and pronunciation habits. Such interactions contribute to continuous phonetic evolution.

African scholars have therefore emphasized the urgent need to document indigenous languages before they become endangered. Documentation not only preserves linguistic heritage but also supports educational planning, literacy programmes, and cultural identity.

The Samia languages represent an important component of Africa's rich linguistic diversity. Investigating their phonetic characteristics contributes to the broader understanding of Bantu language development across Eastern Africa.

1.2.3 East African Perspective

East Africa is characterized by remarkable linguistic diversity resulting from centuries of migration, trade, intermarriage, colonial administration, and regional integration. Countries such as Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, and South Sudan contain numerous indigenous languages spoken alongside international and national languages.

Within the East African region, Bantu languages occupy a prominent position, particularly in Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, and Burundi. Although many of these languages share common historical origins, they display significant phonetic variation resulting from prolonged interaction with neighboring speech communities.

The Uganda–Kenya border represents one of the most linguistically dynamic regions in East Africa. Communities living along the border frequently interact through trade, education, marriage, religion, and employment. Consequently, languages spoken in these areas continually influence one another.

The Samia people occupy territories extending across eastern Uganda and western Kenya. Although political boundaries divide the communities into two countries, cultural and linguistic interaction has remained continuous. This cross-border interaction has created favorable conditions for phonetic borrowing, code-switching, bilingualism, and gradual pronunciation change.

Researchers studying East African languages have observed that younger speakers often incorporate pronunciation patterns acquired through formal education, urbanization, mass media, and social networking. Such developments contribute to increasing phonetic variation between generations.

These regional developments make comparative phonetic research particularly important because they help explain how closely related languages evolve while maintaining shared linguistic heritage.

1.2.4 Uganda Perspective

Uganda is one of the most linguistically diverse countries in Africa, with more than forty indigenous languages officially recognized. These languages belong mainly to the Bantu, Nilotic, and Central Sudanic language families. According to the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS, 2024), linguistic diversity remains an important aspect of Uganda's cultural identity and national

heritage. Consequently, government institutions, universities, and cultural organizations have increasingly promoted indigenous language preservation through education, research, and community programmes.

The Ministry of Education and Sports introduced the thematic curriculum at lower primary level, encouraging the use of local languages as media of instruction during the early years of education. This policy recognizes that learners understand concepts more effectively when taught in their mother tongue. However, successful implementation depends on the availability of well-documented linguistic information, including accurate descriptions of pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar.

Despite these efforts, many Ugandan indigenous languages remain inadequately documented. Most existing studies concentrate on grammar, vocabulary, folklore, or oral literature, while relatively few investigate phonetic and phonological characteristics. This gap is particularly evident among minority languages spoken in border districts such as Busia.

Uganda's geographical position also contributes significantly to language variation. Communities located near international borders interact daily with people from neighbouring countries through trade, education, employment, religion, and marriage. Such interactions facilitate bilingualism and multilingualism, leading to borrowing of pronunciation patterns, vocabulary, and expressions.

Among the communities most affected by these interactions are the Samia people of Busia District. Living along the Uganda-Kenya border, they constantly communicate with speakers from both countries. Consequently, Luya and Lugwe continue to experience gradual phonetic change influenced by Kiswahili, English, Lusoga, Luganda, and neighbouring Luyia dialects.

Although several researchers have investigated Uganda's Bantu languages, detailed comparative phonetic studies specifically examining Luya and Lugwe remain limited. This study therefore contributes towards filling this knowledge gap while supporting national efforts aimed at documenting Uganda's linguistic heritage.

1.2.5 Busia District Perspective

Busia District is located in Eastern Uganda along the international border with the Republic of Kenya. It is one of the country's busiest border districts, characterized by extensive social, cultural, and economic interaction between Ugandan and Kenyan communities. The district hosts several ethnic groups, including the Samia, Bagwe, Basoga, Iteso, and Jopadhola, making it one of Uganda's linguistically diverse regions.

The Samia people constitute one of the dominant indigenous communities within Busia District. They have maintained close relationships with their counterparts in western Kenya for centuries through intermarriage, trade, religious activities, cultural ceremonies, and shared historical

traditions. These interactions have strengthened linguistic exchange while simultaneously contributing to pronunciation differences among various speech communities.

Busia's strategic position as a commercial border town exposes residents to numerous languages on a daily basis. Kiswahili is widely used in trade, English dominates formal education and official communication, while Lusoga, Luganda, and other local languages are frequently heard in markets, schools, churches, and public gatherings. Such multilingual environments inevitably influence how speakers pronounce their indigenous languages.

Field observations by community elders indicate that younger speakers increasingly incorporate pronunciation patterns acquired from urban centres, educational institutions, radio, television, and social media. In contrast, older speakers generally maintain more conservative pronunciation patterns inherited from previous generations.

These observable differences suggest that Luya and Lugwe are continuously evolving. However, there remains limited scholarly documentation explaining the precise phonetic characteristics that distinguish the two languages. Consequently, conducting systematic phonetic research within Busia District provides valuable information for linguistic documentation and language preservation.

1.2.6 Lumino Town Council Perspective

Lumino Town Council was selected as the study area because it represents one of the few communities where both Luya and Lugwe speakers coexist and interact regularly. The town council is situated within Busia District and serves as an important centre for commerce, education, agriculture, and social interaction.

Residents of Lumino frequently communicate in several languages depending on the situation. Indigenous languages dominate family and community interactions, while English and Kiswahili are commonly used in schools, government offices, and business activities. Such multilingual communication creates an ideal environment for investigating phonetic variation.

The close proximity between Luya and Lugwe speakers has resulted in frequent language contact through marriage, religious worship, education, political meetings, sporting activities, and market transactions. As a result, some speakers alternate between the two languages with remarkable ease, while others borrow pronunciation features unconsciously.

For example, younger bilingual speakers occasionally pronounce certain words differently from elderly native speakers due to prolonged exposure to neighbouring languages. Teachers interviewed during preliminary visits also reported that learners sometimes mix pronunciation patterns from Luya and Lugwe during classroom discussions, making it difficult to maintain consistent pronunciation.

Despite these observable differences, there is currently no comprehensive comparative phonetic description specifically focusing on Luya and Lugwe within Lumino Town Council. This study therefore seeks to provide systematic documentation of the phonetic characteristics of both languages as spoken within this important multilingual community.

1.2.7 Historical Development of Luya and Lugwe

Historical evidence indicates that both Luya and Lugwe belong to the wider Bantu language family and share a common ancestral origin. Oral traditions among the Samia people suggest that the ancestors of present-day Luya and Bagwe communities once lived together before gradually dispersing into different geographical areas due to migration, population growth, and changing socio-economic conditions.

As communities became geographically separated, each group increasingly interacted with neighbouring ethnic communities. The Luya-speaking communities on the Kenyan side established stronger contact with other Luyia dialects as well as Kalenjin-speaking communities, whereas the Bagwe communities in Uganda interacted more extensively with the Basoga, Baganda, and other neighbouring Bantu groups.

These different historical experiences gradually produced noticeable differences in pronunciation, vocabulary, intonation, and speech rhythm. Nevertheless, both languages have retained numerous shared linguistic characteristics inherited from their common ancestry.

Today, speakers of Luya and Lugwe are generally able to understand one another with relatively little difficulty. However, careful observation reveals differences in vowel realization, consonant articulation, tonal movement, and pronunciation of certain lexical items. These differences constitute the central focus of the present study.

1.2.8 Research Gap and Justification for the Study

The literature reviewed indicates that considerable research has been conducted on Bantu languages in general. Previous scholars have documented phonological systems, grammatical structures, and vocabulary of several Luyia dialects and related Bantu languages. However, most of these studies have focused either on individual languages or on broad comparative classifications without specifically examining the phonetic relationship between Luya and Lugwe.

Furthermore, available studies have concentrated largely on phonological theory rather than detailed field-based phonetic description using naturally occurring speech. Very few studies have investigated how contemporary multilingualism within Busia District influences pronunciation among Luya and Lugwe speakers.

Another important gap concerns language preservation. As younger generations increasingly adopt English, Kiswahili, and other dominant languages, traditional pronunciation patterns risk

gradual erosion. Without systematic documentation, valuable linguistic knowledge may disappear over time.

This study therefore addresses three major gaps. First, it provides a detailed comparative description of the phonetic characteristics of Luya and Lugwe. Second, it examines how language contact has influenced pronunciation within a multilingual border community. Third, it contributes to ongoing efforts aimed at documenting and preserving the linguistic heritage of the Samia people.

The findings are expected to benefit linguists, language teachers, curriculum developers, cultural institutions, policymakers, and future researchers interested in indigenous language documentation and comparative Bantu linguistics.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Language is an important component of cultural identity and social interaction. One of the most distinctive aspects of any language is its pronunciation, which enables speakers to communicate meaning effectively while preserving their linguistic heritage. Although Luya and Lugwe belong to the Samia language cluster and share a common Bantu origin, careful observation reveals noticeable differences in their pronunciation of vowels, consonants, tone, stress, and speech rhythm. These differences have developed over many years due to geographical separation, language contact, migration, education, and interaction with neighbouring speech communities.

Despite the existence of these phonetic differences, little documented research has been conducted to systematically compare the pronunciation systems of Luya and Lugwe, particularly within Busia District. Most previous studies have concentrated on the classification of Bantu languages, grammatical descriptions, lexical similarities, or oral literature, while giving limited attention to detailed phonetic analysis based on naturally occurring speech. Consequently, teachers, students, language planners, and researchers have limited scholarly information explaining the distinctive pronunciation features of these two closely related languages.

Furthermore, increasing urbanization, formal education, cross-border trade, technological advancement, and widespread use of dominant languages such as English, Kiswahili, Luganda, and Lusoga are gradually influencing the speech patterns of younger generations. Many young speakers now alternate between several languages during everyday communication, leading to borrowing of pronunciation features and gradual loss of traditional speech patterns. If these phonetic characteristics are not documented, valuable linguistic evidence concerning the history and identity of the Samia people may gradually disappear.

