

NAIROBI EVANGELICAL GRADUATE  
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

A RELEVANCE-BASED STUDY OF  
ATTITUDE MARKERS IN KIITHARAKA

BY ]

NJAGI JACOB MAUKI

A Linguistic Project submitted to the Graduate  
School in partial fulfilment of the requirements for  
the degree of Master of Arts in Translation Studies

JUNE, 2003

NAIROBI EVANGELICAL GRADUATE  
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

A RELEVANCE-BASED STUDY OF  
ATTITUDE MARKERS IN KÎÎTHARAKA

By  
NJAGÎ JACOB MAÛKÎ

A Linguistics Project submitted to the Graduate School  
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts in translation Studies

Approved:

Supervisor:

*Regina Blass*

Dr. Regina Blass

Second reader:

*Mary L. Huttar*

Mrs. Mary Huttar

External reader:

*Kithaka wa Mberia*

Dr. Kithaka wa Mberia

June, 2003

0031653

Student's Declaration

A RELEVANCE-BASED STUDY OF ATTITUDE MARKERS IN KÎÛTHARAKA

I declare that this is my original work and has not been submitted to any other College or University for academic credit.

The views presented herein are not necessarily those of the Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology or the Examiners.

(Signed) \_\_\_\_\_  
Jacob Maûkî Njagî

June, 2003

### **ABSTRACT**

This study is aimed at exploring the Kĩtharaka attitude markers otherwise known as attitude particles. It aims at establishing what they are and how they affect speaker meaning in the language.

The end result of this paper is first to establish the place of these attitude markers in the language but more so to ascertain whether their use can improve the quality of Scripture translation or any other written language in general in Kĩtharaka.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am greatly indebted to God, the most high, for His endless grace and favor through out my life and particularly in my studies in N.E.G.S.T. May the glory and honor be to Him alone for ever.

For close guidance and many suggestions toward this work, I appreciate Dr. Blass. She was very kind and patient with me, she opened her private library for my use in this research, on top of having introduced me to the topic in the first place. May the Lord remember her.

I appreciate all my professors in the translation department in N.E.G.S.T: Dr. Blass, Dr. Huttar, Dr. Sim, Dr. Payne, Dr. Ashdown, and many others for your contribution toward what I am today. Mrs. Huttar, thank you for refining my chaotic thinking and taking care of my bad writing style and English grammar as I wrote this project.

Without the computer expertise of Dr. S. Ashdown, the map in this project could not have been possible. Thank you very much for all the time you put in helping me to fix it.

Most of the data used in this project, which includes the stories in the appendix, came from recorded oral narratives in Kîîtharaka by Susan Nyaga of B.T.L. Thank you a thousand times.

My studies here would not have been possible were it not for the financial support by B.T.L. I heartily appreciate the resources the donors gave towards this accomplishment. I owe a great deal to them.

Finally is to my family members and friends near and far, for understanding me in my long leave of absence. Thank you for standing with me prayerfully and sometimes emotionally. May God reward you.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

1	First person
2	Second person
3PL	Third person plural
BE	Verb-be
Comp	Complementiser
FUT	Future
HAB	Habitual
N	Noun
NASB	New American Standard Bible
NEG	Negative
NP	Noun phrase
PART	Particle
PAST	Past tense
PRES	Present tense
POSS	Possessive
PRES	Present
REFL	Reflexive
S	Sentence
SG	Singular
V	Verb
VP	Verb phrase

## LIST OF FIGURES AND MAP

Figure	Page
1. Kîtharaka Cardinal Vowels	3
2. Kîtharaka Consonant Phoneme Inventory	4
3. Morphophonemic process between vowels	5
4. Phrase structure representing rule (a) and (b) combined	13
5. A modified phrase structure to suit Kîtharaka	13
6. A phrase structure showing <i>Atî</i> as a complementiser	16
7. A phrase structure showing an attitude marker in a mid position	17
8. A phrase structure showing an attitude marker in an initial position	17
9. A map of the area covered by Kîtharaka speakers	36

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	iv
Acknowledgements	v
List of abbreviations	vii
List of figures and map	viii
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1. Statement of the problem	1
1.2. Demography and ethnography of Kîtharaka	1
1.3. Phonological background	3
1.3.1. Vowel system	3
1.3.2. Consonant system	3
1.3.3. Tone	5
1.4. Morphology and syntax	5
1.5. Previous study	6
CHAPTER TWO	7
2.0. Particles in Kîtharaka	7
CHAPTER THREE	10
3.0. The grammatical function/structure of the attitude marker	10
CHAPTER FOUR	18
4.0. Attitude markers and relevance	18
4.1.0. Higher level explicature	21
4.1.1. Echoic use	22
4.1.2. Mutual manifestiness	24

CHAPTER FIVE	28
5.0. Use of attitude markers in discourse	28
CHAPTER SIX	32
6.0. CONCLUSION	32
REFERENCE LIST	33
APPENDIX	36

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1. Statement of the problem**

The purpose of this study is to make a contribution to the area of pragmatics in the analysis of Kĩĩtharaka and other related languages. At the moment, the little study that has been done on this language is only focussed on grammatical and phonological analysis and nothing at all has been done in the field of pragmatics.

This topic is the result of my reflection on a number of works about pragmatic markers and discourse particles. It also developed from my own course-work in partial fulfillment of TS 607 Pragmatics class. There was a need to deepen my knowledge about such markers in Kĩĩtharaka.

Though this study does not cover the entire area of pragmatics, it looks at the attitude markers which may be ignored very easily. This is because these markers do not seem to fall under any grammatical category known so far and have been in the past been left out in written Kĩĩtharaka. However, any natural Kĩĩtharaka whether written or spoken should have these markers in their appropriate positions in discourse. This study will therefore be very valuable for Bible translation in Kĩĩtharaka.

