

## **Abstract**

In certain contexts, policy and programme interventions aimed at linguistic inclusion could lead to linguistic and other forms of exclusion. As a case in point, the article reports and reflects on the constitutional review process in Kenya and the dialectics of language in this process: the Kenyan constitutional review process was anchored on linguistic inclusion, by allowing the population to participate and offer views in Kenyan languages. This process produced a radical draft constitution hinging on the decentralisation of state power, accountability and participation in governance – ideals at variance with those of the ruling elite. As a counter, the ruling elite pushed their version of a draft constitution, watering down the decentralisation of state power, accountability and participation in governance. As expected, this version was defeated in a plebiscite. The article postulates that there are dialectic relationships between linguistic exclusion and/or inclusion and the exclusiveness and/or inclusiveness of macro-structures of governance in society.