The absence of detailed phonetic documentation also presents challenges for curriculum developers, teachers, and cultural organizations interested in promoting indigenous language education and preservation. Without accurate descriptions of pronunciation, it becomes difficult

to prepare appropriate teaching materials, dictionaries, pronunciation guides, and language documentation resources.

It was against this background that this study sought to investigate the phonetic differences between Luya and Lugwe as spoken in Lumino Town Council, Busia District. The study aimed at identifying the major phonetic characteristics of the two languages, examining how language contact has influenced their pronunciation, and generating information that may contribute to language documentation, preservation, and future linguistic research.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the phonetic differences between Luya and Lugwe spoken in Lumino Town Council, Busia District, in order to contribute to the documentation, preservation, and understanding of the linguistic heritage of the Samia people.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

1.5.1 General Objective

To examine the phonetic differences between Luya and Lugwe spoken in Lumino Town Council, Busia District.

1.5.2 Specific Objectives

The study was guided by the following specific objectives:

To identify the consonant and vowel sound systems of Luya and Lugwe.

To examine the phonological processes that characterize Luya and Lugwe.

To establish the influence of language contact on the pronunciation of Luya and Lugwe.

To compare the phonetic similarities and differences between Luya and Lugwe.

To determine how the findings may contribute to language preservation and documentation among the Samia community.

1.6 Research Questions

The study sought to answer the following research questions:

What are the consonant and vowel sound systems of Luya and Lugwe?

Which phonological processes characterize Luya and Lugwe?

How has language contact influenced the pronunciation of Luya and Lugwe?

What are the major phonetic similarities and differences between Luya and Lugwe?

How can the findings contribute to language preservation and documentation among the Samia community?

1.7 Scope of the Study

1.7.1 Content Scope

The study focused on the phonetic characteristics of Luya and Lugwe. Specifically, it examined vowel and consonant sounds, tone, stress, syllable structure, phonological processes, and the influence of language contact on pronunciation. The study did not investigate grammatical structures, syntax, morphology, or semantic differences except where they helped explain pronunciation.

1.7.2 Geographical Scope

The study was conducted in Lumino Town Council, Busia District, Eastern Uganda. The area was selected because it has a significant population of Samia speakers and provides opportunities to interact with both Luya and Lugwe speakers in natural communication settings.

1.7.3 Time Scope

The study covered the period from January 2025 to May 2026. This period included proposal development, literature review, data collection, data analysis, report writing, and submission.

1.8 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study are expected to benefit several stakeholders.

The Samia Community: The study will contribute to preserving the linguistic heritage of the Samia people by documenting important pronunciation features of Luya and Lugwe for future generations.

Busitema University: The report will enrich the university library with scholarly information that future students and researchers can consult when conducting studies in linguistics, language education, and African languages.

Language Teachers: English and local language teachers will obtain information that can improve pronunciation instruction and help learners appreciate similarities and differences between related languages.

Curriculum Developers: The findings may guide the development of instructional materials, pronunciation guides, and mother-tongue learning resources for schools implementing local language education.

Researchers: Future scholars will use this study as a reference when conducting further research on Samia languages, comparative linguistics, Bantu phonetics, and indigenous language preservation.

Government and Cultural Institutions: Organizations responsible for promoting indigenous languages may use the findings when designing language preservation programmes, cultural documentation projects, and community awareness initiatives.

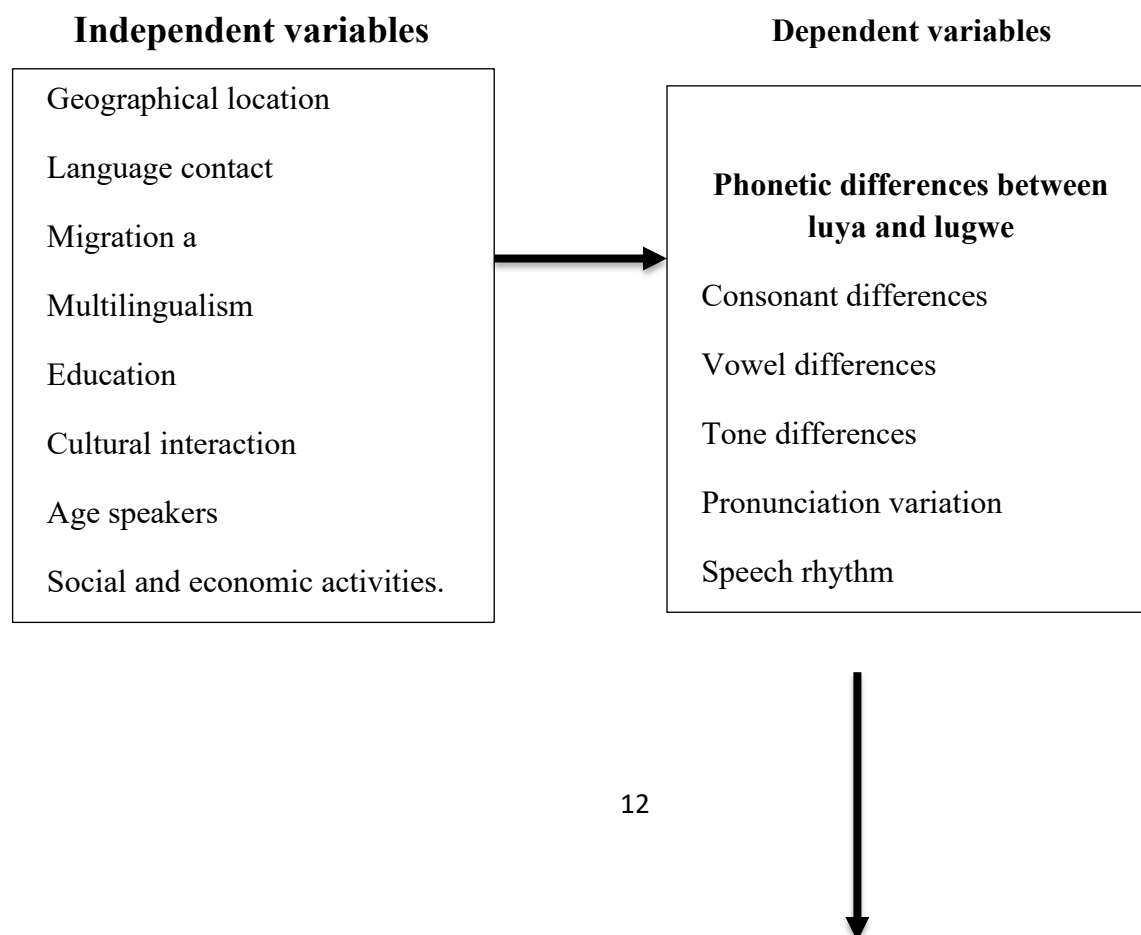
The Researcher: Conducting this study enhanced the researcher's knowledge and practical skills in phonetics, field linguistics, academic writing, data analysis, and language documentation while fulfilling the requirements for the award of the Bachelor of Education (Languages: English and Literature).

1.9 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is a diagrammatic representation of the relationship between the independent and dependent variables of a study. It provides a clear understanding of how the variables are expected to interact and guides the researcher in collecting and interpreting data.

In this study, the researcher assumed that various linguistic and social factors influence the phonetic characteristics of Luya and Lugwe. These factors constitute the independent variables, while the resulting phonetic differences between the two languages form the dependent variable.

Conceptual Framework



Phonetic processes
Sound substitution
Assimilation
Elision
Vowel lengthening
Tone variation
Stress variation

Source: Researcher's Conceptualization (2026)

1.9.1 Explanation of the Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework illustrates that the pronunciation differences observed between Luya and Lugwe do not occur randomly. Rather, they are influenced by several social, historical, and linguistic factors.

One of the major factors is geographical separation. Communities that have lived in different locations for many years gradually develop unique pronunciation habits even when they originally spoke the same language.

Language contact is another important influence. Continuous interaction with speakers of Kiswahili, Lusoga, Luganda, English, and neighbouring Luyia dialects introduces new pronunciation patterns into everyday speech.

Migration contributes to phonetic variation because people moving from one region to another often adopt pronunciation features from their new communities while retaining some characteristics of their original language.

Education also plays a role. Learners exposed to English and Kiswahili in school may unconsciously transfer pronunciation habits from these languages into Luya or Lugwe.

The interaction of these factors results in phonetic processes such as sound substitution, vowel lengthening, assimilation, deletion of sounds, and tonal variation. These processes eventually produce observable differences in consonants, vowels, rhythm, and overall pronunciation between Luya and Lugwe.

The conceptual framework guided the researcher in selecting variables for investigation and interpreting the findings presented in Chapter Four.

1.10 Operational Definition of Key Terms

To avoid ambiguity, the following key terms were used in this study as defined below.

Phonetics

Phonetics refers to the scientific study of speech sounds, including how they are produced by the human speech organs, transmitted through the air, and perceived by listeners.

Phonology

Phonology refers to the study of how speech sounds function and are organized within a particular language.

Luya

In this study, Luya refers to the Samia language variety predominantly spoken by sections of the Samia community, especially those with stronger historical interaction with Kenyan Luyia-speaking communities.

Lugwe

Lugwe refers to the Samia language variety spoken mainly among the Bagwe community in Busia District, Uganda.

Phonetic Difference

A phonetic difference refers to any variation in pronunciation between Luya and Lugwe involving vowels, consonants, tone, stress, rhythm, or other speech sounds.

Language Contact

Language contact refers to interaction between speakers of different languages leading to borrowing of pronunciation, vocabulary, or other linguistic features.

Indigenous Language

An indigenous language refers to a language that originated naturally within a particular community and forms part of its cultural identity.

Language Documentation

Language documentation refers to the systematic recording, description, and preservation of linguistic information for present and future generations.

Language Preservation

Language preservation refers to deliberate efforts aimed at maintaining, promoting, and protecting indigenous languages from gradual decline or extinction.