#### **1.2. Demography and ethnography of Kĩĩtharaka**

Kĩĩtharaka is a Bantu language which belongs to the Niger-Congo language family. Its speakers, known as Tharaka people, are found in the Eastern Province of the Republic of Kenya. According to the 1999 national census, the language has

about 120,000 speakers. They border Imenti to the west, Chuka, Mwîmbî/Mûthambî and Mbeere to the south, Kamba to the east and to the north are Tigania and Îgembe communities. It is said to belong to the Meru cluster of languages even though some scholars like wa Mberia (1993), argue that Kîitharaka is an independent language. Its speakers occupy the whole of Tharaka district, some parts of Meru South and Mwingî North districts. (See map on page 35)

The notable dialects according to Larsen I. (1984) in Grimes (2000, 143) are Gatue (North Tharaka), Ntugî (Central Tharaka), Thagichû (Mwingî North) and Îgoki (South Tharaka and parts of Meru South). The major differences among them are pronunciations of some words and minor lexical differences due to interaction and borrowing from their respective neighbors. The language has been classified thus: Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Volta-Congo, Benue-Congo, Bantoid, Southern, Narrow Bantu, Central, E, Kikuyu-Kamba, (E.20). However, according to Guthrie (1970/71), all the central Bantu groups are classified as Gikuyu-Kamba group. He gives the group code E50. Under this Gikuyu, Kamba, Meru, Tharaka, Embu have separate sub-classification with Tharaka having code-number E.54.

This analysis is that of Gatue dialect because it is the dialect I speak and I am the one who provided most of the data.

The Tharaka language project, a project of Bible Translation and Literacy of Kenya, has made an attempt to write the language. There are a few booklets of Kîitharaka tales, educative stories and reading primers in the most recently proposed writing system. The New Testament portion of the Bible has been published, dedicated, and it is in use in the Tharaka church.

### 1.3. Phonological background

#### 1.3.1. Vowel system

Kîtharaka has seven vowel phonemes in its inventory. They may be either short or long. As seen in Figure 1, below the system consists of two close vowels, two close-mid, two open-mid, and one open vowel.

Fig. 1. Kîtharaka cardinal vowels

	Front	Central	Back
Close	ɪ ɪ:		u u:
Near-close			
Close-mid	e e:		o o:
Mid			
Open-mid	ɛ ɛ:		ɔ ɔ:
Near-open			
Open			ɑ ɑ:

#### 1.3.2. Consonant system.

Though Kithaka wa Mberia, (wa Mberia 1993, 93) has identified thirteen consonants and three semi-vowels, I have identified thirty three consonants, as shown in the Figure 2 below. However, since this is not a phonological study, I will not go into the phonological details.

Fig. 2. Kîtharaka consonant phoneme inventory

	Labial	Dental	Alveolar	Palatal	Velar
Plosive	p	t			k
Labialized plosive	p̥w	t̥w			k̥w
Nasalised plosive	<sup>m</sup> p <sup>m</sup> b	<sup>n</sup> t	<sup>n</sup> d		<sup>ŋ</sup> k <sup>ŋ</sup> g
Fricative		ð		dʒ	ʃ
Labialized fricative		ð̥w			ʃ̥w
Nasalised fricative		<sup>n</sup> ð		<sup>n</sup> dʒ	
Flap/tap			r		
Labialized flap			r̥w		
Nasal		m	n	ɲ	ŋ
Syllabic nasal		m̩	n̩		
Labialized nasal		m̥w	n̥w	ɲ̥w	ŋ̥w

Kîtharaka has an open syllable structure with V, CV and ɲ syllable patterns.

There are various morphophonemic processes that occur within the words and across word boundaries. A sequence of two different vowels at the phonological level is replaced at the phonetic level by a different vowel. This results in glide formation, where /u/ combines with /o/, /a/, /e/, /i/ to give rise to /wo/, /wa/, /we/, /wi/. /i/ on the other hand combines with /o/ to give rise to /yo/. Look at Figure 3 below.

Fig. 3. Morphophonemic processes between vowels.

First vowel ↓	Second vowel →						
	a	e	i	î	o	û	u
a	aa	ee	ai	aî	oo	aû	au
e	êa	ee	ei	ee	eo	eû	eû
i	ia	ie	ei	îi	yo	iû	iu
î	îa	îe	îi	îî	îo	îû	îu
o	wa	we	oi	ûî	oo	ûû	ou
û	wa	we	ûi	wî / ûî	wo	ûû	ûû
u	wa	we	wi	wî	wo	ûû	uu

### 1.3.3. Tone

Kîîtharaka is a tonal language with both grammatical and lexical tones. The basic tone features are high and low which underlie H (high), L (low), HL (high-low) and LH (low-high) tonal melodies. Mid tones are also present.

### 1.4. Morphology and syntax of Kîîtharaka

Kîîtharaka is an agglutinating language just like other Bantu languages with the verb as the core of the language. These verbs can at times be very long because they take many prefixes and suffixes. Example (1) is a good illustration of this phenomenon:

1. Antû ibaragwatananganagîa mwako na ûrîmi

*a- ntû    iba- ra-    gwata- na-    nga- na-    gîa            mwako na ûrîmi*

PL people 3PL PAST hold    REFL HAB PAST REFL    building and weeding

‘people have been helping one another in building and weeding’

Just like other Bantu languages, Kîîtharaka nouns are divided into classes. It has seventeen noun classes, which are marked by a prefix. Kîîtharaka exhibits subject verb object (SVO) and nominative/accusative system characteristics.