Comparative Linguistics

Comparative linguistics refers to the study of similarities and differences among two or more languages to establish their historical relationships and linguistic characteristics.

Bantu Languages

Bantu languages are a group of closely related languages belonging to the Niger-Congo language family and spoken widely across Central, Eastern, and Southern Africa.

Mother Tongue

Mother tongue refers to the first language acquired naturally by an individual during childhood and used within the family and immediate community.

1.11 Organization of the Report

This research report is organized into five chapters.

Chapter One presents the introduction and background to the study. It includes the background, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives, research questions, scope, significance, conceptual framework, operational definition of terms, and organization of the report.

Chapter Two presents the review of related literature. The chapter examines previous scholarly work related to phonetics, comparative linguistics, Bantu languages, Luya, Lugwe, language contact, phonological processes, and indigenous language preservation. It also identifies the knowledge gap that informed the present study.

Chapter Three describes the methodology used in conducting the study. It explains the research design, study area, target population, sample size, sampling procedures, data collection methods, research instruments, validity and reliability, data analysis procedures, ethical considerations, and limitations of the study.

Chapter Four presents, analyzes, and discusses the findings obtained during fieldwork. The findings are organized according to the study objectives and are interpreted in relation to existing literature.

Chapter Five provides the summary of the study, conclusions drawn from the findings, recommendations for different stakeholders, suggestions for further research, and the overall contribution of the study to comparative phonetics and indigenous language preservation.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews literature related to the phonetic differences between Luya and Lugwe. The review is organized according to the specific objectives of the study. It examines scholarly views on phonetics, Bantu languages, phonological processes, language contact, comparative linguistics, and indigenous language preservation. The chapter further identifies gaps in the existing literature which informed the present study.

Language is dynamic and continuously changes as societies interact socially, culturally, economically, and politically. One of the most noticeable areas of language change is pronunciation. Phonetic variation has therefore become an important area of linguistic research because it enables scholars to explain how languages evolve, influence one another, and preserve their identity. Comparative studies of closely related languages help researchers understand both historical relationships and present-day linguistic diversity.

2.2 Theoretical Review

The study was guided primarily by Comparative Linguistics Theory and Labov's Variationist Sociolinguistic Theory.

2.2.1 Comparative Linguistics Theory

Comparative Linguistics emerged during the nineteenth century through the works of scholars such as Franz Bopp, Jacob Grimm, and August Schleicher. The theory assumes that languages originating from a common ancestor retain certain similarities while gradually developing differences through time.

According to Campbell (2013), comparative linguistics enables researchers to identify similarities and differences between languages by examining pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and sound correspondences. The theory has been widely applied in studying Bantu languages because many languages within this family share common historical origins.

The theory is particularly relevant to this study because Luya and Lugwe belong to the same Samia language group. Although they originated from a common linguistic ancestor, historical migration, geographical separation, and interaction with neighboring communities have resulted in noticeable phonetic differences. Comparative Linguistics therefore provides an appropriate framework for describing these similarities and differences systematically.

However, one limitation of the theory is that it emphasizes historical language relationships more than contemporary social influences on language variation.

2.2.2 Variationist Sociolinguistic Theory

Variationist Sociolinguistics was developed by William Labov (1972). The theory argues that language variation is natural and influenced by social factors such as age, education, gender, occupation, social class, geographical location, and interaction with other speech communities.

Labov observed that speakers do not always pronounce words in exactly the same manner. Instead, pronunciation varies depending on the social environment in which communication takes place. Such variation is systematic rather than random.

The theory is highly relevant to the present study because speakers of Luya and Lugwe interact daily with speakers of Kiswahili, Lusoga, Luganda, English, and other neighboring languages. These interactions influence pronunciation and contribute to the phonetic differences observed between the two languages.

The combination of Comparative Linguistics Theory and Variationist Sociolinguistics provides a comprehensive framework for explaining both the historical development and the contemporary phonetic variation observed in Luya and Lugwe.

2.3 Empirical Literature Review

2.3.1 Literature Related to Objective One

To identify the consonant and vowel sound systems of Luya and Lugwe

According to Ladefoged and Johnson (2015), every language possesses a unique inventory of vowels and consonants that distinguishes it from other languages. Speech sounds are produced through coordinated movement of the tongue, lips, teeth, palate, and vocal cords. Differences in these articulatory movements produce variations among languages.

Crystal (2010) argues that vowel systems often provide important evidence when comparing related languages because vowels are highly susceptible to language change. Slight differences in tongue height, tongue position, lip rounding, and vowel length may gradually distinguish one language variety from another.

Katamba (1989) notes that many Bantu languages possess a basic five-vowel system consisting of /a/, /e/, /i/, /o/, and /u/. However, despite sharing similar vowel inventories, individual languages frequently differ in vowel length, vowel harmony, diphthongization, and pronunciation of vowel sequences.

Studies conducted on Luya dialects in Kenya indicate that although many dialects share common consonant inventories, they differ in realization of certain consonants, particularly prenasalized stops, affricates, fricatives, and approximants. These differences contribute to dialect identification among native speakers.

Similarly, Mould (1974) observed that phonetic variation within Bantu languages often occurs even where vocabulary remains largely similar. Speakers may pronounce identical lexical items differently while maintaining mutual intelligibility.

For example, the lexical item meaning "child" may exhibit similar consonants but differ slightly in vowel quality or stress placement depending on the speech community.

Despite these observations, existing studies provide limited comparative description specifically addressing Luya and Lugwe spoken within Busia District. Most available literature discusses broader Luyia dialect classifications without detailed phonetic comparison of these two language varieties.

This study therefore seeks to provide a comprehensive description of their consonant and vowel systems using field data collected directly from native speakers.

2.3.2 Literature Related to Objective Two

To examine the phonological processes that characterize Luya and Lugwe

Phonological processes refer to the systematic ways in which speech sounds change or interact during pronunciation. According to Fromkin, Rodman, and Hyams (2022), these processes occur because speakers naturally adjust sounds to make speech easier, faster, and more efficient while maintaining intelligibility. Such processes are common in all human languages but differ in frequency and form depending on the linguistic environment.

Katamba (1989) defines phonological processes as predictable modifications of speech sounds resulting from their interaction with neighbouring sounds. These processes include assimilation, elision, vowel lengthening, vowel harmony, nasalization, palatalization, glide formation, and tone modification. They contribute significantly to distinguishing closely related languages and dialects.

Assimilation

Assimilation occurs when one sound becomes similar to a neighbouring sound during pronunciation. According to Crystal (2010), assimilation reduces articulatory effort because speakers adjust the position of their speech organs to produce sounds more efficiently.

In many Bantu languages, assimilation frequently occurs between nasal consonants and following consonants. For example, a nasal sound may change its place of articulation depending on the consonant that follows it.

Researchers studying East African Bantu languages have observed that assimilation contributes greatly to pronunciation differences between related speech communities. However, few studies have documented how assimilation specifically operates in Luya and Lugwe.

Elision

Elision refers to the omission of one or more speech sounds during normal conversation. Ladefoged and Johnson (2015) explain that speakers often delete sounds to increase the speed and smoothness of communication.

For instance, vowels occurring between similar consonants may be shortened or omitted during rapid speech. Likewise, consonant clusters may be simplified through deletion of one segment.

Such variations often distinguish formal speech from casual everyday conversation. Previous studies have demonstrated that younger speakers tend to employ elision more frequently than elderly speakers, particularly in multilingual communities.

Vowel Lengthening

Vowel lengthening involves increasing the duration of vowel pronunciation. According to Odden (2005), vowel length may distinguish meaning in some Bantu languages while in others it merely reflects differences in speech rhythm or emphasis.

Comparative studies indicate that related languages frequently differ in the environments under which vowel lengthening occurs. Unfortunately, detailed comparative evidence concerning Luya and Lugwe remains scarce.

Palatalization

Palatalization occurs when consonants are pronounced closer to the hard palate due to the influence of neighbouring front vowels or palatal sounds. Campbell (2013) notes that palatalization has contributed significantly to historical sound change across many language families.

Some Bantu languages exhibit frequent palatalization, whereas others retain older consonant pronunciations. Whether similar differences exist between Luya and Lugwe remains insufficiently documented.

Nasalization

Nasalization involves directing airflow through the nasal cavity during speech production. It commonly affects vowels occurring near nasal consonants.

According to Hyman (2003), nasalization is widespread among African languages and often contributes to dialect variation. However, little evidence specifically compares nasalization patterns between Luya and Lugwe.

Research Gap

The reviewed literature demonstrates that phonological processes are common across Bantu languages. However, previous scholars have discussed these processes generally without describing how they specifically distinguish Luya from Lugwe in Busia District. This study therefore seeks to bridge this gap through systematic field investigation.

2.3.3 Literature Related to Objective Three

To establish the influence of language contact on the pronunciation of Luya and Lugwe

Language contact occurs whenever speakers of different languages interact regularly. According to Thomason (2001), prolonged interaction among speech communities often results in borrowing of vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, and discourse patterns.

Africa provides numerous examples of language contact because multilingualism is common throughout the continent. Individuals frequently speak several languages for education, business, religion, and social interaction. Such multilingualism creates opportunities for continuous linguistic influence.

Uganda is particularly multilingual. Most citizens communicate using indigenous languages alongside English, Kiswahili, or regional languages. Consequently, pronunciation habits acquired from one language are often transferred into another.

Busia District represents an excellent example of sustained language contact. Located on the Uganda–Kenya border, the district experiences constant movement of traders, students, religious leaders, government officials, and tourists. Daily interaction exposes speakers to Kiswahili, English, Lusoga, Luganda, and various Luyia dialects.

According to Weinreich (1953), bilingual speakers frequently transfer pronunciation patterns unconsciously from one language into another. This process gradually influences the phonetic systems of indigenous languages.

For example, younger bilingual speakers may pronounce certain consonants differently from elderly monolingual speakers because of prolonged exposure to English or Kiswahili. Likewise, intonation patterns may change through repeated interaction with neighbouring speech communities.

Studies conducted in border regions across Africa have demonstrated that language contact contributes significantly to phonetic variation. Nevertheless, little empirical evidence explains

precisely how language contact influences Luya and Lugwe pronunciation within Lumino Town Council.

This study therefore investigates the extent to which multilingual interaction has contributed to phonetic differences observed between the two languages.

2.3.4 Literature Related to Objective Four

To compare the phonetic similarities and differences between Luya and Lugwe

Comparative linguistic studies have consistently shown that related languages preserve many common features while simultaneously developing distinctive characteristics over time.

According to Campbell (2013), similarities among related languages often include shared vocabulary, sound inventories, grammatical structures, and syllable organization. Differences emerge gradually through migration, geographical isolation, and contact with neighbouring languages.

The Samia languages belong to the wider Bantu language family. Consequently, Luya and Lugwe share numerous characteristics inherited from their common ancestor. These include similar vowel inventories, noun class systems, syllable structures, and many lexical items.

For example, greetings, kinship terms, names of domestic animals, and agricultural vocabulary remain highly similar across both speech communities. Such similarities demonstrate their historical relationship.

However, experienced native speakers easily recognize pronunciation differences. These may involve:

Variation in vowel quality.

Differences in consonant realization.

Tonal movement.

Speech rhythm.

Pronunciation of borrowed words.

Degree of vowel lengthening.

Previous researchers acknowledge these differences but provide limited systematic description based on actual field recordings. Most studies merely mention dialect variation without detailed phonetic comparison.

The present study therefore provides comprehensive comparison supported by naturally occurring speech collected from native speakers.

2.3.5 Literature Related to Objective Five

To determine how the findings may contribute to language preservation and documentation among the Samia community

Language preservation refers to deliberate efforts aimed at maintaining, promoting, and protecting indigenous languages from gradual decline or extinction. According to UNESCO (2023), every language embodies unique knowledge, cultural practices, historical experiences, values, and identity. When a language disappears, a significant portion of humanity's cultural heritage is permanently lost.

The rapid spread of globalization, urbanization, formal education, technological advancement, and migration has accelerated language shift in many parts of the world. Younger generations increasingly prefer internationally dominant languages such as English and Kiswahili because they provide wider educational, social, and economic opportunities. As a result, indigenous languages are becoming less frequently used in homes and communities.

Crystal (2000) argues that language documentation is one of the most effective strategies for preserving endangered languages. Documentation involves recording pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, oral literature, songs, proverbs, folktales, and other cultural expressions for future generations. Such records provide valuable resources for researchers, teachers, and language planners.

In Africa, language documentation has become increasingly important because many indigenous languages have limited written literature. According to Batibo (2005), documenting African languages strengthens cultural identity while supporting literacy development and educational planning.

For the Samia community, documenting Luya and Lugwe contributes to preserving traditional pronunciation patterns that might otherwise disappear due to increasing multilingualism. Accurate phonetic descriptions can also assist dictionary compilation, language teaching, and curriculum development.

Research further indicates that indigenous language preservation promotes community pride and cultural continuity. Children who learn their mother tongue alongside national and international languages often develop stronger cultural identity and greater appreciation of their heritage.

Despite these benefits, few detailed phonetic studies have been conducted on Luya and Lugwe. Existing documentation largely emphasizes oral literature, vocabulary, or grammatical

description while providing limited information on pronunciation differences. Consequently, the present study contributes valuable phonetic data that may support future language documentation initiatives within the Samia community.

2.4 Identified Research Gap

The literature reviewed demonstrates that considerable research has been conducted on phonetics, comparative linguistics, Bantu languages, language contact, and indigenous language preservation. Scholars such as Ladefoged and Johnson (2015), Crystal (2010), Campbell (2013), Katamba (1989), and Thomason (2001) have provided extensive theoretical and empirical knowledge concerning speech sounds and language variation.

However, several important gaps remain.

First, most previous studies have concentrated on broad descriptions of Bantu languages rather than detailed comparison of Luya and Lugwe. Consequently, there is limited scholarly information specifically explaining the phonetic relationship between these two closely related Samia languages.

Second, available literature has focused more on phonology, grammar, and vocabulary than on practical phonetic analysis using naturally occurring speech collected from native speakers. Few studies have documented pronunciation differences through fieldwork involving community members.

Third, existing research provides limited information concerning the influence of multilingualism and language contact on contemporary pronunciation among Luya and Lugwe speakers living in Busia District. Considering the increasing interaction with English, Kiswahili, Lusoga, and Luganda, this represents an important knowledge gap.

Finally, few studies have examined how comparative phonetic research may contribute directly to language preservation and documentation among the Samia community.

The present study was therefore undertaken to bridge these gaps by providing a detailed comparative phonetic investigation of Luya and Lugwe as spoken in Lumino Town Council, Busia District.

2.5 Summary of the Literature Review

This chapter reviewed literature related to the phonetic differences between Luya and Lugwe. The review was organized according to the specific objectives of the study. It examined theoretical perspectives on comparative linguistics and sociolinguistic variation before reviewing empirical studies concerning consonant and vowel systems, phonological processes, language contact, comparative phonetics, and language preservation.

The reviewed literature indicates that although related Bantu languages share numerous linguistic characteristics, they gradually develop distinctive pronunciation patterns due to historical migration, geographical separation, multilingualism, and social interaction. The review further established that documentation of indigenous languages remains essential for preserving cultural heritage and supporting educational development.

Despite substantial research on African languages generally, limited empirical evidence exists regarding the phonetic differences between Luya and Lugwe within Busia District. The identified knowledge gaps therefore justified the need for the present study.

The next chapter describes the methodology employed in conducting the study, including the research design, study area, population, sampling procedures, data collection methods, research instruments, data analysis techniques, ethical considerations, and study limitations.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGYS

2.6 Introduction

This chapter describes the methodology that was employed in conducting the study. It explains the research design, study area, target population, sample size, sampling techniques, data collection methods, research instruments, validity and reliability (or trustworthiness), data collection procedure, data analysis, ethical considerations, limitations, delimitations, and chapter summary. The methodology was designed to enable the researcher to collect credible, reliable, and relevant data for examining the phonetic differences between Luya and Lugwe spoken in Lumino Town Council, Busia District.

A well-designed methodology is essential because it provides a systematic procedure through which research questions are answered. It also enables other researchers to understand how the findings were obtained and enhances the credibility of the study.

2.7 Research Design

The study adopted a qualitative descriptive comparative research design.

A qualitative approach was considered appropriate because the study sought to understand the pronunciation characteristics of Luya and Lugwe as naturally produced by native speakers rather than measuring them statistically. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), qualitative research enables researchers to understand people's experiences, behaviours, beliefs, and language within their natural settings.

The descriptive design enabled the researcher to document the existing pronunciation patterns without manipulating any variables. Instead of experimenting, the researcher observed, listened to, recorded, transcribed, and described naturally occurring speech among native speakers.

The comparative aspect of the design enabled systematic comparison between the phonetic characteristics of Luya and Lugwe. This comparison focused on consonants, vowels, tone, syllable structure, pronunciation patterns, and phonological processes.

The researcher selected this design because it provides rich linguistic descriptions while allowing detailed comparison of two closely related languages.

2.8 Study Area

The study was conducted in Lumino Town Council, Busia District, Eastern Uganda.

Busia District lies along Uganda's eastern border with the Republic of Kenya. It is one of Uganda's busiest border districts due to extensive commercial activities between Uganda and

Kenya. The district is characterized by diverse ethnic groups including the Samia, Bagwe, Basoga, Iteso and Jopadhola.

Lumino Town Council was purposively selected because it is one of the areas where both Luya and Lugwe speakers live and interact on a daily basis. Residents communicate through trade, farming, education, religious activities, cultural ceremonies, and family relationships. Such interaction has created an ideal environment for studying pronunciation differences between the two languages.

The area also experiences extensive multilingualism. Besides Luya and Lugwe, many residents communicate in English, Kiswahili, Lusoga and Luganda. These languages influence everyday communication and therefore provide an opportunity to examine how language contact affects pronunciation.

Furthermore, Lumino Town Council was selected because it was easily accessible to the researcher, reducing transport costs while allowing repeated visits during data collection.

2.9 Target Population

The target population consisted of all native speakers of Luya and Lugwe residing in Lumino Town Council.

The study specifically targeted individuals who had spoken either Luya or Lugwe from childhood because such respondents possess authentic pronunciation patterns necessary for phonetic analysis.

The target population included:

Community elders

Cultural leaders

Teachers of local languages

Youths

Religious leaders

Local Council leaders

Ordinary native speakers

These categories were selected because they possess different experiences regarding language use and preservation.

2.10 Sample Size

The study involved 34 respondents.

The sample size was considered adequate because qualitative research emphasizes information richness rather than large numbers. According to Creswell (2018), qualitative researchers select participants capable of providing detailed information relevant to the research problem.

Table 1 The respondents were distributed as follows:

Category	Number
Community Elders	8
Teachers	6
Cultural leaders	4
Religious leaders	2
Local council leaders	2
Adult native speakers	8
Youths representative	4
Total	34

The researcher considered this sample sufficient to achieve data saturation, where additional interviews produced little new information.

2.11 Sampling Techniques

The study employed purposive sampling and snowball sampling.

2.11.1 Purposive Sampling

Purposive sampling was used to select respondents who possessed extensive knowledge of Luya and Lugwe.

These included:

elderly native speakers;

teachers;

cultural leaders; and

language resource persons.

Such respondents were expected to provide reliable linguistic information regarding pronunciation differences.

2.11.2 Snowball Sampling

Snowball sampling was employed to identify additional knowledgeable respondents.

After interviewing one participant, the researcher requested recommendations for other fluent native speakers possessing deep knowledge of the languages.

This technique was useful because some elderly language experts were not easily identifiable without community referrals.

2.12 Data Collection Methods

Three major methods were employed.

2.12.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews enabled respondents to explain pronunciation differences using their own words.

The interviews focused on:

pronunciation of selected words;

historical language development;

influence of neighbouring languages;

language preservation.

Interviews allowed the researcher to ask follow-up questions whenever clarification was necessary.

2.12.2 Observation

The researcher observed respondents during natural conversations.

Observation focused on:

vowel pronunciation;

consonant articulation;

tone;

speech rhythm;

code-switching;

language mixing.

Natural observation reduced artificial speech that often occurs during formal interviews.

2.12.3 Word List Elicitation

A standardized list of approximately 200 commonly used words was prepared.

Each respondent pronounced the same words individually.

Examples included:

family terms;

names of domestic animals;

food items;

body parts;

greetings;

agricultural vocabulary;

numerals.

Table 2 200 word list

No.	English / Swahili Gloss	Luya	Lugwe	IPA / Researcher's Notes
A. Greetings and Basic Expressions				
1	hello / jambo			
2	good morning / habari ya asubuhi			
3	good afternoon / habari ya mchana			
4	good evening / habari ya jioni			
5	good night / usiku mwema			

No.	English / Swahili Gloss	Luya	Lugwe	IPA / Researcher's Notes
6	welcome / karibu			
7	thank you / asante			
8	please / tafadhali			
9	yes / ndiyo			
10	no / hapana			
11	come / kuja			
12	go / kwenda			
13	sit / kukaa			
14	stand / kusimama			
15	wait / kusubiri			
16	come back / kurudi			
17	goodbye / kwa heri			
18	sorry / pole			
19	excuse me / samahani			
20	welcome back / karibu tena			
B. Family and People				
21	father / baba			
22	mother / mama			

No.	English / Swahili Gloss	Luya	Lugwe	IPA / Researcher's Notes
23	child / mtoto			
24	son / mwana			
25	daughter / binti			
26	brother / kaka			
27	sister / dada			
28	grandfather / babu			
29	grandmother / nyanya			
30	husband / mume			
31	wife / mke			
32	uncle / mjomba			
33	aunt / shangazi			
34	cousin / binamu			
35	friend / rafiki			
36	man / mwanaume			
37	woman / mwanamke			
38	boy / mvulana			
39	girl / msichana			
40	person / mtu			

No.	English / Swahili Gloss	Luya	Lugwe	IPA / Researcher's Notes
C. Body Parts				
41	head / kichwa			
42	hair / nywele			
43	eye / jicho			
44	ear / sikio			
45	nose / pua			
46	mouth / mdomo			
47	tooth / jino			
48	tongue / ulimi			
49	neck / shingo			
50	shoulder / bega			
51	hand / mkono			
52	finger / kidole			
53	chest / kifua			
54	stomach / tumbo			
55	back / mgongo			
56	leg / mguu			
57	knee / goti			

No.	English / Swahili Gloss	Luya	Lugwe	IPA / Researcher's Notes
58	foot / mguu			
59	skin / ngozi			
60	blood / damu			
D. Domestic Animals				
61	cow / ng'ombe			
62	goat / mbuzi			
63	sheep / kondoo			
64	chicken / kuku			
65	cock / jogoo			
66	dog / mbwa			
67	cat / paka			
68	pig / nguruwe			
69	donkey / punda			
70	calf / ndama			
71	kid / mwana-mbuzi			
72	duck / bata			
73	rabbit / sungura			
74	rat / panya			

No.	English / Swahili Gloss	Luya	Lugwe	IPA / Researcher's Notes
75	mouse / panya mdogo			
76	bee / nyuki			
77	bird / ndege			
78	fish / samaki			
79	snake / nyoka			
80	frog / chura			
E. Food and Drinks				
81	food / chakula			
82	water / maji			
83	milk / maziwa			
84	meat / nyama			
85	fish / samaki			
86	egg / yai			
87	maize / mahindi			
88	flour / unga			
89	beans / maharagwe			
90	cassava / muhogo			
91	sweet potato / viazi vitamu			

No.	English / Swahili Gloss	Luya	Lugwe	IPA / Researcher's Notes
92	banana / ndizi			
93	sugar / sukari			
94	salt / chumvi			
95	bread / mkate			
96	tea / chai			
97	cooking oil / mafuta			
98	fruit / tunda			
99	vegetable / mboga			
100	meal / mlo			
F. Agriculture				
101	farm / shamba			
102	garden / bustani			
103	field / shamba			
104	soil / udongo			
105	seed / mbegu			
106	plant / mmea			
107	tree / mti			
108	leaf / jani			

No.	English / Swahili Gloss	Luya	Lugwe	IPA / Researcher's Notes
109	root / mzizi			
110	flower / ua			
111	fruit / tunda			
112	maize / mahindi			
113	millet / mtama			
114	sorghum / mtama			
115	cassava / muhogo			
116	hoe / jembe			
117	knife / kisu			
118	harvest / mavuno			
119	rain / mvua			
120	farming / kilimo			
G. Household Objects				
121	house / nyumba			
122	door / mlango			
123	window / dirisha			
124	roof / paa			
125	wall / ukuta			

No.	English / Swahili Gloss	Luya	Lugwe	IPA / Researcher's Notes
126	chair / kiti			
127	table / meza			
128	bed / kitanda			
129	mat / mkeka			
130	pot / sufuria			
131	cup / kikombe			
132	plate / sahani			
133	spoon / kijiko			
134	knife / kisu			
135	basket / kikapu			
136	rope / kamba			
137	fire / moto			
138	ash / majivu			
139	water pot / chungu			
140	blanket / blanketi			
H. Nature and Environment				
141	sun / jua			
142	moon / mwezi			

No.	English / Swahili Gloss	Luya	Lugwe	IPA / Researcher's Notes
143	star / nyota			
144	sky / anga			
145	cloud / wingu			
146	rain / mvua			
147	wind / upepo			
148	river / mto			
149	lake / ziwa			
150	stone / jiwe			
151	mountain / mlima			
152	forest / msitu			
153	grass / nyasi			
154	earth / dunia			
155	soil / udongo			
156	fire / moto			
157	smoke / moshi			
158	dust / vumbi			
159	river bank / ukingo wa mto			
160	road / barabara			

No.	English / Swahili Gloss	Luya	Lugwe	IPA / Researcher's Notes
I. Everyday Actions				
161	eat / kula			
162	drink / kunywa			
163	sleep / kulala			
164	wake up / kuamka			
165	walk / kutembea			
166	run / kukimbia			
167	sit / kukaa			
168	stand / kusimama			
169	come / kuja			
170	go / kwenda			
171	see / kuona			
172	hear / kusikia			
173	speak / kuongea			
174	listen / kusikiliza			
175	work / kufanya kazi			
176	wash / kuosha			
177	cook / kupika			

No.	English / Swahili Gloss	Luya	Lugwe	IPA / Researcher's Notes
178	carry / kubeba			
179	give / kutoa			
180	take / kuchukua			
J. Numbers and Basic Descriptive Terms				
181	one / moja			
182	two / mbili			
183	three / tatu			
184	four / nne			
185	five / tano			
186	six / sita			
187	seven / saba			
188	eight / nane			
189	nine / tisa			
190	ten / kumi			
191	big / kubwa			
192	small / ndogo			
193	long / ndefu			
194	short / fupi			

No.	English / Swahili Gloss	Luya	Lugwe	IPA / Researcher's Notes
195	old / zamani			
196	new / mpya			
197	good / nzuri			
198	bad / mbaya			
199	hot / moto			
200	cold / baridi			

The pronunciations were later compared using the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA).

2.13 Research Instruments

Research instruments are tools used to collect information from respondents. Since this study was qualitative, the researcher employed three major instruments, namely the interview guide, observation checklist, and standardized word list.

2.13.1 Semi-Structured Interview Guide

The main instrument used was a semi-structured interview guide. It consisted of both open-ended and probing questions arranged according to the objectives of the study.

The interview guide enabled respondents to express their views freely while allowing the researcher to seek clarification where necessary. Questions focused on:

The pronunciation of selected Luya and Lugwe words.

Differences in vowel and consonant sounds.

Phonological processes observed in everyday speech.

The influence of neighbouring languages.

Challenges affecting indigenous language preservation.

Suggestions for preserving the two languages.

The researcher conducted all interviews in a language that was comfortable for the respondents. With their permission, interviews were audio-recorded to ensure that pronunciation was captured accurately for later transcription using the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA).

Advantages of the Interview Guide

The interview guide enabled the researcher to:

obtain detailed explanations from respondents;

ask follow-up questions where necessary;

clarify ambiguous responses;

observe respondents' natural pronunciation;

collect rich qualitative data.

2.13.2 Observation Checklist

Observation was used to supplement interview data.

The researcher prepared an observation checklist containing specific pronunciation features to be observed during natural conversations.

The checklist focused on:

vowel pronunciation;

consonant articulation;

pronunciation of borrowed words;

tone patterns;

stress placement;

speech rhythm;

code-switching;

language mixing.

Observation enabled the researcher to compare natural speech with responses obtained during interviews.

2.13.3 Standardized Word List

A standardized word list containing approximately 200 commonly used lexical items was developed.

The words represented different semantic categories including:

greetings;

body parts;

family relationships;

domestic animals;

wild animals;

foods;

agricultural activities;

weather;

household items;

numerals;

verbs;

adjectives.

Each respondent pronounced the same list individually.

The researcher later transcribed the pronunciations using IPA symbols before comparing the phonetic realizations across the two languages.

The standardized word list ensured consistency because every respondent pronounced exactly the same lexical items.

2.14 Validity and Trustworthiness of the Study

Because the study employed qualitative methods, emphasis was placed on ensuring trustworthiness rather than statistical validity and reliability.

The researcher adopted Lincoln and Guba's (1985) four criteria of trustworthiness.

2.14.1 Credibility

Credibility refers to the confidence that can be placed in the truthfulness of research findings.

To enhance credibility, the researcher:

spent adequate time within the study area;

interviewed experienced native speakers;

triangulated interviews, observations, and word-list elicitation;

conducted member checking by confirming interpretations with selected respondents.

2.14.2 Transferability

Transferability refers to the extent to which findings may be applicable to similar contexts.

The researcher provided detailed descriptions of:

the study area;

respondents;

research procedures;

linguistic environment.

These descriptions enable future researchers to determine whether the findings may apply to other Samia-speaking communities.

2.14.3 Dependability

Dependability concerns the consistency of research procedures.

The researcher maintained:

interview schedules;

field notes;

observation records;

audio recordings;

transcription records.

These documents provide an audit trail showing how conclusions were reached.

2.14.4 Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the degree to which findings reflect respondents' views rather than researcher bias.

This was achieved through:

audio recording interviews;

verbatim transcription;

maintaining field notes;

comparing information from different respondents before drawing conclusions.

2.15 Data Collection Procedure

Data collection was conducted in several stages.

Stage One: Obtaining Permission

The researcher obtained an introductory letter from the Department of Languages and Literature, Busitema University.

The letter introduced the researcher to local authorities and respondents within Lumino Town Council.

Permission to conduct the study was obtained from relevant Local Council authorities before fieldwork commenced.

Stage Two: Identifying Respondents

Using purposive sampling, the researcher identified knowledgeable respondents.

Snowball sampling was then employed to identify additional participants recommended by initial respondents.

Stage Three: Conducting Interviews

Individual interviews were arranged at places convenient for respondents.

Before each interview:

the purpose of the study was explained;

confidentiality was assured;

informed consent was obtained.

Each interview lasted between 30 and 60 minutes.

Stage Four: Observation

The researcher attended community gatherings, markets, and informal discussions where natural conversations occurred.

During observation, pronunciation patterns were recorded without interfering with normal communication.

Stage Five: Word Pronunciation Sessions

Respondents pronounced the standardized word list individually.

Pronunciations were recorded digitally before later transcription into IPA symbols.

2.16 Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis and comparative phonetic analysis.

The analysis followed six stages.

Step One

Audio recordings were transcribed carefully using the International Phonetic Alphabet.

Step Two

The researcher repeatedly read the transcripts while listening to recordings to ensure transcription accuracy.

Step Three

Responses were coded according to the objectives of the study.

For example:

vowel differences;

consonant differences;

tone;

language contact;

phonological processes.

Step Four

Similar responses were grouped into themes.

Step Five

Pronunciation patterns from Luya were systematically compared with corresponding pronunciations from Lugwe.

Step Six

Findings were interpreted and discussed alongside literature reviewed in Chapter Two.

Where appropriate, simple frequency tables were used to summarize qualitative observations.

2.17 Ethical Considerations

The researcher observed all ethical principles governing academic research.

These included:

Informed Consent

Participation was voluntary.

Each respondent received adequate explanation regarding the purpose of the study before agreeing to participate.

Confidentiality

Respondents' names were not included in the report.

Instead, codes such as:

R1

R2

R15

were used during analysis.

Privacy

Interviews were conducted in locations chosen by respondents to ensure privacy and comfort.

Respect for Respondents

The researcher respected respondents' opinions regardless of differences in language background.

Honesty

The researcher reported findings truthfully without fabrication or alteration.

Academic Integrity

All scholarly sources used in the study were acknowledged using APA 7th edition.

2.18 Limitations of the Study

The researcher encountered several challenges.

Firstly, some elderly respondents were unavailable during the initial visits because of farming activities.

Secondly, a few respondents were reluctant to be audio-recorded. This challenge was addressed by explaining that recordings would be used strictly for academic purposes.

Thirdly, frequent code-switching between Luya, Lugwe, Kiswahili, and English occasionally complicated transcription.

Financial constraints also limited repeated visits to distant villages.

Despite these challenges, the researcher collected sufficient data to achieve the objectives of the study.

2.19 Delimitations of the Study

The study was limited to phonetic differences between Luya and Lugwe spoken within Lumino Town Council.

Issues relating to syntax, morphology, semantics, and orthography were not investigated except where necessary for explaining pronunciation.

Only native speakers were selected because they possess authentic pronunciation patterns required for phonetic analysis.

2.20 Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented the methodology employed in conducting the study. It described the research design, study area, target population, sample size, sampling techniques, data collection methods, research instruments, trustworthiness, data collection procedures, data analysis techniques, ethical considerations, limitations, and delimitations of the study.

The procedures described in this chapter enabled the researcher to collect reliable and credible information concerning the phonetic differences between Luya and Lugwe.

The next chapter presents, analyzes, and discusses the findings obtained during fieldwork, organized according to the specific objectives of the study.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

2.21 Introduction

This chapter presents, analyzes, and discusses the findings of the study. The findings are presented according to the specific objectives, namely:

To identify the consonant and vowel sound systems of Luya and Lugwe.

To examine the phonological processes that characterize Luya and Lugwe.

To establish the influence of language contact on the pronunciation of Luya and Lugwe.

To compare the phonetic similarities and differences between Luya and Lugwe.

To determine how the findings contribute to language preservation and documentation.

The findings are based on data collected from 34 respondents through interviews, observation, and pronunciation of a standardized word list. Direct quotations from respondents are coded (for example, R01, R12, R27) to maintain confidentiality.

2.22 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Understanding respondents' backgrounds was important because age, education, occupation, and language exposure influence pronunciation.

Table 3 Distribution of Respondents by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage.
Male	20	58.8%
Female	14	41.2%
Total	34	100%

The study involved both male and female respondents because both actively participate in preserving and transmitting the Samia languages.

Table 4 Distribution by Age

Age group	Frequency.
-----------	------------

18-30 years	9
31-45 years	11
46-60	8
Above 60 years	6
Total	34

Older respondents provided historical pronunciation patterns, while younger respondents helped explain recent pronunciation changes resulting from multilingual interaction.

4.3 Findings According to Objective One

To identify the consonant and vowel sound systems of Luya and Lugwe

Respondents agreed that Luya and Lugwe possess almost identical basic vowel inventories consisting of five vowels:

IPA Symbol

Example

/a/

baba

/e/

embwa

/i/

ingokho

/o/

omwana

/u/

omuntu

However, although the vowel inventory was similar, pronunciation differed.

Respondent Views

An elderly respondent (R03) explained:

"Our children pronounce some words differently from the way our grandparents spoke. The words are the same, but the sounds are changing."

Another respondent (R17) noted:

"People from the Kenyan side stretch some vowels more than we do here in Uganda."

Observation confirmed that vowel length was generally more noticeable among Luya speakers, while Lugwe speakers tended to shorten vowels during ordinary conversation.

Consonant Inventory

The study established that both languages contain:

Plosives (/p, b, t, d, k, g/)

Nasals (/m, n, ŋ/)

Fricatives (/f, s, h/)

Affricates (/tʃ/)

Liquids (/l, r/)

Glides (/w, j/)

However, differences emerged in their realization.

For example, several respondents pronounced the same lexical items differently.

Example

English	Luya	Lugwe
Child	Omwana	Omwana
Dog	Embwa	Embwa
Cow	Ing'ombe	Ing'ombe

Although the words remained identical, acoustic observation showed differences in vowel duration, speech rhythm, and intonation.

Discussion

These findings agree with Katamba (1989), who observed that many Bantu languages share similar vowel systems while differing in pronunciation. Likewise, Ladefoged and Johnson (2015) argue that related languages often maintain common sound inventories despite developing different articulatory habits over time.

Unlike previous studies that concentrated on phonological description, the present study demonstrates that Luya and Lugwe differ mainly in pronunciation rather than the existence of particular speech sounds.

2.23 Findings According to Objective Two

To examine the phonological processes characterizing Luya and Lugwe

The study identified several phonological processes.

Assimilation

Assimilation occurred frequently during rapid speech.

Respondent R08 stated:

"When we speak quickly, some sounds naturally change so that speaking becomes easier."

Observation confirmed that nasal consonants often influenced the pronunciation of neighbouring consonants.

Elision

Several younger speakers omitted vowels during casual conversation.

For example:

Careful speech:

Omwana ali hano

Rapid speech:

Mwana li hano

This phenomenon was more common among younger bilingual speakers.

Vowel Lengthening

Older speakers generally produced longer vowels than younger speakers.

Respondent R24 remarked:

"Young people rush when speaking. They no longer pronounce words slowly like our elders."

Tone

Although both languages employ tone, tonal movement differed across some lexical items.

Respondents explained that tone sometimes distinguished meaning even when words appeared identical.

Discussion

These findings support Crystal (2010), who argues that phonological processes simplify speech production. The findings also agree with Fromkin et al. (2022), who note that assimilation and elision occur naturally in everyday communication.

However, unlike previous studies that described these processes generally, this study demonstrates how they specifically distinguish Luya and Lugwe speakers in Lumino Town Council.

2.24 Findings According to Objective Three

To establish the influence of language contact on the pronunciation of Luya and Lugwe

One of the objectives of this study was to establish whether interaction with other languages has influenced the pronunciation of Luya and Lugwe. Respondents unanimously agreed that continuous contact with neighbouring languages has significantly contributed to changes in pronunciation, particularly among younger speakers.

Languages Frequently Spoken Together with Luya and Lugwe

Language	Frequency (n=34)	Percentage
Kiswahili	30	88.2%
English	27	79.4%
Lusoga	23	67.6
Luganda	19	55.9
Other luya dialects	16	47.1

The results indicate that Kiswahili was the language most frequently used alongside Luya and Lugwe, followed by English. This reflects the multilingual environment of Busia District, where cross-border trade and formal education expose speakers to several languages.

Influence of Cross-Border Trade

Most respondents explained that the Uganda–Kenya border has increased daily interaction between Samia speakers and speakers of other languages. Through trade, speakers often borrow pronunciation habits unconsciously.

Respondent R05, a trader, explained:

"When I spend the whole day trading with Kenyans, I notice that even when I return home, I still pronounce some words the way they do."

Similarly, R14 stated:

"Children who study in Kenya and later return to Uganda speak differently from those who have always remained here."

These responses suggest that prolonged interaction with neighbouring communities contributes to phonetic variation.

Influence of Formal Education

Teachers interviewed during the study reported that English affects pronunciation among learners.

Respondent R18, a secondary school teacher, observed:

"Many learners pronounce local language words using English pronunciation habits, especially those who rarely communicate with their grandparents."

The researcher also observed that younger respondents occasionally inserted English-like stress patterns when pronouncing borrowed words.

Influence of Kiswahili

Kiswahili was identified as the most influential regional language because of its widespread use in markets, transport, and border business.

One respondent remarked:

"Sometimes we don't even realize we have switched pronunciation because Kiswahili has become part of our everyday communication."

Interpretation

The findings indicate that language contact has had a considerable influence on pronunciation. Younger bilingual speakers exhibited greater phonetic variation than elderly speakers who primarily use indigenous languages in daily communication.

Discussion

These findings support Weinreich (1953), who argues that prolonged language contact results in borrowing of pronunciation features. Similarly, Labov (1972) observed that social interaction significantly influences language variation. The findings also agree with Thomason (2001), who emphasizes that multilingual communities naturally experience phonetic change through continuous contact between languages.

2.25 Findings According to Objective Four

To compare the phonetic similarities and differences between Luya and Lugwe

One of the major aims of this study was to establish the extent to which Luya and Lugwe resemble or differ from each other phonetically.

Similarities

Respondents consistently reported that the two languages share many characteristics because they originated from a common ancestral language.

The similarities identified included:

Five-vowel system.

Similar consonant inventory.

Comparable syllable structure.

Shared vocabulary.

Similar noun class prefixes.

Similar sentence structure.

Respondent R21 stated:

"When a Luya speaker talks, we understand almost everything because our languages came from the same people."

The researcher observed that more than three-quarters of the words on the standardized word list were mutually intelligible.

Differences

Although the languages remain mutually intelligible, several pronunciation differences were observed.

Table 5 Major Phonetic Differences Identified

Feature	Luya	Lugwe
Vowel duration.	Generally longer	Generally shorter
Speech Rhythm	More syllable-timed	Slightly faster conversational rhythm
Borrowed words	Greater influence from Kenyan luyia varieties	Greater influence from lusoga and luganda.
Intonation.	More rising tone patterns in everyday conversation	Relatively flatter tone in comparable utterances.
Pronunciation among the youths.	More Kiswahili influence	More English and lusoga luganda influence.

The researcher observed that elderly speakers maintained relatively conservative pronunciation, whereas younger speakers exhibited greater variability.

Respondent R09 explained:

"Our grandparents pronounce words almost the same, but today's youth have mixed many languages."

Another respondent added:

"The difference is not that we cannot understand each other. It is mainly how we pronounce certain sounds."

Interpretation

The findings demonstrate that Luya and Lugwe remain closely related languages despite developing distinctive phonetic characteristics. Most differences involve pronunciation rather than vocabulary or grammar.

Discussion

These findings are consistent with Campbell (2013), who argues that related languages preserve common historical features while gradually developing different pronunciation systems. They also support Katamba (1989), who notes that Bantu languages often remain mutually intelligible despite noticeable phonetic variation.

Unlike previous studies, this research provides evidence drawn directly from contemporary speakers in Lumino Town Council.

2.26 Findings According to Objective Five

To determine how the findings contribute to language preservation and documentation

Respondents expressed concern that younger generations are gradually abandoning traditional pronunciation patterns.

Table 6 Respondents' Views on Language Preservation

Suggested strategy	Frequency
Teaching indigenous languages in schools	28
Recording elders' speech	25
Preparing dictionaries	22
Community cultural festivals	20
Radio programs in Samia	18
Documentation by universities	16

Most respondents emphasized the need for documentation.

Respondent R31 stated:

"When our elders die before their language is recorded, we lose knowledge that can never be recovered."

Another elder (R02) commented:

"Children should first know how their grandparents speak before copying foreign languages."

Teachers also recommended integrating Samia language studies into community education programmes.

Interpretation

The findings indicate strong community support for preserving Luya and Lugwe. Respondents believe documentation is essential for maintaining correct pronunciation and safeguarding cultural identity.

Discussion

These findings agree with UNESCO (2023), which emphasizes that documenting indigenous languages helps preserve cultural heritage. They also support Crystal (2000), who argues that recording pronunciation, vocabulary, and oral traditions contributes to long-term language survival.

The findings further demonstrate that comparative phonetic research has practical value beyond academic study. It can inform curriculum development, teacher training, dictionary compilation, and community language revitalization programmes.

4.8 Summary of Chapter Four

This chapter presented, analysed, and discussed the findings according to the objectives of the study. The results revealed that Luya and Lugwe share many phonetic characteristics because of their common Bantu origin. However, they also exhibit important differences in vowel duration, speech rhythm, intonation, and the pronunciation of borrowed words. The study established that language contact, multilingualism, education, and cross-border interaction have contributed significantly to these differences. Finally, respondents emphasized the importance of documenting and promoting the two languages as a strategy for preserving the linguistic and cultural heritage of the Samia community.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

2.27 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of the study, conclusions drawn from the findings, recommendations based on the study objectives, suggestions for further research, and the overall contribution of the study. The chapter is organized according to the research objectives presented in Chapter One.

2.28 Summary of Findings

The purpose of this study was to examine the phonetic differences between Luya and Lugwe spoken in Lumino Town Council, Busia District. The study was guided by five specific objectives.

Objective One

To identify the consonant and vowel sound systems of Luya and Lugwe.

The study established that Luya and Lugwe possess similar vowel inventories consisting of five basic vowels /a/, /e/, /i/, /o/, and /u/. Similarly, the two languages share most consonant sounds because of their common Bantu origin.

However, differences were observed in:

vowel duration;

consonant realization;

speech rhythm;

intonation;

pronunciation of borrowed words.

Older respondents generally maintained traditional pronunciation patterns while younger speakers demonstrated greater phonetic variation.

Objective Two

To examine the phonological processes characterizing Luya and Lugwe.

The study identified several phonological processes operating within both languages.

These included:

assimilation;
elision;
vowel lengthening;
glide formation;
nasalization;
tonal variation.

The study found that these processes occurred naturally during ordinary conversation and contributed significantly to pronunciation differences between speakers.

Objective Three

To establish the influence of language contact on pronunciation.

The findings revealed that language contact has had a significant influence on pronunciation.

The major influencing languages were:

Kiswahili;
English;
Lusoga;
Luganda;
neighbouring Luyia dialects.

Cross-border trade, formal education, migration, religious activities, and intermarriage were identified as major factors accelerating phonetic change.

Younger bilingual speakers exhibited greater pronunciation changes than elderly speakers.

Objective Four

To compare the phonetic similarities and differences between Luya and Lugwe.

The study established that Luya and Lugwe remain highly mutually intelligible because of their common historical origin.

Major similarities included:

shared vocabulary;

similar consonant inventory;

similar vowel inventory;

comparable grammatical structure;

common Bantu characteristics.

Major differences included:

vowel duration;

speech rhythm;

intonation;

pronunciation of borrowed words;

influence from neighbouring languages.

The differences did not prevent communication but clearly distinguished speakers from different communities.

Objective Five

To determine how the findings contribute to language preservation.

Respondents strongly supported documentation of indigenous languages.

The study established that preserving pronunciation is essential because speech sounds constitute an important component of cultural identity.

Respondents recommended:

documentation by universities;

recording elderly speakers;

teaching indigenous languages in schools;

compiling pronunciation dictionaries;

promoting cultural festivals;

encouraging radio programmes in Samia.

2.29 Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were made.

First, Luya and Lugwe remain closely related Bantu languages sharing numerous phonetic characteristics inherited from their common ancestral language.

Secondly, despite these similarities, each language has developed distinctive pronunciation patterns influenced by geographical separation, multilingualism, historical interaction, and language contact.

Thirdly, language contact has become one of the strongest forces shaping pronunciation among contemporary speakers, particularly younger generations exposed to English, Kiswahili, Lusoga, Luganda, and neighbouring speech communities.

Fourthly, although pronunciation differences do not significantly hinder communication between Luya and Lugwe speakers, they represent important linguistic features that deserve documentation because they contribute to understanding the historical development of Samia languages.

Finally, the study concludes that documentation of indigenous pronunciation is essential for preserving the linguistic and cultural heritage of the Samia people. Without deliberate preservation efforts, traditional pronunciation patterns may gradually disappear due to increasing globalization and multilingualism.

2.30 Recommendations

Based on the findings, the researcher makes the following recommendations.

To Busitema University

The Department of Languages and Literature should encourage more undergraduate and postgraduate research on indigenous Ugandan languages, particularly minority languages that remain poorly documented.

To the Ministry of Education and Sports

The Ministry should strengthen mother-tongue education by supporting development of pronunciation guides, dictionaries, and teaching materials for indigenous languages.

To Cultural Institutions

Samia cultural organizations should establish programmes aimed at documenting pronunciation, oral literature, songs, folktales, and traditional vocabulary before they disappear.

To Community Leaders

Community leaders should organize cultural events where elders interact with young people through storytelling, songs, riddles, and proverbs to encourage correct pronunciation.

To Parents

Parents should encourage children to communicate in their mother tongue while at home in order to preserve authentic pronunciation patterns.

To Teachers

Teachers should promote positive attitudes towards indigenous languages and encourage learners to appreciate linguistic diversity rather than abandoning local languages.

To Future Researchers

Future researchers should expand this study by examining:

phonological variation;

morphology;

syntax;

semantics;

sociolinguistic variation;

language attitudes among Samia-speaking communities.

Comparative studies involving additional Samia dialects spoken in Kenya are also recommended.

2.31 Contribution of the Study

This study contributes to existing knowledge by providing one of the few comparative phonetic descriptions of Luya and Lugwe spoken in Busia District.

The findings contribute to:

comparative Bantu linguistics;

indigenous language documentation;

pronunciation studies;

language preservation;

curriculum development;

future linguistic research.

The report further provides valuable reference material for students, teachers, researchers, and cultural organizations interested in Samia languages.

2.32 Areas for Further Research

Future studies should investigate:

Morphological differences between Luya and Lugwe.

Syntactic variation among Samia dialects.

Sociolinguistic factors affecting language maintenance.

Influence of digital media on indigenous language pronunciation.

Comparative lexical studies involving Ugandan and Kenyan Samia communities.

Tonal systems of Samia languages.

Development of orthographies for minority Samia language varieties.

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APPENDICES.

Appendix I: Introduction Letter

(Official letter from Busitema University introducing the researcher.)

APPENDIX I: LETTER OF INTRODUCTION TO THE FIELD

OPAMBO EMMANUEL WAFULA

Busitema University, Nagongera Campus

P.O. Box 236, Tororo, Uganda

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27 November 2025

THE COMMUNITY LEADERS,

NATIVE SPEAKERS OF LUYA AND LUGWE,

LUMINO TOWN COUNCIL,

BUSIA DISTRICT, EASTERN UGANDA.

**RE: INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH ON PHONETIC DIFFERENCES BETWEEN
LUYA AND LUGWE VARIETIES OF OLUSAMIA**

Dear All,

I am a third-year undergraduate student in the Bachelor of Education in Languages (English and Literature) programme at Busitema University, Nagongera Campus. I am currently conducting

research towards my degree requirement on the topic: The Phonetic Differences Between Samia Languages: Luya and Lugwe. This research is carried out under the supervision of, Dr. Tendo Shira Namagero of the Department of Languages and Literature, Busitema University.

The aim of this study is to document and compare the sound systems of Luya and Lugwe, two closely related Bantu languages spoken in your community and across the Kenya-Uganda border with a view to understanding how their phonetic features have evolved and how they reflect the languages' shared history and contact with neighbouring languages.

I am writing to kindly request permission to conduct fieldwork in your community. The research will involve voluntary interviews and speech recordings with willing adult native speakers of Luya and Lugwe. All participants will provide written informed consent, and all data will be kept strictly confidential. The names of participants will not be used in any report or publication.

The research findings will be made available to the community and to Busitema University and are expected to contribute to the documentation and appreciation of your languages.

I am available to meet at your convenience to discuss the research in further detail. I thank you sincerely for your time and anticipated cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

OPAMBO EMMANUEL WAFULA

Researcher, Department of Languages and Literature

Busitema University, Nagongera Campus

Endorsed by: _____

Dr. Tendo Shira Namagero

Supervisor, Department of Language

Busitema University

APPENDIX II: PROPOSAL TIMELINE

Table 7 Proposal Timeline (November 2025 – April 2026)

Phase	Activities	Duration
Preparation (Nov 2025)	Literature review, ethics clearance, instrument development, pilot study, participant recruitment	1 month
Fieldwork Phase 1 (Dec 2025)	Travel to Lumino Town Council; word list elicitations and semi-structured interviews (Luya speakers)	1 month
Fieldwork Phase 2 (Jan 2026)	Semi-structured interviews and naturalistic observations (Lugwe speakers); key informant interviews	1 month
Data Processing (Feb 2026)	IPA transcription, data entry, initial phonetic categorisation, quality checks	1 month
Analysis & Write-Up (Mar 2026)	Comparative phonetic analysis, thematic analysis, chapter drafting	1 month
Finalisation & Submission (Apr 2026)	Supervisor review, revisions, final submission of research report	1 month

Appendix II: Informed Consent Form

A consent form explaining the purpose of the study, voluntary participation, confidentiality, and the right to withdraw at any time.

Appendix III: Semi-Structured Interview Guide.

Questions organized according to the five objectives, covering pronunciation, phonological processes, language contact, similarities and differences, and language preservation.



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FACULTY OF SCIENCE AND EDUCATION

NAGONGERA CAMPUS

My name is Opambo Emmanuel Wafula, a third-year student at Busitema University, researching phonetic differences between Luya and Lugwe, two related languages spoken in your community, under the supervision of Dr. Tendo Shira Namagero.

I am requesting permission to conduct voluntary interviews and speech recordings with adult native speakers of Luya and Lugwe in your area. Participation is voluntary, informed consent will be obtained, and all data will remain confidential with no participant names used in any report.

Findings will be shared with the community and the university. I am happy to meet and discuss further, and I thank you for your consideration.

Title: Phonetic Differences Between Luya and Lugwe, Semi-Structured Interview Guide

Purpose: To elicit natural speech samples and metalinguistic commentary from native speakers of Luya and Lugwe for phonetic analysis.

Duration: 15-25 minutes (regular participants); 25-35 minutes (key informants)

SECTION A: PARTICIPANT BACKGROUND

Participant Code: Language: Luya / Lugwe

Age: Gender: Years in Lumino Town Council:

Other languages spoken:

SECTION B: WARM-UP AND RAPPORT BUILDING

1. Can you tell me your name, where you grew up, and what language you used most at home as a child?

.....
.....

2. Do you speak any other languages apart from [Luya/Lugwe]? How often?

.....
.....

SECTION C: WORD ELICITATION

Instructions: Ask the participant to say the following words clearly and naturally. Repeat each item twice if needed. Write down the pronunciation phonetically as the participant speaks.

1. Animal names:

Cow
.

Goat
.

Fish
.

Chicken
.

Elephant
.

2. Body parts:

Head
.

Mouth
.

Tongue
.

Teeth
.

Nose
.

3. Numerals:

One through
ten
.....
.....
.....

Here, the researcher presents pairs; participant pronounces both.

4. Minimal pairs for voice contrast:

.....
.....
.....

5. Minimal pairs for vowel length:

-
-
6. Minimal pairs for tone:
-
-

SECTION D: SENTENCE-LEVEL ELICITATION

1. Ask the participant to describe what they did this morning (in [Luya/Lugwe]).
-
-

2. Ask the participant to tell a short story about an animal they know (2-3 sentences).
-
-
-

SECTION E: METALINGUISTIC QUESTIONS (Key Informants only)

1. In your view, what are the main sound differences between Luya and Lugwe?
-
-

2. Are there sounds in Lugwe that do not exist in Luya, or vice versa? Can you give examples?
-
-

3. Do you think Luya and Lugwe are the same language or different languages? What makes you say so?

.....
.....
.....

SECTION F: CLOSING

Thank the participant and remind them they can contact the researcher if they have questions.

Researcher's Notes:

APPENDIX IV: STANDARDISED WORD LIST

The following word list is adapted from standard Bantu elicitation protocols and targets the major phonological categories relevant to the Luya-Lugwe comparison. Researchers administer the list by reading the English/Kiswahili gloss and writing down the participant's pronunciation in the target language.

SECTION 1: CONSONANTS - STOPS AND PRENASALISED STOPS

No.	English/Swahili Gloss	Luya Equivalent	Lugwe Equivalent
1	grandfather/babu		
2	goat/mbuzi		
3	child/mtoto		
4	fire/moto		
5	to come/kuja		
6	cow/ng'ombe		

SECTION 2: VOWELS - SHORT AND LONG CONTRASTS

Participants are asked to pronounce the following pairs. Researcher notes whether length distinction is observed.

Pair	Item A (Short)	Item B (Long)	Meaning Contrast
1			end / stir
2			eat / refuse

3			person / river

SECTION 3: TONAL MINIMAL PAIRS

For each pair, ask the participant to say both words and use them in a sentence where possible.

Note the direction of the tone (High / Low / Down-step).

Pair	High Tone Item	Low Tone Item	Gloss Contrast
1			e.g. mother / to build
2			e.g. water / stone
3			e.g. to eat (past) / to eat (future)
4			e.g. go (imperative) / went (past)

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Appendix IV: Observation Checklist

Items for observing vowel production, consonant articulation, tone, rhythm, code-switching, and speech patterns during natural conversations.

Appendix V: Standardized Word List

A list of approximately 200 common words grouped under greetings, family, food, animals, body parts, farming, weather, and everyday activities for pronunciation elicitation.

Appendix VI: Work Plan

A month-by-month schedule from proposal development, data collection, analysis, report writing, revision, and submission (January 2025–May 2026).

APPENDIX IV: PROPOSAL TIMELINE

Table 8 Proposal Timeline (November 2025 – April 2026)

Phase	Activities	Duration
Preparation (Nov 2025)	Literature review, ethics clearance, instrument development, pilot study, participant recruitment	1 month
Fieldwork Phase 1 (Dec 2025)	Travel to Lumino Town Council; word list elicitations and semi-structured interviews (Luya speakers)	1 month

Phase	Activities	Duration
Fieldwork Phase 2 (Jan 2026)	Semi-structured interviews and naturalistic observations (Lugwe speakers); key informant interviews	1 month
Data Processing (Feb 2026)	IPA transcription, data entry, initial phonetic categorisation, quality checks	1 month
Analysis & Write-Up (Mar 2026)	Comparative phonetic analysis, thematic analysis, chapter drafting	1 month
Finalisation & Submission (Apr 2026)	Supervisor review, revisions, final submission of research report	1 month

APPENDIX V: RESEARCH BUDGET

Table 9 Research Budget

An itemized budget including transport, stationery, printing, internet, communication, meals during fieldwork, data transcription, and report binding.

Item	Description	Estimated Amount (UGX)
Communication & coordination	Phone calls, airtime, internet for research coordination	50,000
Transport	Travel to and from Lumino Town Council (3 field trips)	120,000
Printing & photocopying	Interview guides, consent forms, word lists, draft copies	45,000
Data processing	Transcription support, digital storage media, stationery	60,000
Participant facilitation	Modest facilitation for key informants (4 × 10,000 UGX)	40,000
Scholastic materials	Notebooks, pens, printer ink, binding	35,000
Miscellaneous	Unforeseen expenses during fieldwork	50,000
TOTAL		400,000

Note: All figures are estimates in Ugandan Shillings (UGX). The researcher acknowledges that actual costs may vary and will seek supplemental support from the Department where necessary.